Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy

2020-30

Contents

Foreword

The Outer Hebrides contribute much to Scotland - culture, heritage, language and landscape. Our key sectors of tourism, aquaculture, food, drink and agriculture bring benefits beyond our shores. Our economy faces out to the world and our people reach out welcoming arms to visitors. An economy of this nature rises and falls on our external transport connectivity and the ability of people and goods to move to, from and within our islands as easily as possible.

Progress has been made, now we need to work together to achieve even more. The case for further investment is strong, delivering empowered, strong, sustainable and resilient communities.

The external environment in which the Comhairle delivers its services and supports its communities is constantly changing and, since the last LTS in 2000, significant changes have occurred. During 2020, a seismic change has taken place in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis which looks set to result in enduring impacts on our local society and economy.

The Local Transport Strategy is intended as a succinct tool in terms of prioritisation, and to identify where the Comhairle requires support – to deliver the best local services and securing investment to strengthen the communities and economy of the Outer Hebrides by supporting a strong and socially inclusive recovery that creates empowered, resilient communities, based on a green economy, and in which digital connectivity and innovation are prioritised.

Introduction

There is a unique opportunity to revitalise the islands and to transform the Outer Hebrides into a net contributor to the national economy, while simultaneously rebuilding confidence in our communities and our distinctive Gaelic culture and heritage.
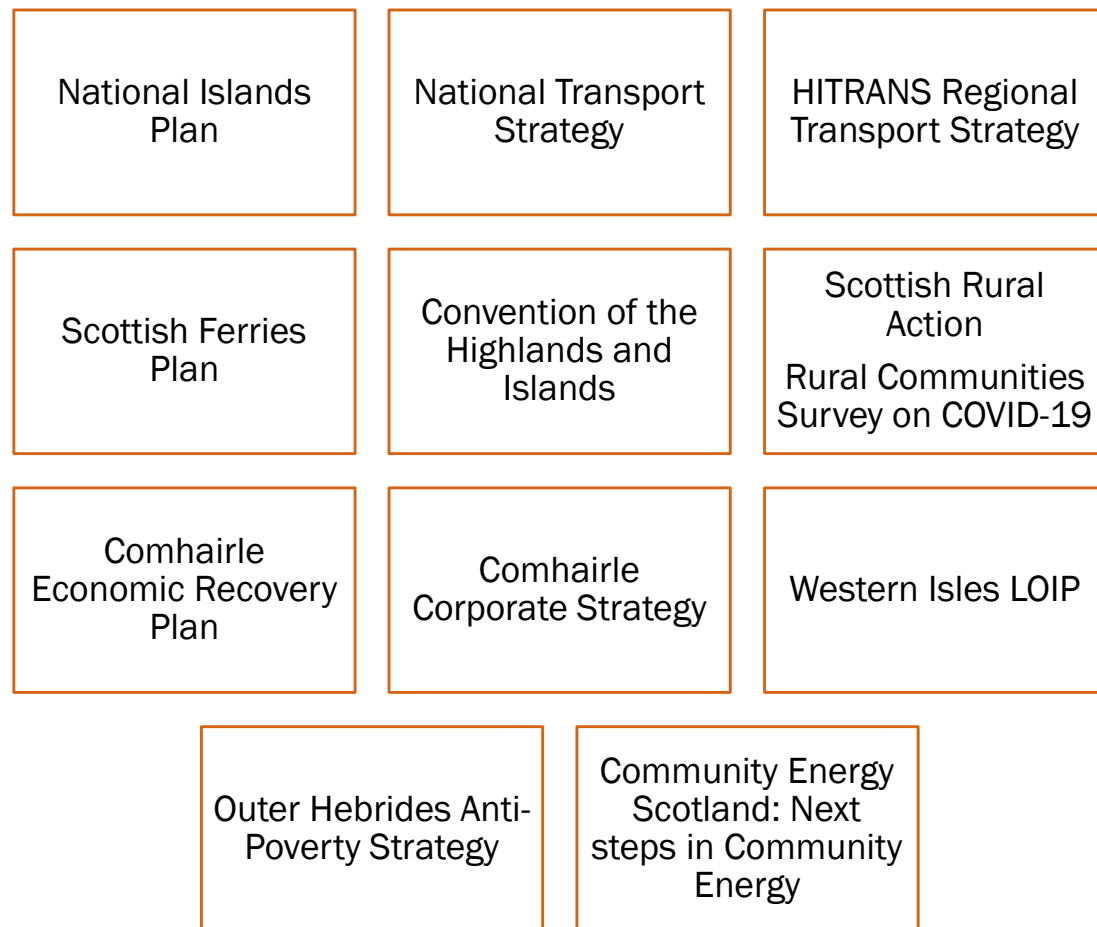
The Outer Hebrides Local Transport Strategy 2020-2030 is our vision for enhancing transport and travel throughout the area, and to key destinations beyond the area. Enhancing the transport network is a key driver for: improving the local economy, improving the environment, increasing social inclusion, and delivering health benefits for all residents and visitors of the Outer Hebrides. The Strategy sets out the Comhairle's policy on transport, presents Transport Planning Objectives and coordinates future priorities through a series of actions and interventions to enhance transport and travel.

This Local Transport Strategy sets out the evidence base and policy framework that has informed its development. We have developed the LTS in dialogue with input from Comhairle officers and partners, using their experience and evidence of issues and opportunities to inform and devise the long list of LTS options. We have also scrutinised recent community consultations to inform our understanding of relevant issues and opportunities across the area.

Policy Linkages

This section summarises a number of key relevant national, regional and local strategies and plans.

These plans have been reviewed to inform the development of the Local Transport Strategy, and the connections are summarised at the end of this section, which sets out also how this has informed the development of the Transport Planning Objectives.

National Islands Plan

National Transport Strategy

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

Scottish Ferries Plan

Convention of the Highlands and Islands

Scottish Rural Action

Rural Communities Survey on COVID-19

Comhairle Economic Recovery Plan

Comhairle Corporate Strategy

Western Isles LOIP

Outer Hebrides Anti-Poverty Strategy

Community Energy Scotland: Next steps in Community Energy

National Islands Plan

To improve transport services

Improvement of transport to island communities is included within the Islands Act 2018 and this is reflected in the National Islands Plan, which has 'To Improve Transport Services' as one of its thirteen strategic objectives. The National Islands Plan is underpinned by the principles of being 'fair, integrated, green and inclusive'. Island communities should therefore receive equality of access in respect of transport. It states: "A fair, low carbon transport system is needed so that island communities are put on an equal footing with people on the Scottish mainland, and in order for transport to fully enable the fulfilment of basic human rights."

The Plan also recognises the importance of transport for economic development on islands. Improving resilience is another objective within the National Islands Plan, which is to be achieved by increasing standardisation of ferries. It is highlighted that Transport Scotland are working with CMAL, CalMac and other relevant stakeholders to improve ferry resilience. Furthermore, improving connections between the Central Belt and the Highlands and Islands is noted as being crucial for economic development.

In terms of improving transport, the Plan objectives include: produce a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports to improve resilience, reliability, capacity and reduce emissions to give confidence to island communities on our ongoing commitment; and develop a new Ferries Plan that will meaningfully contribute to delivering the outcomes of wider Scottish Government strategies as set out in the National Transport Strategy and the National Islands Plan.

Also as part of the Ferries Plan, the need to review and promote integration between ferries and other modes of transport on the mainland and islands is identified, with a view to better facilitating the use of active, public or shared transport for all or part of journeys to and from islands in an affordable and accessible manner.

For the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services, specifically the need to develop and introduce a new booking, reservation and ticketing system, with Smart Ticketing capability, to replace the existing system, is highlighted.

It is set out that determining strategic transport investments from island communities will come through the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 – which will also inform the next Ferries Plan.

The National Islands Plan also describes working in partnership with local authorities and communities to improve walking and cycling infrastructure, the design of place and access to bikes, facilities, promotion and education to make walking and cycling the most popular choice for shorter everyday journeys including as part of multi-modal journeys; and finally the need to explore the potential to reduce the need to travel by using the planning system to promote places which bring people and services together.

National Transport Strategy (NTS2)

Protecting the climate and improving lives

The vision is for a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.

The National Transport Strategy (NTS2) sets out the vision for Scotland's transport system for the next 20 years.

There are four priorities to support that vision.

o reduces inequalities

o takes climate action

o helps deliver inclusive economic growth

o improves our health and wellbeing

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

"a prosperous economy and on inclusive, connected and healthy communities."

The RTS vision is, *"To deliver connectivity across the Highlands and Islands which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities."*

HITRANS activities should contribute to these high-level objectives by supporting, making the case for, and delivering the following transport objectives:

1) Reducing journey times and improving journey reliability and resilience.

2) Improving/maintaining the safety of transport and travel.

3) Tackling capacity constraints across the network.

4) Improving the quality, accessibility, affordability and integration of travel.

5) Protecting the environment and mitigating the adverse impacts of travel/transport.

6) Improve health and well being.

STPR2 and the Scottish Ferries Plan 2013-22

The second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) will inform transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years. STPR2 should help to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes for transport set out in the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) and will align with other national plans such as the National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the Climate Change Plan.

An STPR2 consultation survey ran from December 2019 to January 2020, and the final STPR2 report is expected in 2021, giving Scottish Ministers a programme of potential transport investment opportunities for the period 2022-2042.

The Scottish Ferry Services Ferries Plan (2013-2022) included recommendations on:

- Where investment should be focussed to make connections better for island and remote rural communities.

- Improving reliability and journey times.

- Seeking to maximise opportunities for employment, business, leisure and tourism.

- Promoting social inclusion.

The Scottish Ferries Plan is to be updated following the completion of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2.

Convention of the Highland and Islands

CONVENTION OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS – MONDAY 28 OCTOBER 2019

COHI noted that NTS and STPR set the future strategy and infrastructure interventions but this sits alongside ongoing work to address immediate issues.

Transport Scotland was to undertake sectoral engagement (including food and drink, aquaculture, forestry, tourism) to inform draft National Transport Strategy and identification of infrastructure interventions through the STPR2.

CoHI welcomed the equality promoting focus of the draft outcomes and recognised the need to reflect the rurality and remoteness issues for accessing services, including health services on the mainland to ensure accessibility for all irrespective of disability, income inequalities etc.

Scottish Rural Action

Rural Communities Survey on COVID-19 – Response and Recovery   Round 1 - May 2020

SRA's survey captures the views of rural residents, to help understand the response and recovery from a whole-community perspective. This Report covers the first round of the survey undertaken in May 2020. Two further rounds are planned, one in June 2020 and one in July 2020, which will help map trends as Scotland emerges from lockdown.

Connectivity issues (broadband or mobile network coverage) and inadequate data on house numbers/residents were noted to hamper community responses alongside lack of PPE and conflicting or confusing guidance coming from the UK and Scottish Governments and statutory authorities. Respondents see a lot of trauma on the horizon, including financial hardship, the impact of having to wait for essential healthcare and the ongoing impact of social isolation on peoples' mental health.

The report noted that tourism was the most contentious theme with an almost equal split between respondents whose primary concern was that tourists might bring the virus to their community and respondents whose primary concern was that the tourism sector might not survive the pandemic. A significant number of survey respondents voiced concern that trying to find a balance between these competing interests could lead to conflict and the erosion of community solidarity. Some respondents felt this was an opportunity to shift the sector (or attitudes towards the sector) by promoting a more socially and environmentally conscious model of tourism catering for staycations and slow travel.

Those who normally rely on school buses to get to shops. For them the withdrawal of school buses has been a devastating blow

Public transport services, especially ferry companies, were raised in a number of responses, with several respondents praising ferry companies while others noting ongoing issues:

Better response by ferry connection...limiting travel sooner; not combining 3 islands each day. Not shortening time available on mainland so significantly - which has caused real life problems for those who HAVE to travel for medical reasons and in terms of the haulier moving goods / livestock off / on the island. It hasn't been thought through.

Island communities faced particular problems with accessing health care on the mainland and some respondents suggested this might be alleviated through virtual GP consultations. They also experienced local price increases on goods due to reduced crossings and expressed difficulties in working from home due to poor or intermittent broadband infrastructure.

A strong theme was the perception of less traffic on the roads, more cycling, 'peace and quiet' and a lot less pollution. Many respondents drew a link between a cleaner, quieter environment and the reduction in tourists and second home owners visiting their area.

We have major issues in our town with speeding and limited space for cyclists and pedestrians, during the lock down this has greatly improved and many of us have had the confidence to let our children cycle through town and build their cycle confidence.

Lastly, several respondents described how home working and home study had become more viable as increasing numbers of people were motivated to learn how to use Zoom and other communication applications. A small number of respondents noted that the technological revolution was making everything from virtual medical appointments to public meetings more accessible.

It's booted some foosty organisations into the 21st century in terms of communications. It's booted most people too!

Comhairle Economic Recovery Plan

REIMAGINE AND REFORM: POST COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The plan sets out to support a "Community Wealth Recovery" that builds on the concepts of localism, community capacity and resilience and that positively prioritises local supply chains and local procurement. Including:

Identify opportunities to decentralise the local public sector to create new opportunities in communities across the Outer Hebrides

Work with, and make a case to Scottish Government and its agencies, for a greater level of public sector decentralisation to fragile island communities; for example, CalMac, Bord na Gàidhlig, MG Alba and related cultural organisations.

Identify opportunities through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 for the establishment of Local Place Plans – identify and work with a community wishing to test and pilot such an approach.

Support a "Green Recovery" that maximises the Outer Hebrides unrivalled renewable resources; that aspires to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2035 and that ensures a robust set of climate change mitigations and adaptations.

Support the delivery of green hydrogen production at the Outer Hebrides Energy Hub for on island use (heat and transport).

Develop a route-map for the full decarbonisation of the Outer Hebrides transport system.

Support an enhanced programme of active travel.

Ensure early identification of "at risk" infrastructure such as roads, piers and buildings.

Support a "Digital Recovery" that ensures high speed digital infrastructure to every domestic property and every business premises by 2022 and uses that infrastructure to stimulate new business opportunity.

Make an investment case to the UK and Scottish Governments for the delivery of gigabyte fibre out with and beyond the Reaching 100 project

Explore opportunities to market and package the Outer Hebrides to "digital nomads" and other potential business relocations.

