



REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR THE HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS

Final Strategy

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FOREWORD

This HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy represents a genuine milestone in transport decision-making in the Highlands and Islands. For the first time a plan – locally developed, consulted upon and refined, enjoys legal status as a statutory document. This carries with it responsibilities for those agencies who will work alongside HITRANS to implement the strategy as well as for those who will ultimately take decisions on future transport investment across Scotland.

For the Highlands and Islands the stakes are high. Our transport networks dictate to a large extent how we live our daily lives, how we travel to school, shops or hospitals, and how our businesses deliver their goods and services across the area. This region is unique in Scotland in terms of its geography of islands and mountains. Travel is costly and often disrupted by weather. Many essential journeys are unreliable. Lifeline transport services are essential to maintain our island and remote communities.

There is no doubt that our area is making progress both economically and socially, however more needs to be done. Our productivity is some 20% behind the rest of Scotland and the condition of our transport infrastructure will play a critical part in closing that gap.

This significance is underlined by the support that people across the region have shown in the development of the Strategy and the responses they have provided to the consultation exercise, a level of input I welcome greatly.

I believe that in this Strategy we have considered the needs of the whole region: from Campbeltown to North Ronaldsay, or from Carloway to Cullen; from the remote corners of the mainland to the island communities and the more populated areas surrounding the inner Moray Firth.

However any such plan inevitably involves compromises. We simply cannot address all the areas' needs at once, there is just too much to do. What this Strategy sets out to achieve are enhancements and improvements to those core routes and services – those which are most important in knitting the area together, and providing connectivity from the Highlands and Islands to the rest of Scotland and beyond. Over time we would seek to address all our transport inadequacies – and these will be covered in subsequent strategies, but we have to start somewhere.

There are also compromises between our core vision of supporting economic growth and the pressures for sustainability and environmental protection. While much of our Strategy focuses on the trunk and regional roads network, we have also not ignored the rail or ferry networks, the need to promote active travel, or better public transport integration. These and others have their place in this plan.

There are further compromises too between ambition and a realistic appraisal of the resources that will be available to the area. Not every scheme advanced for the area is included in this Strategy, but I do not believe it lacks ambition. If the action plan within this document is implemented within the intended timescale then it will have made a real contribution to the vitality and viability of the Highlands and Islands.

Finally, I would urge all those living and working in the Highlands and Islands, as well as our local authorities, public