Corporate Strategy 2017-2021

A Comhairle with Ambition for the Outer Hebrides

The Comhairle's Corporate Strategy 2017-21 four main strategic priorities are:

- Economy and Jobs

- Communities and Housing

- Education, Skills and Training

- Quality of Life, Wellbeing and Health

The Strategy is being refreshed (2020-2022) in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Post-Brexit and through community engagement, participation and empowerment, there may be greater autonomy and scope for the Comhairle and partners to address our economic priorities, with increased powers and resources, and pursue necessary improvements in transport, infrastructural and digital connectivity to mitigate the adverse impacts on the economy and service delivery of interruptions to domestic and commercial travel to and from these islands; development of existing industries and investment in growth sectors; and expansion of training and employment opportunities, all of which help to retain an economically active working population.

Strategic Priorities, include:

- Ensure that air and ferry services provide appropriate capacity to facilitate economic growth.

- Lobby for "Fair fares" that help equalise costs for island businesses.

Plus:

- Achieve 100% high-speed broadband coverage throughout the Outer Hebrides.

- Achieve significant improvement in mobile connectivity throughout the islands.

- Roll-out of free Wi-Fi in the islands' main population centres.

- Increase significantly the presence online of local businesses.

- Develop sustainable economic opportunities from our natural, cultural and historic resources.

Western Isles LOIP

The Outer Hebrides is a special place. The geography, culture, history, environment are all elements that contribute so much to the quality of life that communities enjoy as evidenced in many studies which identify the Islands as one of the best places to live in Scotland and the UK.

The Outer Hebrides does, however, face significant challenges. The economy is fragile, and we need to attract and retain our working population to grow our economy, increase our population and provide the services they need to all of our people, including our older people. Set against a background of financial restraint and reducing resources, the challenges we face are growing; yet our people continue to be innovative, resilient and determined to provide the best quality of life possible for their communities. The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) is committed to working together in partnership with our communities to create transformational change and achieve a sustainable population.

The priorities for the OHCPP over the next 10-20 years include:

Our islands are connected with high quality, affordable and reliable broadband, mobile networks and transport connections.

Communities will have access to a range of innovative transport solutions which reduce isolation and increase access to services.

Outer Hebrides Anti-Poverty Strategy 2019-2024

INCORPORATING THE LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT 2019

Major national health reviews conducted over the last 30 years have all concluded that the greatest positive impact on health and health inequalities comes from policies which address the wider determinants of health. These determinants include education, income, employment, transport, the environment and housing.

In terms of childcare, there has historically been limited provision in the more peripheral areas, with accessibility, affordability and transport being major challenges. Transport is critical to improving access to employment, education and services and can also be a significant factor contributing to higher transport costs.

The provision of quality childcare services in island rural areas requires high levels of support, there are issues of availability and affordability of transport, and where there is reliance on public transport, issues of access (timetabling) to fit in with provision which is often centralised, causing barriers to employment, education or training.

The LOIP refers to a number of anti-poverty efforts:

The Outer Hebrides is an area of innovation and investment which secures a sustainable and vibrant job market with well-paid opportunities; support the expansion of access to childcare to enable parents to access employment, training and education; communities will have access to a range of innovative transport solutions which reduce isolation and increase access to services.

Current Actions to Mitigate Poverty in the Outer Hebrides to April 2019: Provide free transport to and from nursery for vulnerable families / Early Years Service / Existing Resources / Cost of living Appropriate service provided to all referred families / Parents of pre-school children

Proposed Long-Term Actions to Mitigate Child Poverty in the Outer Hebrides: Make changes to school transport structures and school closing times to maximise participation in after school events reducing effects of rurality / ES&CS Resources / Costs to be confirmed / Cost of Living – availability and affordability of transport / Increase in FSM eligible children from rural areas accessing clubs / August 2021 Eligible low income families living in rural areas of the Western Isles

Transport links and other digital methods of attending appointments / NHS WI Digital Healthcare / Existing Resources / Cost of Living No of journeys avoided / August 2020 Parents

CES Next steps in Community Energy Report:

Mobilising the demand side: building stronger communities

and a just transition to a low carbon energy system in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic

Salient points from the Community Energy Scotland report:

Reset hyper-mobility - very significant changes have occurred to transport patterns worldwide during the Coronavirus pandemic, with direct impacts on CO2 emissions and air quality. We could try to 'reset' our hyper-mobile lives by building on the renewed significance of local community life.

Despite the (literally) clear benefits in air quality visible in cities across the world, as well as the demonstrable reduction in carbon emissions, there is a significant risk that car ownership and use will increase relative to pre-pandemic conditions once lockdown is eased, due to fears over contracting the virus when in close quarters with other commuters on public transport.

There has been broad cross-party support at Westminster and Holyrood for policies to support the adoption of electric vehicles. This has resulted in a number of support measures from both Governments, in the form of loans and grants for vehicles and home/business chargepoints, and support for public charging facilities.
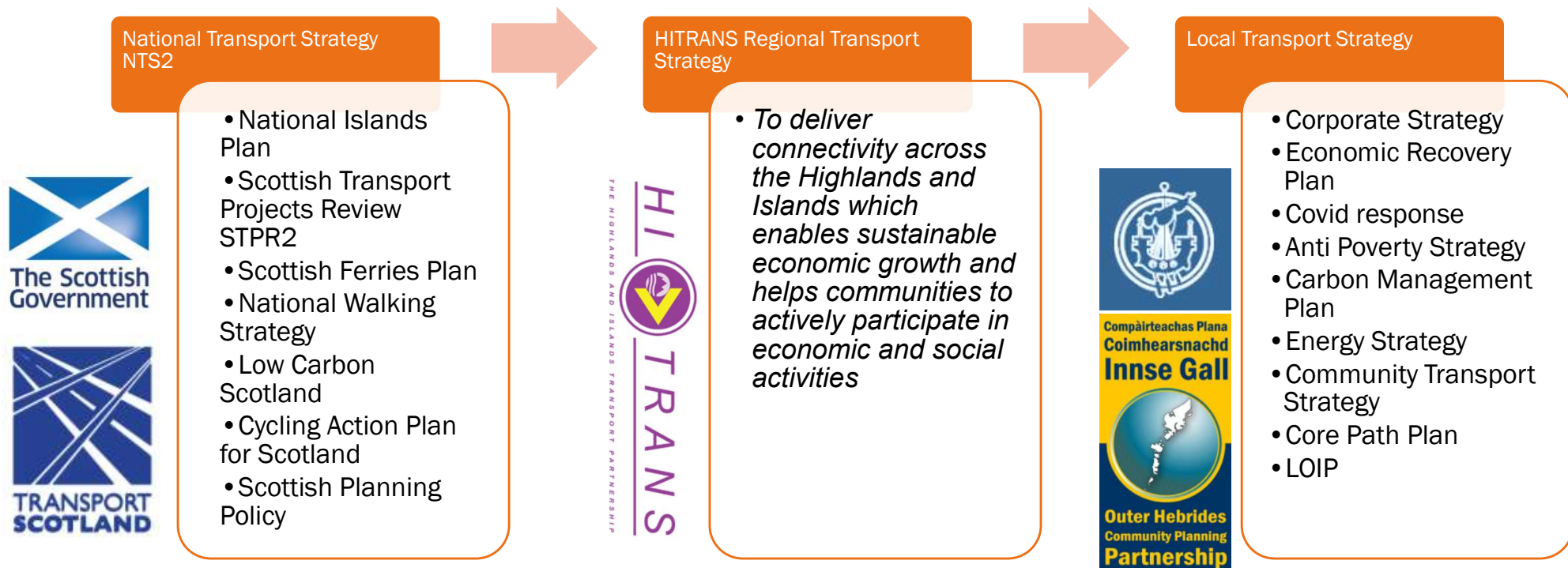
Policies to support (or indeed enforce) electrification of public transport have been less notable to date. There is also a real risk that declining passenger numbers may push local operators (who tend to service the more rural routes) out of business; this will further reduce local resilience and mobility, and will reduce opportunities for the unemployed in rural areas to find work outwith their immediate vicinity.

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Local community groups have an important role to play in the development of local active travel plans. Active travel measures to support cycling and walking have also been supported by the Scottish and UK governments, although usage is far lower than in most other European countries.

A recent study has identified that the most significant opportunities for e-bikes are in rural and suburban settings, as there are generally other existing low-carbon transport options within city centres. This study recommends defining e-bikes as a strategically important mode of transport within key policy initiatives. Growth in usage has already been substantial elsewhere; in the Netherlands, the majority of adult bikes sold are now e-bikes. Active travel in rural areas has always been difficult to encourage given the greater distances involved, but e-bikes have the potential to significantly change mindsets, providing they are integrated with safer route measures.

Towards equitable transport policy context

National Transport Strategy NTS2

- National Islands Plan
- Scottish Transport Projects Review STPR2
- Scottish Ferries Plan
- National Walking Strategy
- Low Carbon Scotland
- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland
- Scottish Planning Policy

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

- *To deliver connectivity across the Highlands and Islands which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities*

Local Transport Strategy

- Corporate Strategy
- Economic Recovery Plan
- Covid response
- Anti Poverty Strategy
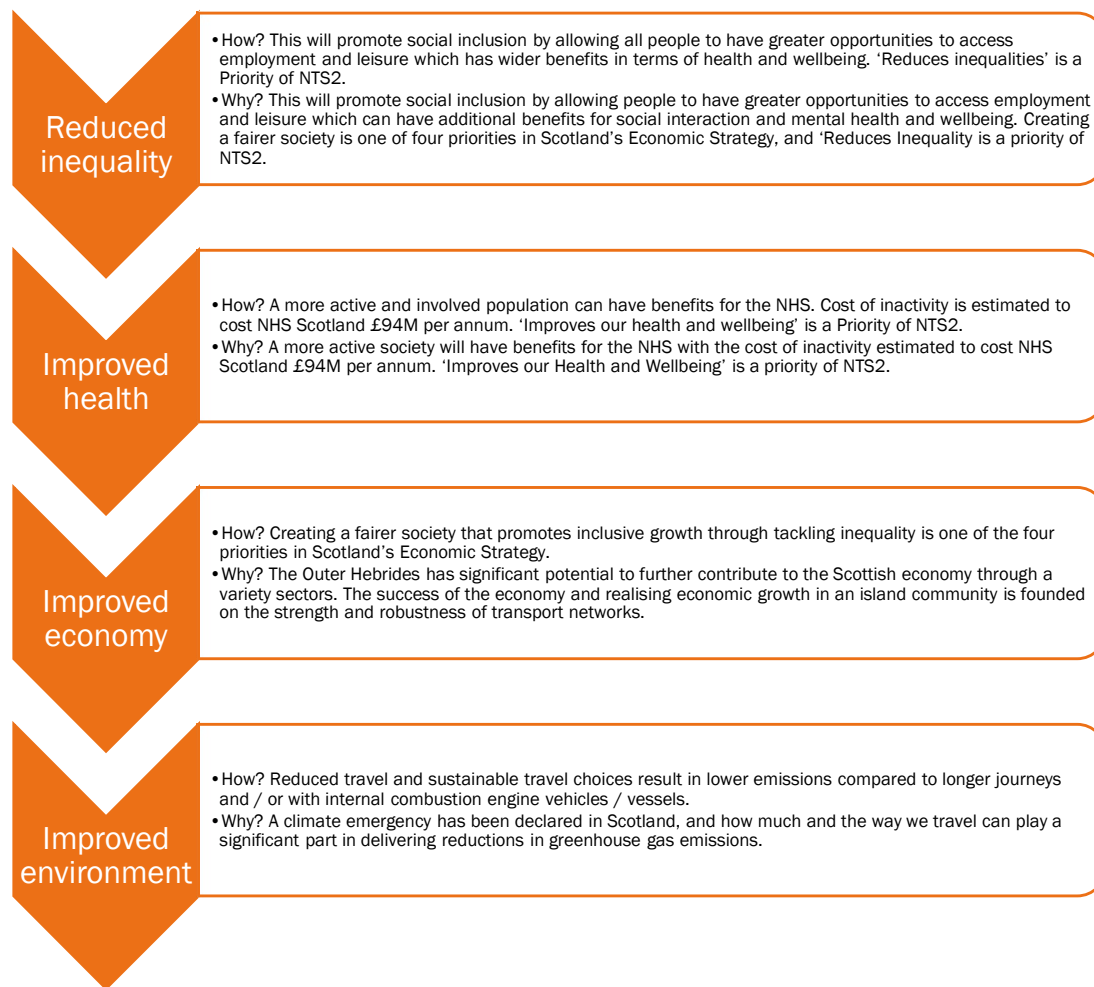- Carbon Management Plan
- Energy Strategy
- Community Transport Strategy
- Core Path Plan
- LOIP

Towards equitable transport

One of the key outcomes of the policy review underpinning this LTS is continuous progress towards equality of access in respect of transport.

The requirement for a national shift to equitable and sustainable transport is a key driver. Here we outline how a shift to equitable transport can support the economy, reduce isolation, improve health, improve the environment, and why these improvements will benefit the Outer Hebrides and Scotland as a whole.

Reduced inequality

- How? This will promote social inclusion by allowing all people to have greater opportunities to access employment and leisure which has wider benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. 'Reduces inequalities' is a Priority of NTS2.
- Why? This will promote social inclusion by allowing people to have greater opportunities to access employment and leisure which can have additional benefits for social interaction and mental health and wellbeing. Creating a fairer society is one of four priorities in Scotland's Economic Strategy, and 'Reduces Inequality is a priority of NTS2.

Improved health

- How? A more active and involved population can have benefits for the NHS. Cost of inactivity is estimated to cost NHS Scotland £94M per annum. 'Improves our health and wellbeing' is a Priority of NTS2.
- Why? A more active society will have benefits for the NHS with the cost of inactivity estimated to cost NHS Scotland £94M per annum. 'Improves our Health and Wellbeing' is a priority of NTS2.

Improved economy

- How? Creating a fairer society that promotes inclusive growth through tackling inequality is one of the four priorities in Scotland's Economic Strategy.
- Why? The Outer Hebrides has significant potential to further contribute to the Scottish economy through a variety sectors. The success of the economy and realising economic growth in an island community is founded on the strength and robustness of transport networks.

Improved environment

- How? Reduced travel and sustainable travel choices result in lower emissions compared to longer journeys and / or with internal combustion engine vehicles / vessels.
- Why? A climate emergency has been declared in Scotland, and how much and the way we travel can play a significant part in delivering reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Outer Hebrides

The 'Long Island'

The archipelago is often referred to as the 'long island' as it stretches from north to south over 100 miles, the equivalent of the journey from Inverness to approaching Glasgow.

The archipelago comprises five major islands – Lewis and Harris, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Barra – together these account for more than 26,000 of the around 27,500 inhabitants. The area features outstanding natural resources with an unspoilt environment, quality of life, and a unique community in terms of culture and heritage.

Whilst Stornoway is the main settlement within the Outer Hebrides, it is a significant distance away from many of the communities in the south area of the archipelago; as such many communities have closer connections to locations on the Scottish mainland, such as Oban.

The Outer Hebrides is an economically fragile area relatively reliant on primary industries (including crofting, agriculture, fishing and aquaculture) as well as Harris Tweed weaving, tourism, construction and the public sector.

The population and households

Total population 26,180
(2018 estimate)
(27,684 at 2011 Census)

10% of
**population aged
75 years or older**
(Scotland 7.7%)
21% 65 & older
(17% Scotland)

Total
households
12,576

Percentage of
economically
inactive people
aged 16 to 74
who are **long-
term sick or
disabled** 13%
(17% Scotland)

Gross weekly pay (All
full time workers, £)

Outer Hebrides
476.70

Scotland 562.70

Travel to work 2018

Walk
15%

Car
74%

Bicycle
1%

Bus
6%

In 2018 the population of the Outer Hebrides was estimated at 26,180, a reduction from 2011 with reduction forecast to continue.

This, along with an ageing population has major implications for Health and Social Care expenditure as well as social and economic consequences, and associated access and transport requirements.

In 2016 the National Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings showed that full time average earnings in the Outer Hebrides at £26,240 were 20.2% below the Scotland average of £32,880 and 23.7% below the UK average of £34,410. Three in five (62%) of households were assessed as being in fuel poverty and 26% in extreme fuel poverty with 75% of pensioner households in fuel poverty and 40% in extreme fuel poverty.

Population and demographics

Affordable, resilient, efficient transport is needed within and between the islands and the mainland to ensure the ongoing sustainability of our communities and to capitalise upon our islands' opportunities to prosper.

The Outer Hebrides has the lowest population density of any local authority area in Scotland - 9 people per sq. km which is lower than that for the Highlands and Islands (12 people per sq. km) and considerably lower than the Scottish average (70 people per sq. km).

Twenty-eight per cent of the total population, close to 7,500 people, live in and around the town of Stornoway, with the remaining population scattered over 280 settlements across 11 inhabited islands.

By 2028, 31 per cent of island residents are forecast to be aged 65 and older, compared with a Scottish average of just 23 per cent.

In consultations communities have reported that getting to the mainland isn't the big issue for them, they want to be able to get around their own local community, get to the youth club or the swimming pool in Stornoway.

That said, the young population is the future of the islands; and young islanders particularly have said that part of the attraction of living and remaining in the islands is connected to their ability to get off and on the islands to the Scottish Mainalnd with ease – hence connectivity is vital to community health and wellbeing for these young folk, and therefore linked directly to skills and talent attraction and retention.

Population change

Population reduction has been severe in outlying areas and islands and is projected to continue, with a resulting demographic imbalance anticipated.

Older, dispersed population brings particular transport needs in terms of delivery of public services, such as health, education and social care, as well as transport requirements to support people living and remaining independently in their homes and communities.

ISLAND	DESCRIPTION	POPULATION 2001	POPULATION 2011	% CHANGE 01-11	% CHANGE 11-18*
Lewis and Harris	Scheduled ferry and air services to the mainland	19,918	21,031	+6% ⬆	-3% ⬇
North Uist	Scheduled ferry and air services to the mainland	1,271	1,254	-1% ⬇	-4% ⬇
Benbecula	Scheduled ferry and air services to the mainland	1,219	1,303	+7% ⬆	-1% ⬇
South Uist	Scheduled ferry and air services to the mainland	1,818	1,754	-4% ⬇	-7% ⬇
Barra	Scheduled ferry and air services to the mainland	1,078	1,174	+9% ⬆	-1% ⬇
Scalpay	Connected by bridge to Harris	322	291	-10% ⬇	-2% ⬇
Great Bernera	Connected by bridge to Lewis	233	252	+8% ⬆	-3% ⬇
Grimsay North	Connected by causeway to Benbecula and South Uist	201	169	-16% ⬇	-
Eriskay (Causeway)	Connected by causeway to South Uist	133	143	+8% ⬆	-15% ⬇
Berneray (Causeway)	Connected by causeway to North Uist	136	138	+1% ⬆	-
Vatersay	Connected by causeway to Barra	94	90	-4% ⬇	-3% ⬇
Baleshare (North Uist)	Connected by causeway to North Uist	49	58	+18% ⬆	-
Grimsay South	Connected by causeway to Benbecula and South Uist	19	20	+5% ⬆	-
Flodaigh (Benbecula)	Connected by causeway to Benbecula	11	7	-36% ⬇	-

*Small Area Population Estimates have been considered for 2018 compared to the 2011 data. The 2011 Data Zones do not always fit exactly into the boundaries of other geographical areas, such as island boundaries, they are allocated on a best-fit basis. Where relevant and necessary, annual registration data from General Practitioner surgeries have been used to disaggregate data.

Poverty and Prosperity

Poverty and deprivation are dispersed throughout the area, and are often hidden.

Considering the indictors of transport poverty, this places a significant share of households across the islands in some form of transport poverty. Young people are particularly vulnerable to transport poverty. Unlike mainland areas, island residents also have to figure the cost of ferry and / or air travel into their budgeting. Affordable and consistent passenger and vehicle fares across air and ferry networks are therefore key.

The three indicators of transport poverty relate across the area:

- Low income (where the costs of running a car(s) place a significant strain on household budgets) – high proportion of relative poverty. A household may need to run multiple cars from a rural area to enable multiple household members to access employment.

- Significant proportion of residents live more than a mile from their nearest bus (or railway station) – which is the case for a high proportion of residents outside of the main settlements.

- Where it takes over an hour to access essential goods and services by walking, cycling or public transport – from the Scottish Household Survey, Western Isles respondents are travelling distances way in excess of the Scottish Average.

Despite high car ownership, still 23 per cent of households in the Outer Hebrides do not have a car available at home, and when considering those living in social housing this figure rises to as high as 44 per cent of households that do not have a car available. A higher proportion of these households may be located within more urban areas, but the data suggest a holistic and community-based approach is required to support inclusion.

Consequently, and as captured within the Anti Poverty Strategy, action is required to support communities to have access to a range of innovative transport solutions which reduce isolation and increase access to services. And in turn, to capitalise on the area's innovation and investment, to secure a sustainable and vibrant job market with well-paid opportunities available to all.

It is vital to be able to travel from the islands and to the main centres of business – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness and Aberdeen – for a days' business. The advancement through the Covid-19 period in the use of remote technology for work reinforces established expertise in distance learning and work opportunities, which can pave the way for growth into the future. This can mean that good job prospects for many more people regardless of where they are located.

Economy and employment

What makes a community is work and job opportunities. Transport priorities therefore in being community-focussed need to be linked to economic and social regeneration.

Food and drink is a key local sector which requires reliable access to markets to enable local producers, particularly in the shellfish and aquaculture sectors, to prosper and grow.

Tourism has increased significantly in recent years, and is set to continue, including with the popularity of staycations

The nature of the economic area is unique, with multiple points of entry and essentially multiple sub-economies. Each of these sub-economies have an absolute dependence and reliance on the ferry services particularly, the potential for economic growth has an extricable link to ferry connectivity.

Compared with the Highlands and Islands and Scotland, the Outer Hebrides has a higher share of employment by industry in agriculture, forestry and fishing and public administration and defence. Employment in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is particularly important to the Outer Hebrides, with 28.1% of the area's workforce employed in the sector, more than double that of the Highlands and Islands (11.7%) and more than eight times the figure for Scotland (3.2%).

Other key industries in terms of employment in the Outer Hebrides are Health, Public Administration, then followed by Education, Accommodation and Food Services, Retail and then Construction.

The balance between full time and part time working in Outer Hebrides is different to the regional and national average, with Eilean Siar having the highest level of part time working of all local authority areas in the region (32%), and significantly higher than the national average (26%).

The fishing sector is key within the local economy. And in the absence of other major industry, tourism offers great growth potential.

Towards a sustainable future

Using natural assets.

Unleashing the potential of renewable energy resources offers the islands the prospect of transformational economic benefit.

Climate change is leading to more extreme weather patterns. The transport system needs to be resilient to disruption and also lead the way in decarbonisation if net zero targets are going to be realised.

Local transport infrastructure will also need to adapt to projected climate change impacts and severe weather patterns which could especially affect low lying islands and infrastructure. Low lying roads / causeways in Uist and Barra in particular are flood vulnerable.

We have substantial onshore wind power resources with planning permission for turbines which could generate 400 megawatts of power- enough to supply the Outer Hebrides 20 times over and export clean energy to Scotland and the UK.

Proposed and potential developments in respect of onshore and offshore wind, and, in the longer term, floating offshore wind, will need to be underpinned by a strong transport infrastructure. The new interest in offshore renewables rests on the ability to move associated services and goods.

We have hydrogen expertise – the Comhairle has been active in Hydrogen since 2010 with electrolyser and wider energy strategies. Hydrogen has been used to power a refuse collection vehicle.

Comhairle has a fleet of BMW X3 (with range extenders) which have worked well to overcome concerns of range anxiety amongst staff.

Health

Rural patients experience of health care differs from that of urban patients in that they often have to travel long distances to receive care.

Isolation is raised by members of the population of all ages, and promoting and maintaining the independence of individuals is of critical importance in the provision of health and care services.

The provision of patient transportation is however highly complex with many inter-dependencies. At its most fundamental level, it is about the need for a comfortable, timely and seamless journey where patients receive the support that they need. This should be the objective no matter where patients have to travel – either as in or out patients to and from appointments at a hospital or clinic, or to a case assessment or case conference. Ensuring that this objective is met universally and consistently can be challenging.

Current measures of deprivation fail to capture significant levels of scattered deprivation, amongst the holiday homes and affluent retirees. Although the pattern of diseases is similar in urban and rural areas, differences do exist such as: higher suicide rates; higher incidences of alcohol related disease; higher numbers of accidents: on roads, through climbing, farming, diving and fishing; palliative care workload is proportionally higher; and there is seasonal fluctuation in population.

Outwith the main population centres, lifeline transport infrastructure is often a single route that connects a community with key destinations. These are the routes that often need to be accessed for health.

COVID-19 is and will continue to have an impact on the way we travel and our transport needs, for health and all other purposes. So, (possibly) there may in the short to medium term be less travel to the mainland, and greater scope for attending appointments from home or attending a healthcare hub, where previously patients had to travel to mainland.

Summary

Travel and communication are essential to our lives. They are essential to help us access jobs, customers, education, shops, local facilities and leisure opportunities. The transport networks for the Outer Hebrides need to:

Support the **economy** by cutting journey times, minimising journey unreliability and smoothing supply chains to minimise business costs, improving access to markets, and supporting tourism

Support **communities** by being safe to use, promoting healthy lifestyles, and helping everyone to access jobs and opportunities

Reduce any **harmful impacts on the environment** by minimising carbon emissions

Innovate in emerging technologies and practices both in transport specifically and to support means of reducing the need to travel or travel as often or as far

The Transport Baseline

This strategy looks to the future, providing resolution for current transport challenges and maximising economic, social and community opportunities.

The Comhairle already undertakes a range of "business as usual" activities sustaining the area's current transport network and connections.

This basis and these activities will continue to be undertaken throughout the lifetime of this strategy and are presented here as the starting platform from which our transport strategy, through the Delivery Plan, will build.

The following section however sets out some of the challenges facing these "business as usual" activities; some of these challenges being long established and others emerging as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Transport and travel

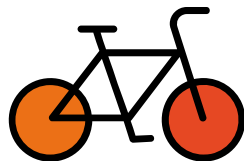Percentage of households no car or van available (2018) 23% (30.5% Scotland)

Percentage of roads needing repair (2018) 43% (36% Scotland)

Number of people killed and seriously injured on roads: 4 (2018), (2017: 3, 2016: 5)

Plug-in cars and light goods vehicles (2020) 49

bicycles available for private use by households (2018) 27%

Used local bus services in the last month (2018) 17%

Traffic on Subsidised ferry services (2018)
Passengers 687,500
Cars 247,300
Commercial vehicles and buses 24,700

Sea and air transport is crucial with a variety of ferry and air services operating between the islands and mainland Scotland and joining the islands to each other.

The ability to get around is vital to vibrant and economically active communities.

With good connections, the more remote areas in the Outer Hebrides can also benefit both through new business opportunities and through home working by established island businesses as well as public sector reform delivering work opportunities at community hubs. This would help to reverse the drift of population towards the main island towns, and the drift of young people off the islands altogether.

The extensive transport assets that support communities across the area require significant ongoing expenditure to deliver, maintain, sustain and develop services to meet needs, and to prevent decline and guard against problems associated with climate change.

The Spinal Route

Business, public services, and the community and visitors are heavily reliant on the road network. Large vehicles, particularly associated with aquaculture frequently utilise single track rural roads of unsuitable construction.

The Comhairle is responsible for 1195km of public roads, with maintenance costs significantly higher than equivalent mainland areas.

The Spinal Route, the main network from the north to south of the island chain is of variable quality, with 90km remaining as single track sections with unsuitable foundations and alignment. Together with its own high prioritisation for investment, this categorisation has previously enabled the Comhairle to secure external EU-level funding for several phases of the upgrading of the road from poorly-founded single track carriageway with passing places, to double-track carriageway designed and constructed to modern standards. The consequential reduction in journey times, improvements to road safety, and the impact on environmental considerations have all contributed to positive outcomes in terms of the economic development of the islands.

Between 1942 and 2001, a number of bridges and causeways were constructed across the archipelago to enhance accessibility between islands. Many of these infrastructure were created with Scottish and European funding, but now the Comhairle don't have the funding in order to adequately maintain them.

Many of the rural roads and causeways and bridges are the only means of access for communities.

Due to a reducing level of internal and external capital funding, the upgrading programme has stalled. It is a long-standing aspiration of the Comhairle to secure additional investment in the Western Isles Spinal Route to enable upgrade of all the spinal route network to double track.

Roads, causeways and bridges

1,191km Roads:

340km A Roads

177km B Roads

189km C Roads

486km Unclassified Roads

The Comhairle has no roads capital investment planned for the next 3 years, also the roads revenue budget has been reduced significantly. The road condition will inevitably deteriorate. Road conditions will be monitored, but with increased volumes of tourism and business development this is a concern. Should the Spinal Route be fittingly classified as a Trunk Road it would be eligible for priority capital funding through the national allocation across the Trunk Network that Transport Scotland is responsible for.

Bridges and fixed link causeways have also been a product of major investment in the past number of years. These structures are in need of significant capital maintenance and in the majority of cases are the single lifeline connection to a community.

In terms of climate change, there are vulnerable parts of the network, and a reliance on causeways, which will be potentially at risk from sea level rises. Of additional concern over recent years has been the effect of coastal and fluvial flooding on the road network. Storm surges have had a damaging effect on coastal defences that are putting road, and private dwellings at risk of erosion if not maintained. Increased rainfall intensity is also evident resulting in structural damage to roads and increasing the likelihood and frequency of landslides.

Car parking can be an issue at popular tourism sites, with nowhere to park cars at specific locations along the Hebridean Way. Further, there are often limited facilities for the growth in tourism, and including particularly visitors travelling with campervans.

The Comhairle participates in the Roads Asset Management Process facilitated by SCOTS and in the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee. The Roads Condition Index for the Western Isles has been maintained at a relatively steady level over the past five years albeit with a backlog maintenance figure in the order of £42m, however at current investment levels the percentage of the road network requiring maintenance is predicted to increase considerably over the next 20 years.

During Covid lockdown there has been a large reduction in traffic on the roads, rather than bigger roads, and questions can be asked around whether we need to use this experience to focus on taking more people off the roads going forward?

Road safety and traffic management

The 1988 Road Traffic Act puts a 'statutory duty' on local authorities to deliver an appropriate road safety education service and for the provision of a safe local road network.

In the islands, road safety activity is carried out in partnership with Police Scotland and other relevant partners. A Road Casualty Reduction Plan has been developed for the Highlands and Islands area and localised to be specific to the Western Isles. Work has included information campaigns for visiting drivers and cyclists to the islands, covering the specific challenges of island roads.

As Roads Authority, the Comhairle has responsibility for maintaining the public road network in a condition that allows safe movement of traffic in winter conditions, including gritting and street clearing as required. Provision of well-designed and maintained street lighting is a further element of road/public safety. The Council has a statutory responsibility for the installation, management and maintenance of streetlights (including associated signs, bollards, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings).

Continued increases in car usage has created town centre and residential parking pressures and competing demands for limited space, notably in Stornoway and Tarbert, where both settlements have struggled to adapt to these changes and balance them with the needs of pedestrians and other users. Solutions are not easily achieved as the infrastructure is not readily adaptable to the increased vehicular ownership and dependence. There are a number of off-street car parks in Stornoway and one in Tarbert. The introduction of car parking charges apply in a number of the car parks and in a small number of on-street spaces in Stornoway and has helped ensure parking availability for users of town centre facilities. Enforcement is carried out by Police Scotland through a Service Level Agreement between the Comhairle and Police Scotland which also covers a number of traffic management related activities in Stornoway.

Active Travel Network

Promotion of Active Travel opportunities can support, promote and facilitate healthier journey choices and reduce number of car journeys. We recognise that the opportunities for active travel are more limited in rural areas, particularly in remote and rural areas.

The Comhairle has produced an Active Travel Strategy in close consultation with communities. This seeks to identify active travel opportunities in local communities, with a view to accessing funding to put in place the infrastructure to support increased cycling and walking. Active travel has allowed the creation of businesses in the local supply chain to assist such as bike transportation businesses and increased offering from accommodation providers along the Hebridean Way.

Building on the momentum created by the Hebridean Way Cycling & Walking Route, a range of third sector organisations are also proactively involved in initiatives to promote cycling and walking in our communities. In addition, the NHS Western Isles 'Walk on Hebrides' initiative aims to provide Health Walks in communities across the Outer Hebrides, providing people with an opportunity to be physically active and improve their health through walking.

Active travel can be challenging in rural parts of the Outer Hebrides where many villages have no footpaths and instead have high grassed verges and deep ditches or steep embankments. A number of local groups have identified active travel routes and are seeking funding for safe, well designed paths for active travel users. Funding this can be challenging, however, with most sources of funding for active travel routes only providing 50% funding towards capital costs.

SUSTRANS has declassified the Spinal Route NCN route, but will continue to publicise the Hebridean Way route.

That said, it is as important for a child to be able to walk and cycle safely in the Western Isles as it is for a child in the Central Belt on an NCN route.

Active Travel Network

There is demand within local communities for investment in their local path infrastructure, however there is a lack of resource available within the capital or maintenance budgets to develop this, including where significant match funding is required.

Cycling and walking is popular amongst visitors, but conflict can exist between cyclists / walkers and other traffic, particularly on narrow sections of single track road, and on stretches with steep gradiants.

Road safety is a concern in terms of promoting further walking and cycling.

The Covid-19 experience has seen more and more people spending more time at home and spending more time walking and cycling in their local community.

The Core Path Plan is presently being updated.

While external funding can be sought for active travel network development, the required specifications for such developments are often incommensurate with the local and island context and existing infrastructure and needs; essentially requirements could be categorised as over-specified.

Arrangements for taking cycles on ferries is disjointed and could be better organised and communicated with intending travellers.

There is a strong case for the benefit of e-bikes in response to the local topography and weather conditions, however they are an expensive investment for an individual, and so as is commonly the case, those that might most benefit from them will often by those least likely to be able to afford that investment.

Bus and Community Transport Services

All bus services in the area are operated under subsidy by the Comhairle. Declining budgets have impacted on frequency of services and rationalisation of services has been a feature of recent years.

Services tend to provide AM and PM workers' buses, and with multiple runs through the middle of the day.

Bus usage figures have been in decline across the Western Isles, which mirrors national trends.

There is existing Community Transport provision – funded by the Comhairle – and provided by Voluntary Action Barra and Vatersay, Tagsa Uibhist and Third Sector Hebrides / Staran CIC – shopping, doctors' and post office runs etc. and social / sports team transport, all provided through a variety of means and arrangements.

The Outer Hebrides CPP has an aspiration to increase the number of Rural Community Transport Partnerships to promote and provide community-led accessible, affordable and alternative transport services.

Bus and Community Transport Services

Issues and opportunities

In areas such as the islands it is difficult to make public transport work for the many. People depend on their cars, but some people can't afford to run a single or multiple cars in a household, that may be required for access to employment as well as leisure etc.

There is a high level of subsidy, with no single commercial route, and with reducing service budgets on an ongoing basis. It is difficult to achieve savings on a very thin network without drastic reduction to services. Increasing budgetary pressure, including as costs have risen in response to regulatory demands, such as accessibility compliance, and therefore the Comhairle will inevitably be looking at cuts to services again in the future. Innovation and reform is required to sustain and enhance accessibility.

Fares are comparatively low, and yet passenger numbers remain low.

Community transport is variable across the islands and there is a gap in understanding as to whether it is best meeting needs or if individuals or areas are isolated.

Ferry Network

Sea transport is crucial – the variety of ferry services operating between the islands and the mainland are lifeline services, but NOT just lifeline services – also the means, delivered well, that will grow the economy.

Ferry service to and within the Outer Hebrides are operated by CalMac Ferries Ltd., a subsidiary of David MacBrayne Ltd., which in turn is wholly owned by the Scottish Ministers, under the terms of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) contract.

The main sea-links from the islands are Stornoway to Ullapool, Tarbert to Uig (Skye), Lochboisdale and Castlebay to Oban, and Lochboisdale to Mallaig.

Inter-island sea links operate from Eriskay to Barra and Leverburgh (Harris) to Berneray (North Uist).

The current contract (2016-2024) is half-way through at the time of writing, and work will need to commence in early course to inform the routemap for how the ferry services are to be operated following the present contract.

Ferry Network

Cost, capacity issues and timetabling are critical issues for ferry services.

There is significant and increasing lack of capacity on a number of routes during the widening peak summer period, and severe challenges are caused by the age and condition of vessels and lack of resilience across the fleet and within the network, and evidence of significant delays, disruption and cancellations. HITRANS reports that of the 32 vessels on the CalMac routes, all owned by Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL), 18 of them are more than 20 years old, with six more than 30 years old.   An ageing ferry fleet is leading to reduced service reliability and breakdown interruptions, perhaps coupled with changing weather patterns. It also contributes to vehicle capacity constraints on some routes. It is important that efforts are taken to accelerate procurement of new vessels, coupled with more flexible and responsive deployment of vessels within the network.

A journey to the mainland or between islands will often involve more than one mode of transport, which may not necessarily be integrated in terms of timetabling and ticketing, along with requirements for overnight stay(s), something that residents from other areas do not have to contend with – both the extra time away from home and the associated costs and loss of working time.

RET has delivered lower fares and resulted in a noticeable increase in passenger numbers, but it took considerable time following its introduction for local business to invest and grow. This investment however has now been realised through top-end accommodation, food and drink. However, the full potential is not realised from tourism through capacity constraints, for example on the Stornoway – Ullapool services.

For freight, while significant work was done on the Ferry Freight Fares Review between 2014 and 2016, a decision by Transport Scotland on implementation of any of the proposed options appears to have stalled. Haulage of materials into the area is challenging due to capacity constraints, and this can adversely affect projects, such as the new Castlebay Project (Hospital, Care Home and Schools), whereby the transport challenges and costs are estimated to add in excess of one-third to the project costs compared to a similar build at a remote location of the Scottish mainland.

Infrastructure constraints at Barra and Mallaig impact on reliability and present safety challenges.

Mainland ports are at significant distance to key centres, such as Inverness and Glasgow, and so onward travel and connections are vital. Bus and rail services on the mainland do not consistently integrate. Ferry timetables and frequency could allow for better integration.

The Comhairle has a long-standing policy position advocating the locating to the islands of management and administrative posts associated with transport services, not only for the economic benefit of these communities but in order to lead to better informed strategic and operational decision making.

Ferry Network

Route specific issues and constraints

Ullapool - Stornoway
- Carries almost half of all passengers to / from the isles; between 2015 and 2017 passenger carryings have increased by 19%.
- Single vessel operating 2 runs plus a freight run daily and so little resilience if any delay or breakdown.
- Severe capacity constraints throughout summer, and difficulty booking space for a vehicle

Uig – Lochmaddy / Lochmaddy - Tarbert
- Significant timetabling and capacity issues on these two routes.
- Evidence of unmet demand on both routes, and consequent adverse impact on island economies.
- Delays in delivery of the replacement vessel for the MV Hebrides.

Sound of Harris
- Challenges associated with water depth on route, which places constraints on service provision

Sound of Barra
- Capacity pressures on the route.

Castlebay to Oban and Mallaig to Lochboisdale
- Ageing fleet on both routes, affecting the reliability and resilience of services – vessels launched in 1995 and 1989.

Piers and Harbours

OVERVIEW

The Comhairle is responsible for 32 harbours throughout the islands, including five ferry ports.

Some cruise activity, but mainly into the larger Stornoway harbour, which is operated by a Harbour Trust – Stornoway Port Authority (SPA).

SPA has a proposed development for a Deep Water Port that will enable larger cruise vessels to come into Stornoway, and will upscale other marine capacity around the port, including that associated with renewables.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Similarly to the roads, the investment in all piers has reduced over the years, which means that conditions of piers will also deteriorate over time.

Opportunity to develop bespoke cruise opportunity, particularly smaller 'explorer' style cruises which can access smaller harbours, and could support distributing the benefit of cruise across the island chain.

Air travel

The majority of scheduled passenger services operate commercially; Loganair is the main operator of routes connecting the Western Isles with Scottish hubs.

In addition there are routes provided via Public Service Obligations (PSOs), whereby the minimum timetables and maximum fares are set through a tendering process with subsidy provided. This encompasses intra-local authority flights Western Isles and Transport Scotland-sponsored routes connecting Barra with Glasgow.

Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL) (a wholly-owned Scottish Government Subsidiary) operate and manage 11 airports including at Barra, Benbecula, and Stornoway.

- There are scheduled air services between Stornoway and Glasgow, Inverness and Benbecula, and between Benbecula and Glasgow, and Barra and Glasgow. Flights to / from Barra land on the famous wide shallow bay of Traigh Mhòr, and consequently the timetable is variable to coincide with tide times. The flights to / from Barra operate using a Transport Scotland PSO, and between Benbecula and Stornoway using a Comhairle PSO, with all other elements being operated commercially. The timetables and frequency of air services vary between winter and summer.

- **Stornoway** has frequent links with Glasgow (23 return flights per week during the summer and 19 in the winter); this is followed by 14 flights per week year round to Inverness, and eights flights in the summer and four in the winter to Edinburgh.

- For **Benbecula** there are five flights per week year round to Glasgow and three flights per week year round to Inverness; plus operated under PSO to the Comhairle a Monday and Friday single return flight to Stornoway and morning and afternoon return flights on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

- For **Barra** there are two return flights per day; for Barra during the winter the scheduled flights are not always operated; however, there is a 'bank' of unused flights that the community can then use as they see fit (e.g. for attendance at funerals, functions, etc).

- Flights are expensive, and the issue of cost is often brought up in consultation with the community.

- The Air Discount Scheme (ADS) is an initiative by the Scottish Government (under the General Block Exemption Regulation of the European Union) that has a principal objective of making air travel more affordable for remote communities in the Highlands and Islands. It is available to those who have permanent (or main) residency in Colonsay, Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles, Islay, Jura, Caithness and parts of Sutherland. This has been a significant success, offering discounts of up to 50%.

- The discount is not available on PSO routes and for those travelling on business or on NHS-funded health trips are not eligible.

Air travel

The nature of the air services, other than the PSO routes, operated commercially, with a single operator, presents concerns around the vagrancies of how commercial decisions taken can affect a lifeline service.

The operator in recent years has demonstrated their commitment to enhance services with increased capacity and replacement fleet, but concerns remain, and especially compounded by the Covid-19 impact on demand for services.

In a normal year, some capacity issues, particularly for group travel exist, for example sports teams travelling for matches.

There continues to be the question as to the requirement for the Benbecula-Stornoway PSO route and work will continue to consult with the community and partners on how connectivity can be delivered.

HIAL's proposals to centralise Air Traffic Control management services and functions to Inverness are of significant concern to island communities. ATM (Air Traffic Management) 2030 is the largest programme of its kind within UK air traffic control, seeking to bring together air traffic management of seven airports into a single location, including HIAL airports at Sumburgh, Dundee, Inverness, Wick, John O'Groats, Kirkwall, Stornoway and Benbecula. The Comhairle has expressed concerns around the potential robustness of the Islands Community Impact Assessment proposed by HIAL, and resilience of the Digital Tower Technology, and will continue lobbying Scottish Government and HIAL to retain an Air Traffic Control presence in Stornoway and Benbecula on the basis of safety, economic and cost/benefit impacts. A small number of well-paid jobs such as these lost from the islands is the equivalent of losing a large factory from an urban area.

Low Carbon is likely to be a feature in the future Highlands & Islands aviation sector, with Scottish Government and HIAL expressing commitment to the world's first zero emission aviation region through a new programme of activity to decarbonise airport operations, infrastructure and flights across the Highlands and Islands, and parallel activity around low and zero emission planes.

The Barra Traigh Mhor airstrip imposes operational difficulties due to the tidal nature of the landing strip. The Comhairle recognise the positive steps taken to improve timetables within these physical constraints by Transport Scotland through the PSO on this air route.

Alternative fuels and reducing the need to travel

Transport is a major contributor to carbon emissions, particularly the contribution of ICE cars, and there is likely to be a continued focus on low carbon transport in order to ensure Scottish Government Net Zero Caron targets are met by 2045.

There is now good coverage of EV charging infrastructure, with investment having bene supported through funding from Transport Scotland, which has seen the phased implementation of (EV) charging posts at key points across the Outer Hebrides since 2012, providing a network to enable EV travel throughout the island chain. Chargers are available at schools, council offices, town centres, ports and new housing developments.

This strategic approach has enabled the identification of some remaining key sites where there are opportunities to enhance and strengthen the network, particularly with rapid charging capability, or where particular challenges exist for which additional funding is required. Demand on the islands for EV charging points is visibly increasing and this trend is projected to continue. The Western Isles have moved from an extremely low baseline of EV usage and ownership to one where there is a noticeable increase in tourists visiting the islands utilising EVs, either by bringing their own or hiring EVs locally, and there is greater commitment within the public sector through Comhairle purchasing EVs for use by staff, and an increase in ownership of electric vehicles locally. The opportunity also may exist to use surplus, locally generated renewable electricity to fuel this growing local Electric Vehicle sector.

The Covid-19 experience, as is the case nationally, has seen an influx in people working from home, and the entrepreneurial spirit flourish. Digital connectivity supports this, and the experience is providing a solid foundation of understanding what is possible in terms of people working and doing business at or closer to home.

The islands are in a position to support national and local targets for reduction in climate emissions due to our renewable resources, and the recognition of the decarbonisation of transport as a central element to this by facilitating and promoting increased use of low carbon vehicles (hydrogen and electric) across a range of sectors, and as far as possible, using renewable sources of energy as part of this process.

Alternative fuels and reducing the need to travel

Issues

A barrier to further take up of EVs is also the facilities and resilience on the mainland when people are travelling away from home.

There are some issues with further rollout out of charging infrastructure, with some constraints around sites requiring both power and mobile connection, which rules some potential sites out either on practical or cost terms.

Despite good coverage of chargers, which users pays to use (since 2020), there continues to be modest uptake of EVs across the islands. Upfront investment in a vehicle is, like elsewhere, undoubtedly a barrier, with those households that could benefit most from the cheaper-to-run (than ICE car) EVs costs the least likely to be able to afford the upfront investment of the vehicle.

Hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) are recognised as having potential in supporting transition, recognising that there remain challenges with capital cost and refuelling infrastructure. The Comhairle has experience in production of hydrogen from renewables for the transport sector through its Outer Hebrides Local Energy Hub project. There is scope to scale up this activity beyond the current Refuse Collection Vehicle to fuel higher numbers of Comhairle vehicles, public transport vehicles and refuelling for businesses, the public and the visitor economy, should demand emerge in those segments.

Point & Sandwick Development Trust (PSDT), in collaboration with seven industry partners, have produced 'The Scottish Western Isles Ferry Transport using Hydrogen (SWIFTH2)' report, demonstrating that the cost difference between using Green Hydrogen and Marine Oil as a marine fuel is not as great as first thought. Two ferry routes were identified for further study – Stornoway to Ullapool (large ferry) and Barra to Eriskay (small ferry) – and replacing existing vessels on these routes with Hydrogen Ferries could save 22,491 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent emissions per annum and equate to taking 4,889 cars off the road each year. PSDT are currently working with partners, including the Comhairle, to progress further work on the two identified routes.

Much of the islands have good digital connectivity, yet there remains some 'not spots' where internet is poor and / or there is no mobile phone connection, which places limitation on doing working remotely and also the siting of EV charging infrastructure which requires a mobile signal.

Funding

Funding for maintaining and improving our transport network, comes through two sources:

Revenue Budget: Includes monies from Council Tax payments and grant from the Scottish Government. This is typically spent on ongoing maintenance and repair of existing infrastructure and operations and includes: roads, pedestrians and cycle facilities, street lighting, winter maintenance, road signing, flood protection, and bridge/causeway refurbishment.

Capital Budget: Includes monies from grant funding. This is typically spent on improvement works. Funding is on an individual project basis and is normally secured through funding applications to external agencies, with funding therefore not guaranteed.

The distribution of general capital to councils on the basis of road length and population does not address the additional costs faced by islands in terms of asphalt production and transportation. A severe reduction in maintenance expenditure has seen a change in emphasis from reconstruction or major resurfacing projects into minor resurfacing / surface dressing works.

Diminishing capital and revenue budgets, coupled with increased costs within the supply chain, affect the local availability of surfacing and quarry materials. This is reaching the point where the viability of obtaining locally sourced materials is at jeopardy, which will in the future further increase costs significantly.

Historically, EU funds have supported businesses, major infrastructure, facilities and transport, helped support the establishment of the University of the Highlands and Islands, and delivered wider community benefit through training and social inclusion programmes.

Funding

Prior to Brexit and Covid-19, the Comhairle was operating in a prolonged period of economic austerity and public sector funding constraints. Since Covid, Scottish Government has financially supported local authorities with business support, food supply and job retention through furlough. Unless further funds are received from central government, the pressure on Comhairle's budgets and reserves will be challenging.

The investment that the Comhairle has been able to make to transport infrastructure and services has declined over the last decade.

Revenue and capital reductions will have an increasingly adverse effect on road users due to the Comhairle's capacity to undertake surface repairs and structural remediation works. Deterioration of the existing roads infrastructure will impact on safety, journey experience and journey times for business and visitors, and business performance and productivity. It is critical that we work with Government to ensure our roads get the investment they need to make them safer, resilient, reliable and future-proofed.

Funding for active travel is challenging in this context, and most sources of external funding for active travel routes only providing 50% funding towards capital costs, and require a design specification that exceeds that which would be practical and pragmatic in our area.

The Scottish Government, and its agency Transport Scotland, provide a vital component of our grant funding. We will continue to seek funding from this source. The Scottish Government has a range of funding programmes to which we will make funding bids where appropriate. These include:

- Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP) Supporting walking, cycling and public transport initiatives to reduce dependence on the car

- ERDF funding for projects such as EV charge facilities

- Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund to facilitate the delivery of active travel and low carbon transport hubs, as well as paths.

The means of funding will evolve through Covid-19 recovery, and we will be responsive to opportunities as they present in keeping with the guiding principles of this LTS. There will be a need also to consider innovation in funding models through the LTS, such as borrowing routes and charging mechanisms.

Beyond Brexit, the loss of EU Structural and Rural Development funds is of great concern to local authorities and the Comhairle and partners, in consultation with Scottish Government, will lobby for early clarity as to the shape of a future regional policy and funding. If it is to be the Shared Prosperity Fund, it must continue to recognise particular geographic, demographic and economic challenges on islands and peripheral rural areas. In recent years, EU funding has become more restrictive and there is now an opportunity, with greater flexibility, to ensure that regional and local economic development, regeneration and competitiveness are at the heart of the objectives of the Fund. It is also vital "that the annual budget of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is no less, in real terms, than the EU and UK funding streams it replaces".

Local Transport Strategy Objectives

Ambition

OUR AMBITION

The *purpose* of a transport network is to allow people and goods to move around safely and efficiently whether by walking or cycling, passenger transport, lorry, van or car.

Our ambition for the transport network of the Outer Hebrides is that it allows **people** and **goods** to get where they need to be safely and efficiently in ways that improve people's health and wellbeing and don't damage the environment.
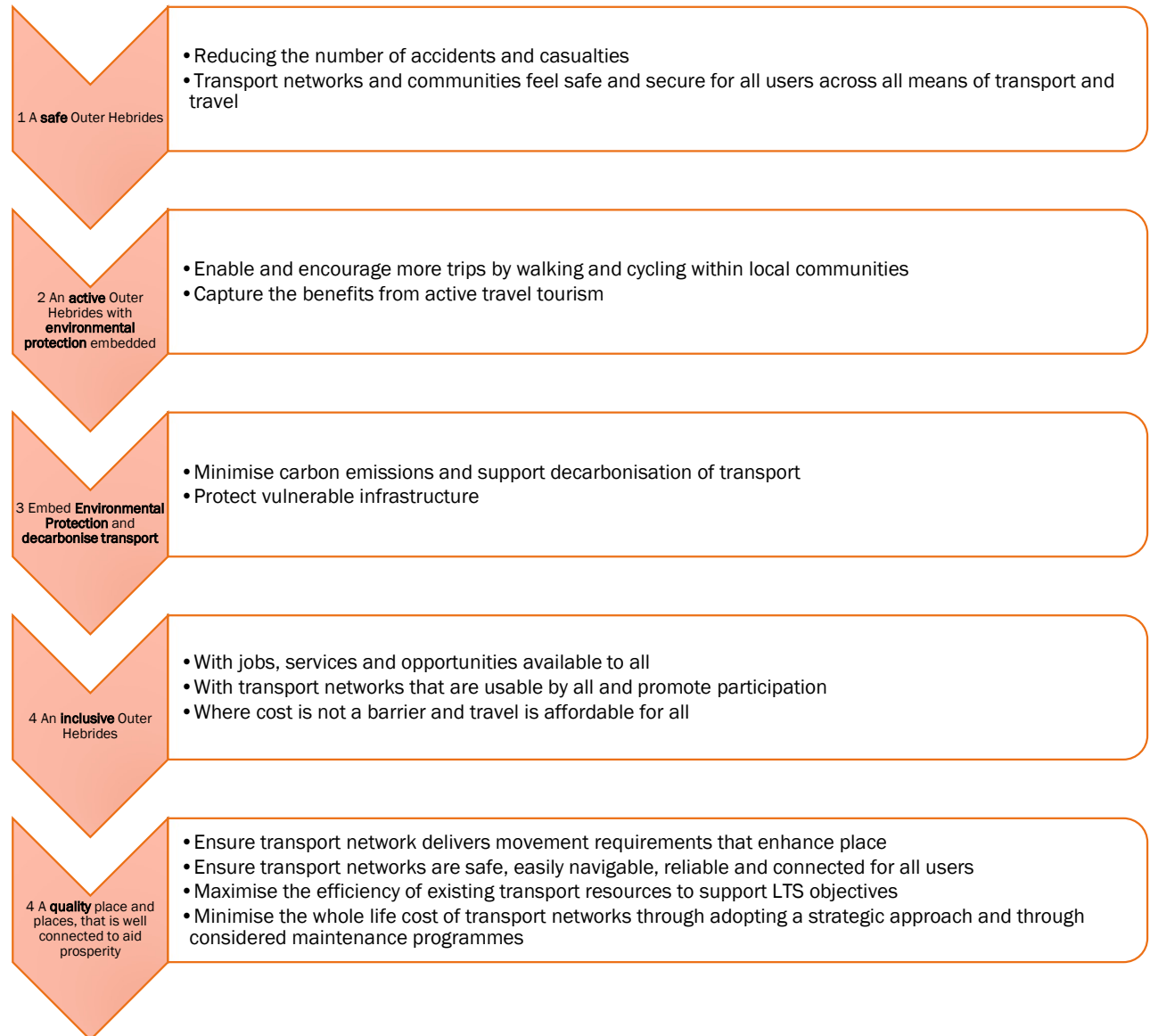
OUR OBJECTIVES AND HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THEM

Our objectives to achieve this ambition bring together what we know from past work, and support local, regional and national objectives and targets.

Objectives

Transport Planning Objectives

1. Safe
2. Active
3. Environmental Protection & Decarbonising Transport
4. Inclusive
5. Quality

1 A safe Outer Hebrides
- Reducing the number of accidents and casualties
- Transport networks and communities feel safe and secure for all users across all means of transport and travel

2 An active Outer Hebrides with environmental protection embedded
- Enable and encourage more trips by walking and cycling within local communities
- Capture the benefits from active travel tourism

3 Embed Environmental Protection and decarbonise transport
- Minimise carbon emissions and support decarbonisation of transport
- Protect vulnerable infrastructure

4 An inclusive Outer Hebrides
- With jobs, services and opportunities available to all
- With transport networks that are usable by all and promote participation
- Where cost is not a barrier and travel is affordable for all

4 A quality place and places, that is well connected to aid prosperity
- Ensure transport network delivers movement requirements that enhance place
- Ensure transport networks are safe, easily navigable, reliable and connected for all users
- Maximise the efficiency of existing transport resources to support LTS objectives
- Minimise the whole life cost of transport networks through adopting a strategic approach and through considered maintenance programmes

LTS Objectives

1 A **safe** Outer Hebrides

Evidence for objective: safety is paramount for an accessible and effective transport network. Number of recorded KSI between 3 and 5 per year in recent years, and it is important to reduce this level.

Key links to policy:
NTS2
Scotland's Road Safety Framework
RTS
LOIP

2 An **active** Outer Hebrides with embedded **environmental protection**

Evidence for objective: levels of active travel for everyday journeys are lower, yet current Covid-19 experience has seen an increase in walking and cycling around local communities

Key links to policy:
NTS2
A long term vision for Active Travel in Scotland to 2030
National Walking Strategy
Cycling Action Plan for Scotland
RTS
Active Travel Strategy

3 Embed **Environmental Protection** and **decarbonise transport**

Evidence for objective: at threat infrastructure due to climate conditions; need and requirement to decarbonise transport to support reduction in carbon emissions

Key links to Policy:
NTS2
Islands Plan
SG Climate Change Plan

4 An **inclusive** Outer Hebrides

Evidence for objective:
Economic barriers to access exist for some groups in society, especially those who are unemployed or low paid. Physical barriers to access also exist, and some transport is in variable supply across the area

Key links to policy:
NTS2
Islands Plan
Scotland's Economic Strategy
Economic Recovery Plan
LOIP
RTS

4 A **quality** place and transport network to aid prosperity

Evidence for objective:
An effective transport network will help enable economic development. Having jobs within local communities is the lynch pin in sustainable communities, making them good places to live, work and visit. People should be able to easily move around and to and from their local community

Key links to policy:
NTS2
Islands Plan
LOIP
RTS

Objectives fit - *National Islands Plan*

Legend:
- ✔✔ positive impact / factor
- ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral
- ✗ slight negative impact / factor
- ✗✗ negative impact / factor

	A safe Outer Hebrides	An active Outer Hebrides	Embed Environmental Protection and decarbonise transport	An inclusive Outer Hebrides	A quality place and transport network to aid prosperity
Fair	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔
Integrated	/	✔	✔	✔✔	✔
Green	/	✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔
Inclusive	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Reduce inequalities	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Take climate action	/	✔	✔✔	✔	✔
Helps deliver inclusive economic growth	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Improve our health and wellbeing	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔

Objectives fit - *National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)*

✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	A safe Outer Hebrides	An active Outer Hebrides	Embed Environmental Protection and decarbonise transport	An inclusive Outer Hebrides	A quality place and transport network to aid prosperity
Reduce inequalities	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Take climate action	/	✔	✔✔	✔	✔
Helps deliver inclusive economic growth	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Improve our health and wellbeing	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔

Objectives fit – *HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy*

✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	A safe Outer Hebrides	An active Outer Hebrides	Embed Environmental Protection and decarbonise transport	An inclusive Outer Hebrides	A quality place and transport network to aid prosperity
Reducing journey times and improving journey reliability and resilience	✔	✔	/	✔	✔✔
Improving/maintaining the safety of transport and travel	✔✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Tackling capacity constraints across the network	/	/	/	✔✔	✔✔
Improving the quality, accessibility, affordability and integration of travel	/	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔
Protecting the environment and mitigating the adverse impacts of travel/transport	✔	✔	✔✔	/	✔
Improve health and well being	✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔

LTS long list actions & interventions

A long-list of actions and interventions were drawn up through consultation with key officials and partners and a review of relevant documents and data, with actions identified to address the issues and opportunities identified through the development of the LTS. The actions are grouped into the following categories and are documented at Appendix A.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE – WHOLE PLACE LOCAL APPROACH	A CONNECTED OUTER HEBRIDES
ROADS AND ROUTES FOR ALL USERS	HARBOURS AND PIERS
PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	DECARBONISING TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

Appraisal and Prioritisation

The long list of LTS proposed projections and interventions have been appraised. The Appraisal Summary Table is set out in Appendix B.

Appraisal has been undertaken qualitatively against the LTS Transport Planning Objectives and against the STAG criteria of *Environment*, *Safety, Economy*, *Integration* and *Accessibility and Social Inclusion,* together with consideration of feasibility, affordability and public acceptability.

Each aspect has been scored on a five point scale from *positive impact / factor* through to *negative impact / factor.* A judgement has then been taken across all aspects through the appraisal as to whether each project / intervention is therefore a *high priority, medium priority* or *'slow' priority,* as follows:

- High priority: will deliver, or offers the potential to deliver, significant benefits across the Transport Planning Objectives and should be progressed in the short term.

- Medium priority: will deliver across the Transport Planning Objectives, including significant benefits in some areas, and should be worked towards progressively.

- 'Slow' priority: has the potential to deliver some benefits and should be reviewed over time, and progressed as opportunities present.

Local Transport Strategy Delivery Plan

The Delivery Plan presents the key actions which we will undertake during the lifetime of this strategy. The Delivery Plan is an improvement plan and builds on current activities. We will continue with our current *'business as usual'* activities alongside the delivery of the strategy actions.

The actions contained within the Delivery Plan are presented alongside the main objective(s) they are working towards through their delivery. This allows ease of identification of how individual actions are seeking to accomplish the strategy's objectives.

The Delivery Plan table that follows presents the high priority actions from the LTS appraisal, and this is followed by a list of also the medium priority actions.

The Delivery Plan comprises actions that will be led by the Comhairle and actions that the Comhairle will need to work with Partners to achieve, as well as those which are within the gift of others to deliver, such as the Scottish Government, but which will bring significant benefit for the Outer Hebrides and Scotland.

The Comhairle will work with their partners to achieve the successful delivery of all the actions, which are also anchored through the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy.

Delivery Plan

LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY HIGH PRIORITIES

Delivery Plan – Actions to be led by the Comhairle (items 1-2)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
1. Local Place Plans; community hubs and community empowerment, with public sector reform; digitisation and decentralisation	1 – reduced traffic, especially longer journeys 2 – more short journeys by active travel in local communities, reduced local emissions 3 – jobs more accessible, including for those without / with limited car availability; cost no longer a barrier 4 – enhance place, reduced traffic on other routes, reduced costs	The Comhairle will continue to develop programme, and in partnership with other public sector agencies through the CPP	Immediate short-term aspects deliverable building on successes through Covid-19 experience; full development through the short to medium term, including identifying emerging opportunities.
2. Long-term 30 years Roads and Infrastructure Investment Plan, covering: • Maintain and improve the Spinal Route • Maintain and improve connections to the Spinal Route • Tailored programme to address pinch points and barriers to Active Travel • Address climate change threats • Improvements to the formerly classified NCN • Walking and cycling infrastructure island-tailored approaches	1 – focus to support safe transport networks across all means of transport; communities feel safe and secure within their local community, including walking and cycling 2 – support for a network that is more attractive for walking and cycling, with more active travel for functional journeys within local communities, associated reduction in carbon emissions 3 – transport network is usable by all, promoting participation and social inclusion 4 – maximising the utility of the transport network	Plan to be developed by the Comhairle, and requires securing of external / supplementary funding to advance plan. Liaison with SG and other partners required to break down ring-fenced funding barriers that prohibit progress of the plan – for example, national funding for walking and cycling is focussed presently on high-specification dedicated facilities which would be inappropriate in much of the Outer Hebrides, and which the Comhairle would be unable to match fund; however, improvements to the active travel network could be achieved the funding opportunities be flexible and commensurate with a remote and island setting. Work with partners required to set out the opportunities and present barriers. Plus pursue consideration of the trunking of the spinal route in keeping with similar routes on other islands; and in dialogue with other islands areas with a similar opportunity for the trunking of a core route that connects major ferry services.	Ongoing

Delivery Plan – Actions to be led by the Comhairle (items 3-6)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
3. Comhairle Harbours Masterplan to identify opportunities and develop business case	3 – job creation with jobs and opportunities created throughout the isles and available to all. 4 – maximising the efficiency of harbour resources to support LTS objectives; maximising the utility of these facilities.	The Comhairle will work with partners to develop a Plan for Investment in its Marine Infrastructure, setting out a clear outline of issues, constraints and opportunities, together with a detailed market assessment as part of an Outline Business Case.	Medium-term
4. Comprehensive review of Community Transport (coordinated with Public Transport) in partnership with communities and a resulting Action Plan	2 – support increased use of community and public transport; people able to be more active in their local community, closer to home, and resulting reduction in carbon emissions. 3 – jobs, services and opportunities available closer to home and available to all, with transport networks that are usable by all and which promotes participation; cost is not a barrier to travel. 4 – helps ensure that transport network across the area delivers the movement requirements that enhance place.	Comhairle to work through the CPP to progress the Community Transport review; working with local communities and building on the success of the Participatory Budgeting exercise to devise Action Plan	Short-term and ongoing
5. Consider e-bike library to redress affordability barriers, which could be linked through the CT review above.	2 – enable more trips be cycling within local communities; capture benefits of active travel tourism. 3 – cost is not a barrier to travel and is affordable to all.	Comhairle to work with communities and Community Energy Scotland Energy in Motion project to identify and support opportunities.	Short-term
6. Make changes to school transport structures and school closing times to maximise participation in after school events reducing effects of rurality and poverty	3 – cost is not a barrier to travel and to participation in education or extracurricular activities, or is adversely affecting on other aspects of childhood / family life as a result. Transport actions assist in promoting participation by all.	Progressed through the Anti-Poverty Strategy for FSM children across all areas. Linkages to actions 14 and 15, the outputs of which could support maximising participation at a community-level.	Medium-term

Delivery Plan – Actions the Comhairle will work with partners to deliver (items 7-8)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
7. High-level review of connectivity across the two Sounds, considering economic impacts and whole life costs	2 – protect vulnerable infrastructure and assets, reduce emissions 3 – increased economic activity, increased access to jobs, services and other opportunities. Transport network promotes participation, travel is affordable. 4 – place enhanced through greater movement flexibility; greater connectivity and enhanced utility of the transport network; necessary to consider the whole life costs of internal transport networks.	The SG has set out its ferry investment plans through successive Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plans (VRDP), with the latest version due to be published in Autumn 2020. At the time of writing, work has also commenced on the next Ferries Review of ultra-long-term connectivity, including connectivity across the two Sounds.	STAG study of the ferry routes to, from and within the Outer Hebrides concluded in late 2019 – identifying options for short, medium and long-term development. Short-term progress required to review ultra-long-term connectivity options.
8. Seek additional funding to pilot, pump-prime and develop a flexible and holistic community-focussed approach to Community and Public Transport, including reducing carbon emissions through efficient use of appropriate sized vehicles and ultra low emissions vehicles (decarbonisation of bus fleets).	2 – support increased use of community and public transport; people able to be more active in their local community, closer to home, and resulting reduction in carbon emissions. 3 – jobs, services and opportunities available closer to home and available to all, with transport networks that are usable by all and which promotes participation; cost is not a barrier to travel. 4 – helps ensure that transport network across the area delivers the movement requirements that enhance place.	Additional and / or innovative funding solutions required to progress with community-focussed approach to the future of a mixed model of public and community transport.	Short-term and ongoing

Delivery Plan – Actions the Comhairle will work with partners to deliver (items 9-10)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
9. Transport links and other digital methods of attending appointments / health care / health services	1 – reduced travel overall related to reduced accidents and casualties. 3 – less time spent travelling related to increased time economically active; costs and time associated with travel is not a barrier to participation. 4 – maximise utility of the network and of digital connectivity.	Support NHS WI and other partners through CPP to progress and capitalise on advancements that have been made through Covid-19 experience.	Short to Medium-term and ongoing
10. Explore the feasibility of Green Hydrogen production at an Outer Hebrides Energy Hub (Arnish) for on-island use, and work with partners on the development of Hydrogen Ferry potential. Actively seek funding and investment opportunities for hydrogen production, storage and refuelling facilities for transport, throughout the island chain.	2 – potential to make step change in terms of reduction in carbon emissions and support decarbonisation of transport 3 – associated jobs and economic benefit 4 – contributes to quality place and maximising the utility of the transport network.	Comhairle to secure partner support and funding to develop the project and opportunities.	Short to Medium-term and ongoing

Delivery Plan – Actions required of others (items 11-14)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
11. Dedicated freight vessel for Stornoway-Ullapool route	3 – economic benefit through increased activity 4 – maximise utility of transport network	The Comhairle will work collaboratively with SG and delivery partners to inform the strategy. It is critical that decisions are taken with input from island communities. The SG has set out its ferry investment plans through successive Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plans (VRDP), with the latest version due to be published in Autumn 2020. At the time of writing, work has also commenced on the next Ferries Plan. Expenditure on new or replacement vessels, ports and harbours to increase capacity and reliability; and the consideration of alternative new routes comprising shorter crossings and smaller, more frequent vessels must all be considered within these.	STAG study of the ferry routes to, from and within the Outer Hebrides concluded in late 2019 – identifying options for short, medium and long-term development. It is critical that the short-term improvements identified are implemented at the earliest opportunity, and that there is clarity on commitment to the medium and long-term recommendations, as well as review of ultra-long-term connectivity, including connectivity across the two Sounds.
12. De-coupling Uig-Lochmaddy and Uig-Tarbert routes	3 – economic benefit through increased activity; greater flexibility for all travellers 4 – greater flexibility in travel options, maximising the utility of the network		
13. High-level review of connectivity across the two Sounds, considering economic impacts and whole life costs	2 – protect vulnerable infrastructure and assets, reduce emissions 3 – increased economic activity, increased access to jobs, services and other opportunities. Transport network promotes participation, travel is affordable. 4 – place enhanced through greater movement flexibility; greater connectivity and enhanced utility of the transport network; necessary to consider the whole life costs of internal transport networks.		
14. De-centralisation of ferries' management and administration as well as transport policy jobs to the islands	2 – boost creation of community economic activity hubs; in turn supporting move to more active travel to work within communities. 3 – jobs available to all within their local community; economic growth and increase economic activity in fragile areas. 4 – maximise utility of the local transport network.	The Comhairle will work with partners, including SG, Transport Scotland, HIAL and others to deliver this action progressively.	Ongoing, with some initial short-term deliverables.

Delivery Plan – Actions required of others (items 15-18)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
15. Reduced costs, including freight charges, to meet the needs of islands and enabling enterprise and island economies to flourish	3 – affordability removed as a barrier to travel; economic activity increased through removing excessive and inconsistent freight costs as a barrier to doing / doing more business. 4 – maximise the efficiency of existing transport resources.	The Comhairle will work collaboratively with SG to ensure progress. SG initiative to instigate.	Required in the short-term after significant delay in implementing any of the proposed options arising from the Ferry Freight Fares Review.
16. Maintain and improve air service connectivity – reducing the cost of air travel	3 – transport network more available and usable by the many, promoting participation, and removing cost as a barrier. Increase in economic activity with wider benefits. 4 – will ensure that the transport network delivers movement requirements that enhance place for all residents, for business and for visitors.	The Comhairle will work with partners, including HITRANS and SG to achieve this action.	Short to Medium term progress required.
17. Removal of Air Passenger Duty from incoming flights to the islands	4 – will ensure that the transport network delivers movement requirements that enhance place for all residents, for business and for visitors.	The Comhairle will support the continuation of the exemption from UK Air Passenger Duty for flights departing from airports in the area; and will continue working with HITRANS to present the case of the need for, and benefit arising from an exemption from the current UK Air Passenger Duty and any successor duty.	Short-term
18. Support the retention of Air Traffic Control management services and functions within the Outer Hebrides	1 – ensure the lifeline transport network is safe and feels safe and secure for all users. 3 – secure well-paid jobs and associated economic activity within the area and across the islands.	Liaise with SG and in partnership with other affected local authority areas in opposing the centralisation plans and calling for a moratorium on them pending an Islands Impact Assessment.	Short-term

Delivery Plan – Actions required of others (items 19-20)

ACTION	RELATIONSHIP to Transport Planning Objectives Which of the TPOs this action will deliver	Delivery Plan How delivered, delivery partners and funding	Timescale Ongoing (will be progressed on an ongoing basis) Short-term (1-2 years) Medium-term (2-5 years) Long-term (5+ years)
19 Make the case for island-proofing funding allocation processes	3 – an inclusive approach to transport networks, an approach which sees funding mechanisms evolved to ensure island communities are not subject to disproportionate disbenefits.	Require to secure of external / supplementary funding to advance investment plans; across revenue and capital streams of funding. Liaison with SG and other partners required to break down ring-fenced funding barriers that prohibit progress of the plan – for example, national funding for walking and cycling is focussed presently on high-specification dedicated facilities which would be inappropriate in much of the Outer Hebrides, and which the Comhairle would be unable to match fund; however, improvements to the active travel network could be achieved the funding opportunities be flexible and commensurate with a remote and island setting. Work with partners required to set out the opportunities and present barriers, including looking at innovative funding practices.	Short-term
20 Call for Scottish Government to recognise the role of CT in remote / rural areas where public transport is challenging – island-proof the scheme, and hence adopt such CT services as part of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme.	2 – support increased use of community transport; people able to be more active in their local community, closer to home, and resulting reduction in carbon emissions. 3 – cost is not a barrier to travel.	Comhairle to work with partner Local Authorities and HITRANS to challenge that the national Concessionary Travel policy should be subjected retrospectively to a Island Community Impact Assessment.	Short-term

Medium Priorities

These project will deliver across the Transport Planning Objectives, including significant benefits in some areas, and should be worked towards progressively

- **ACTIONS TO BE LED BY THE COMHAIRLE**
  - Town Centre plan assessing options for managing traffic flow and parking in Stornoway and Tarbert
  - Develop Low Carbon Transport Hubs in Stornoway, and other larger settlements where required, to fill gaps in current EV charging and step up hydrogen refuelling infrastructure
  - Explore the feasibility of Green Hydrogen production at an Outer Hebrides Energy Hub (Arnish) for on-island use (transport and heat).

- **ACTIONS THAT THE COMHAIRLE WILL NEED TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO ACHIEVE**
  - Support regional approach to achieving resilient EV charging corridors (on and along main corridors including in Mainland Scotland)

- **ACTIONS REQUIRED OF OTHERS**
  - Greater capacity on Sound of Barra crossing
  - Call for a review of the future design and procurement of ferries in Scotland
  - Consider socio-economic and wider economic impacts of establishing PSO on Benbecula – Glasgow route

Alternative Strategy

No action is not an option. The interventions described in the delivery plan are essential to strengthen the communities and economy of the Outer Hebrides by supporting a strong and socially inclusive recovery that creates empowered, resilient communities, based on a green economy in which digital connectivity, quality and efficient transport and innovation are prioritised.

The actions and interventions set out in the delivery plan are required to deliver on the Transport Planning Objectives. Without intervention through the LTS and associated approaches it will not be possible to realise the opportunities that have been identified, namely:

◦ To continue to **revitalise communities**, with people working and living closer to home, with wide-ranging employment opportunities available to all across the Outer Hebrides.

◦ To best meet the **needs of local communities**, geographically, and for those within our communities with particular transport needs. We need to work with our communities to shape transport to ensure we maximise the efficiency of our resources to meet needs.

◦ **Being prepared** to respond to areas susceptible to coastal and fluvial flooding through climate change impacts; and ensuring early identification of infrastructure at risk, including roads, piers and buildings to enable appropriate measures to be identified.

◦ Staying ahead with the local **Energy Economy** – ensuring transport continues on the road to decarbonisation, and realises the wider economic benefits.

◦ Ensure transport connections – particularly **ferry services** – fully meet the needs of our community and economy. Ensuring continued engagement with Scottish Government and key transport stakeholders to identify resources and further the interests of local priorities – addressing capacity constraints, timetabling barriers to business, and realising the full tourism potential for our islands.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The progress being made in the delivery of each action contained in the Action Plan will be monitored throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. The progress being made in delivery the TPOs will also be monitored by recording progress made across a number of indicators.

Indicators will be provided through national, regional and local datasets which could then through evaluation be supplemented by information recorded by Comhairle delivery services.

Monitoring of the transport strategy's Action Plan is vital to ensuring that the strategy's vision is realised, and that the actions provide the targeted benefits we seek to attain.

The LTS Monitoring Framework will provide the means for an annual 'state of transport and travel' report, which will allow the Comhairle to oversee progress and changes in transport and travel across the area.

Individual actions and projects through the LTS Delivery Plan should be progressed in parallel with a tailored monitoring plan for each specific action. These project-specific monitoring plans should be devised prior to delivery, and should be commensurate with the scale and intended outcomes of each action. The combination of the LTS Monitoring Framework and individual monitoring plans will enable the Comhairle to demonstrate progress in future years, and will provide the necessary evidence to inform future evolution of the LTS.

Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Rating of road condition 2018-19	**Red condition 7%** **Amber condition 36%**	Red condition 7% Amber condition 29%
Casualties by police force division, council and severity	2019 (provisional) 2 fatal, 13 serious, 32 all	2019 (provisional) 168 fatal 2001 serious 7,594 all

Monitoring Baseline 2020
A Safe Outer Hebrides

Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Adults (16+) frequency of walking as a means of transport in previous 7 days	None 67% 1-2 days 15% 3-5 days 11% 6-7 days 8%	None 31% 1-2 days 19% 3-5 days 26% 6-7 days 23%
Travel to school	TBC	TBC
Adults (16+) - use of local bus services	Every day or almost every day 3% 2 or 3 times per week 4% About once a week 2%, About once a fortnight, or about once a month 8% Not used in past month 83%	Every day or almost every day 10% 2 or 3 times per week 10% About once a week 7% About once a fortnight, or about once a month 15% Not used in past month 58%

Monitoring Baseline 2020
An Active Outer Hebrides

Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Number of bicycles available for private use by households	**None 73%** **One 13%** **Two 11%** **Three or more 3%**	None 65% One 16% Two 13% Three or more 6%
Charging devices per 100,000 population	**Charging devices per 100,000 population 89.8** **Rapid charging devices per 100,000 26.2**	Charging devices per 100,000 population 35.0 Rapid charging devices per 100,000 8.9

Monitoring Baseline 2020
Environmental Protection and Decarbonise Transport

Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
Number of cars available for private use by households: 2018	None 23% One 46% Two 26% Three or more 5%	None 29% One 42% Two 24% Three or more 6%
Employed adults (16+) not working from home - usual method of travel to work: 2018	Walking 15% Driver car/van 68% Passenger car / van 6% Bicycle 1% Bus 6% Other 3%	Walking 12% Driver car/van 63% Passenger car / van 5% Bicycle 3% Bus 10% Other 8%
Adults aged 60+ - possession of a concessionary fare pass, and use in the past month Has pass 84%	Every day 1% Almost every day 1% 2-3 times per week 4% Once a week 5% Once a fortnight 4% Once a month 6% Not used 63%	Every day 3% Almost every day 7% 2-3 times per week 18% Once a week 9% Once a fortnight 7% Once a month 10% Not used 34%

Monitoring Baseline 2020
An Inclusive Outer Hebrides

Indicator	Outer Hebrides	Scotland
People aged 17+ - frequency of driving: 2018	Every day 51% At least three times per week 13% Once or twice per week 8%	Every day 41% At least three times per week 15% Once or twice per week 6%
Adults' views on satisfaction with public transport	Very satisfied 13% Fairly satisfied 53% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 23% Fairly dissatisfied 6% Very dissatisfied 5%	Very satisfied 21% Fairly satisfied 44% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 15% Fairly dissatisfied 12% Very dissatisfied 7%
Reliability and punctuality of lifeline ferry services	2018/19 CalMac Reliability 99.5 Punctuality 99.6	
Employed adults (16+) - place of work: 2018 and car/van commuters - could they use public transport: 2018	Could use public transport 20%, could not use public transport 80%	Could use public transport 44%, could not use public transport 56%
Traffic on Subsidised ferry services (2018)	687,500 passengers 247,300 cars 24,700 commercial vehicles and buses	
Terminal Passengers at Airports (Stornoway, Benbecula, Barra) 2018	Stornoway 133,000 Benbecula 35,000, Barra 15,000	

Monitoring Baseline 2020
A Quality Place and Places, that is well connected, to aid prosperity.

Delivering the Strategy

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

The Comhairle can only achieve the LTS objectives by working in partnership with the residents and businesses of the Outer Hebrides, the Scottish Government, other public sector agencies and private sector providers. Together we can solve problems and provide innovative solutions.The delivery programme outlined in the LTS is based on discussions across the Comhairle and with partner organisations, as well as reflecting on a variety of recent community consultations that have been undertaken.

To ensure the success of the delivery plan it will be essential that the detail of actions are developed with full participation of communities, partner organisations and industry; this participative approach going forward will be fundamental to achieving the best outcomes through the LTS.

GOVERNANCE

Delivery of the Local Transport Strategy is the responsibility of a number of teams across the Comhairle.

The Transport Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) will oversee the coordination of annual work programmes in line with the LTS priorities.

LTS delivery programmes will be approved annually by the Transport and Infrastructure Committee, who will also receive and scrutinise the annual monitoring and evaluation report.

Appendix A:
LTS long list actions and interventions

THE FOLLOWING LONG-LIST ACTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS WERE DRAWN FROM CONSULTATION WITH KEY OFFICIALS AND PARTNERS AND FROM THOSE ACTIONS PREVIOUSLY SET OUT IN THE DRAFT LTS AND FROM EARLIER STUDIES TOGETHER WITH ACTIONS DEVISED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LTS

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE – WHOLE PLACE LOCAL APPROACH

Local Place Plans:

Community Transport / Public Transport Planning

Access to Health – primary / remote access / access to secondary and tertiary treatment

Walking and cycling infrastructure

Community-based assets *library* (EV car club, e-bikes, cycles etc.)

Relocation and co-location of public sector jobs, and together with private enterprise

As we emerge from Covid-19, Government can't operate in the same way it did, there is far less money in the system.

Solution – a whole place approach through **Local Place Plans**:

- Digitisation coupled with decentralisation of services. Increase deployment of Comhairle employees to place based functions and support, facilitating communities to access funding, arrange and deliver services.

- Empowering communities approach to delivery. Advance localism by prioritising and supporting the development of local supply chains, skills and businesses within a framework which meets legal, equalities and governance standards and is fully responsive to island communities.

Led through the Comhairle Corporate Strategy, and framed within public sector reform and a focus on economic and social regeneration together with de-carbonisation. How can we across all transport and travel "do the least distance for the most activity?"

Community hubs and satellite offices for multiple partners – locating jobs from services in the communities that they serve – CnES, CalMac, HIAL, Transport Scotland, NHSWH, as well as private enterprise and the community sectors. Hence, reducing central offices, people live within the communities they serve and work within, and travel shorter distances; added value through enhanced understanding of local issues.

Exploring opportunities to market and package the Outer Hebrides to "digital nomads" and other potential business relocations

A CONNECTED OUTER HEBRIDES (1)

Ferry Services

- Maintain and improve connectivity to / from the Outer Hebrides for travel to / from the Scottish Mainland and beyond to Scotland's cities. This will be achieved through high-level delivery of:
  - o AM plus PM ferry services off / onto all of the islands the Outer Hebrides enabling greater flexibility for personal travel and for freight movements throughout the island chain, including earlier departures to support better connections for longer-distance routes to market
  - o Ensure available capacity for when people want and goods need to travel

- These aspects could be achieved through a combination of:
  - Provision of new or replacement vessels, ports and harbours to increase capacity and reliability
  - Dedicated freight vessel for the Stornoway – Ullapool route
  - De-coupling of Uig-Lochmaddy and Uig-Tarbert routes with dedicated vessels
  - Greater capacity on Sound of Barra crossing

- High-level review of connectivity across the two Sounds, considering economic impacts and whole-life costs of future options; ferry services or fixed links.

- Reduced costs, including freight charges, to meet the needs of islands and enabling enterprise and island economies to flourish

- De-centralisation of ferries' management and administration and ferry crewing (as well as transport policy (Transport Scotland / Scottish Government)) jobs to the islands

- Call for a review of the future design and procurement of ferries in Scotland

A CONNECTED OUTER HEBRIDES (2)

Air Services

- Maintain and improve connectivity to / from the Outer Hebrides for travel to / from the Scottish Mainland and beyond to Scotland's cities. This will be achieved through high-level delivery of:
  - Reducing the cost of air travel to support *inclusion* on non-PSO routes
  - Reducing the cost of air travel to deliver economic growth via non PSO routes

    This could be achieved through the wider roll-out of Air Discount Scheme to the business community, and consideration of PSO or other mechanisms to make air travel more inclusive for those on lower incomes.

- Support the removal of Air Passenger Duty from incoming flights to the islands

- Consider socio-economic and wider impacts of establishing PSO on Benbecula – Glasgow air service route

- Inform options and appraisal for future of Barra airstrip

- Lobby against HIAL's centralisation of Air Traffic Control management services and functions to Inverness plus support the de-centralisation of other HIAL services and functions to the Outer Hebrides

ROADS AND ROUTES FOR ALL USERS

Vehicular traffic

EVs

Walking and Cycling

- Long-term 30 year roads and infrastructure investment plan, covering:
  - Maintain and improve the Spinal Route in keeping with earlier policies to dual the route.
  - Maintain and improve connections to the Spinal Route from local roads:
    - Including road infrastructure improvements around certain key tourism attractions where capacity for buses, campervans and other tourism traffic is proving to be a significant issue.
  - Develop tailored programme to address pinch points and barriers to active travel, focussing in and around settlements and community hubs and on the Spinal Route
  - Addressing emerging threats from climate change (Through continuous review and research, ensure early identification of infrastructure at risk, including roads, piers (and buildings) to enable appropriate measures to be identified.)
  - Secure external funding to continue to invest in (former National Cycle Network route) – particularly improvements in passing places and some short sections of off-road, introduction of crawler lanes for cyclists on uphill sections, and consideration of Active Travel community bothies
  - Secure external funding for improved walking and cycling infrastructure in line with priorities identified in the Active Travel Strategy, including making the case for island-appropriate (rather than national) safe design standards.

- In association with investment plan, making the case to recognise the additional costs faced in the islands for roads maintenance and investment – *island-proofing* of the funding allocation process

- Town Centre plan assessing options for managing traffic flow and parking in urban settlements

HARBOURS MASTERPLAN

Realising the marine infrastructures full potential, including development and coordination of multiple users, such as development of cruise, fisheries activity etc.

Work with local communities, including those that have shown an interest in taking on harbours infrastructure

Island economies and communities are dependent on marine infrastructure not only to support lifeline ferry services but as key economic drivers and social assets often with significant heritage and tradition. Harbours can generate substantial direct and indirect employment across a range of sectors, such as oil and gas, renewables, cruise, aquaculture, boat building, marine leisure and fishing. Indeed, a considerable proportion of total employment in island communities can be related to marine infrastructure.

Investing in marine infrastructure has the potential to unlock additional economic and social benefit for the Western Isles and for those communities where piers and harbours are located. The development of a marine infrastructure strategy would consider priorities for investment in marine infrastructure with a view to unlocking economic and social benefits and realising market opportunities, such as: identification of suitable locations for marinas, yacht mooring, etc.; identification of suitable locations for cruise ship calls, either at anchor or alongside; potential sites for aquaculture activity; creation of additional berthing for fishing boats, yachts, etc; identification of potential quayside locations for specific sectoral development (e.g. fisheries, aquaculture, boat repair, freight, etc.) – alongside options for specific harbour development/upgrade/construction.

A Plan for Investment in Marine Infrastructure would be developed following an objective-led approach involving stakeholder engagement, a clear outline of issues, constraints and opportunities, a detailed market assessment, generation and appraisal of options, followed by an assessment of costs and benefits as part of an Outline Business Case.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Communities will have access to a range of innovative transport solutions which can reduce social isolation and provide improved access to services

Comprehensive review of Community Transport (coordinated with Public Transport) in partnership with Communities and a resulting Action Plan is association with OHCPP / Community Councils and local groups, including consideration of fares policy.

Seek additional funding to pilot, pump-prime and develop a flexible and holistic community-focussed approach to Community and Public Transport, including reducing carbon emissions through efficient use of appropriate sized vehicles and ultra low emissions vehicles (decarbonisation of bus fleets).

Call for Scottish Government to recognise the role of Community Transport in remote / rural areas where public transport is challenging – island-proof the scheme, and hence adopt such Community Transport services as part of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. This would equally be the case for the ferry services over the sounds, which are the equivalent of local bus services for residents.

Consider e-bike library to redress affordability barriers, which could be linked through the CT review above.

Public Transport tourism review - consider actions to improve the public transport tourism offer – information, branding, access, ticketing, promotion etc.

Make changes to school transport structures and school closing times to maximise participation in after school events reducing effects of rurality

Transport links and other digital methods of attending appointments

DECARBONISING TRANSPORT

Specific actions to focus on de-carbonising transport in the Outer Hebrides; other related de-carbonising actions, such as a focus on making EVs more available to those on particularly low incomes, are weaved through the long list of transport actions set out above

Work with partners on the development of Hydrogen Ferry potential. Engaging with green hydrogen developers to progress initiatives such as SWIFTH$_2$.

Contribute to promotion of Highlands and Islands as low / zero emission aviation region

Support regional approach to achieving resilient EV charging corridors (on and along main corridors including in Mainland Scotland)

Develop Low Carbon Transport Hubs in Stornoway, and other larger settlements where required, to fill gaps in current EV charging and step up hydrogen refuelling infrastructure

Explore the feasibility of Green Hydrogen production at an Outer Hebrides Energy Hub (Arnish) for on-island use (transport and heat). Actively seek funding and investment opportunities for hydrogen production, storage and refuelling facilities for transport, throughout the island chain.

Appendix B: Appraisal and Prioritisation

The long list of LTS proposed projections and interventions have been appraised. The Appraisal Summary Table is set out in Appendix B.

The following 7 tables summarise and set out the high-level appraisal of the options that have been collated and developed through the LTS exercise.

Appraisal has been undertaken qualitatively against the LTS Transport Planning Objectives and against the STAG criteria of Environment, Safety, Economy, Integration and Accessibility and Social Inclusion together with consideration of feasibility, affordability and public acceptability.

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Local Place Plans; community hubs and community empowerment, with public sector reform; digitisation and decentralisation	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔	£	✔✔	Requires multi-agency working alongside communities to realise full potential. Has significant potential to deliver significant positive benefit. High priority
New / replacement vessels, ports and harbours to increase capacity and improve reliability	✔	✔	/	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔	£££	✔✔	Modern vessels with adequate capacity and operability are deliverable with the right planning and investment. From evidence supplied addressing current deficiencies across the network will have the largest impact on the area's economy and prosperity. High priority
Dedicated freight vessel for Stornoway-Ullapool route	/	/	✗	✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔	/	✔	£££	✔✔	As earlier studies have demonstrated, offers positive economic potential and solution to severe capacity constraints High priority
De-coupling Uig-Lochmaddy and Uig-Tarbert routes	✔	/	/	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	£££	✔✔	Recent STAG highlighted significant timetabling and capacity issues on these routes and identified a requirement for two ferries to service the routes, with the medium term recommendation of this being part-year in order to cope with the summer demand. High Priority
Greater capacity on Sound of Barra crossing	✔	✔	/	✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	££	✔✔	Extra capacity would make travel from the Uists to Oban viable, with the benefit also of reducing capacity pressures on other routes. Medium Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
High-level review of connectivity across the two Sounds, considering economic impacts and whole life costs	✔	/	/	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	£ review	✔	Various options have been muted over time; comparisons have been drawn with what the Faroe Islands have been able to achieve with fixed links; full feasibility study required to study options, whole life costs and economic and wider impacts etc. High Priority
Reduced costs, including freight charges, to meet the needs of islands and enabling enterprise and island economies to flourish	/	/	✗	✔✔	✔✔	✗	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	£	✔✔	The overarching policy as described in the Ferries Plan 2013-2022 should be finalised in order to have a consistent structure across all ferry routes, and one which supports economic development and sustainability of the islands. High Priority
De-centralisation of ferries' management and administration and ferry crewing as well as transport policy jobs to the islands	/	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	Relocation of transport management, crew, policy and administrative jobs to the islands these areas serve will lead to significant economic benefit and will support better informed strategic and operational decision making. Relatively small number of jobs has disproportionately large impact on small, remote economy. Locally-based crew will increase network resilience and flexibility. High priority
Review of the future design and procurement of ferries in Scotland	✔	✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	£ review	✔	It will be beneficial for the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plans (VRDP) and new Ferries Plan to become more 'live' ensuring they can be adapted as issues and opportunities emerge, and allowing community voices to be part of the process on an ongoing basis. Medium Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor`L	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Maintain and improve air service connectivity – reducing the cost of air travel	/	/	/	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	££	✔✔	The ADS has been a significant success, nevertheless the cost of air travel is comparatively expensive compared to other domestic routes, and high costs for excluded groups (business, public sector, patient transport) has a significant adverse impact. High Priority
Removal of Air Passenger Duty from incoming flights to the islands	/	/	/	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	£	✔✔	The existing exemption must remain unchanged - it must remain in place to protect remote and rural communities. High Priority
Consider socio-economic and wider economic impacts of establishing PSO on Benbecula – Glasgow route	/	✔	/	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔ ✔	✔	✔✔	£ review	✔✔	A PSO secures a lifeline route and service. Air travel is a vital component of our island transport system, and the full, current, economic impact should be understood on such fragile routes. Medium Priority
Support the retention of Air Traffic Control management services and functions within the Outer Hebrides	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔	✔ ✔	/	/	✔✔	Concerns remain around the robustness of the Islands Community Impact Assessment proposed by HIAL, and the resilience of the Digital Tower Technology, together with the adverse economic impacts on the Outer Hebrides economy. High Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Long-term 30 years Roads and Infrastructure Investment Plan, covering: • Maintain and improve the Spinal Route • Maintain and improve connections to the Spinal Route • Tailored programme to address pinch points and barriers to Active Travel • Address climate change threats • Improvements to the formerly classified NCN • Walking and cycling infrastructure island-tailored approaches Including securing external / supplementary funding to advance plan	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	£££	✔✔	Necessary to strategically plan and direct investment, maintenance and improvement works in a targeted manner. Requires additional funding to prevent degradation of asset and address climate change threats. High Priority
Make the case for island-proofing funding allocation processes	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔ ✔	✔✔	✔✔	/	✔✔	Recognising the additional challenges faced by island authorities and higher costs that are associated with works to advance the LTS. High Priority
Town Centre plan assessing options for managing traffic flow and parking in Stornoway and Tarbert	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔	£ Planning	✔	To manage competing demands on road space and parking within urban areas; developed in partnership with local communities and interest groups. Medium Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Harbours Masterplan to identify opportunities and develop business case	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	/	/	✔✔	£ Planning	✔	Realising the marine infrastructures full potential, including development and coordination of multiple users, such as development of cruise, fisheries activity etc., alongside community interests. High Priority
Comprehensive review of Community Transport (coordinated with Public Transport) in partnership with communities and a resulting Action Plan	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	/	/	✔✔	£ Planning	✔	Progress review through the CPP Community Transport Group in partnership with community anchor organisations and communities and in association with subsequent LTS actions. High Priority
Seek additional funding to pilot, pump-prime and develop a flexible and holistic community-focussed approach to Community and Public Transport, including reducing carbon emissions through efficient use of appropriate sized vehicles and ultra low emissions vehicles (decarbonisation of bus fleets).	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	££	✔✔	The CPP has an aspiration to increase the number of Rural Community Transport Partnerships (RCTP) to promote and provide community led accessible, affordable and alternative transport services. This approach is in keeping with the TPOs and regional and national aims. High Priority
Call for Scottish Government to recognise the role of CT in remote / rural areas where public transport is challenging – *island-proof* the scheme, and hence adopt such CT services as part of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme.	/	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔	£	✔✔	Although a scheme beyond the remit of the Comhairle, it is recognised that island residents do not benefit from the national scheme to the same extent of their counterparts in more urban areas. The scheme should be retrospectively assessed through an ICIA to re-shape it's delivery. High Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Consider e-bike library to redress affordability barriers, which could be linked through the CT review above.	✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	£	✔✔	Active travel can be challenging in rural parts of Outer Hebrides, e-bikes provide great potential for some, although cost can be a barrier for many. High Priority
Make changes to school transport structures and school closing times to maximise participation in after school events reducing effects of rurality and poverty	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔		✔	/	✔	✔	✔	£	✔✔	Identified as an action within the Outer Hebrides Anti-Poverty Strategy 2019-2024 High Priority
Transport links and other digital methods of attending appointments / health care / health services	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔		✔	/	✔	✔	✔	£	✔✔	Identified as an action within the Outer Hebrides Anti-Poverty Strategy 2019-2024 High Priority
Work with partners on the development of Hydrogen Ferry potential.	✔	/	✔✔	/	✔	✔✔	/	/	/	/	£ review	✔	Support the long-term commitment to decarbonising transport. Slow Priority

LTS Actions

Intervention / project ✔✔ positive impact / factor ✔ slight positive impact / factor / neutral ✗ slight negative impact / factor ✗✗ negative impact / factor	Safe	Active	Environmental protection / decarbonisation	Inclusive	Quality	Environment	Economy	Integration	Accessibility & Social Inclusion	Feasibility	Affordability	Public Acceptability	SUMMARY / PRIORITY High Priority Medium Priority Slow Priority
Contribute to the promotion of the Highlands and Islands as low / zero emission aviation region	✔	/	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	/	✗	/	✔	Low carbon should feature in the aviation sector, CnES support the SG and HIAL commitment to a zero emission aviation region through decarbonising airport operations, infrastructure and flights across the region Slow Priority
Support regional approach to achieving resilient EV charging corridors (on and along main corridors including in Mainland Scotland)	✔	/	✔✔	/	✔✔	✔✔	✔	/	✗	✔	£	✔	Already progressed from an extremely low baseline of EV usage and ownership to greater adoption both as an organisation, through the community and by visitors. This will progress suitability of EV to our islands. Medium Priority
Develop Low Carbon Transport Hubs in Stornoway, and other larger settlements where required, to fill gaps in current EV charging and step up hydrogen refuelling infrastructure	/	✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔	/	/	✔	£	✔	Transport is a major contributor to carbon emissions, it is important that our islands are not left lagging behind during this transition. Medium Priority
Explore the feasibility of Green Hydrogen production at an Outer Hebrides Energy Hub (Arnish) for on-island use (transport and heat). Actively seek funding and investment opportunities for hydrogen production, storage and refuelling facilities for transport, throughout the island chain.	✔	/	✔✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✗	£££	✔	The Scottish Government is currently assessing the potential to use hydrogen as an energy vector as part of its Energy Strategy, following the appointment of Arup in March 2020 to carry out the work – expected to report in 2021. In the Outer Hebrides a study has been commissioned to look at where additional hydrogen opportunities may lie and how they can be accessed. The LTS should support these pieces of work. Medium Priority

Participants

The LTS has been developed in dialogue with input from Comhairle officers and partners, using their experience and evidence of issues and opportunities to inform and devise the long list of LTS options

David MacLeod (CnES – bus services, waste, fleet, carbon reduction)	Peter Coldwell (CnES – Core Paths / Access Panel)	Neal Ingram, Colin MacIver, Calum MacKenzie – (CnES - Strategic Transport, Civil Engineering, Active Travel)	Anne Murray & Angus Murray (CnES – Policy / Strategy)
Joe MacPhee (CnES – Economic Development)	Ranald Robertson and Neil MacRae - HITRANS	Robert Emmet (CnES – Director of Finance)	Angus Campbell (Chair of CalMac Community Board)
Kenny Morrison (CnES – Harbour Master)	Uisdean Roberston (CnES – elected member, Committee Chair)	Bernard Chisholm (CnES – Director of Education)	Rob McKinnon (Chief Executive, Outer Hebrides Tourism Community Interest Company
Donald Joseph MacLean (Barra Atlantic)	Hector Stewart (Kallin Shellfish)	Abbe Farrell (Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership)	Matthew Logan (Western Isles Energy in Motion Development Officer Community Energy Scotland)
Iain McKinnon – Director for Investment Delivery	Debbie Bozkurt / Gordon Jamieson (NHSWI)	Transport and Infrastructure Member Officer Working Group (MOWG)	Comhairle Corporate Recovery Team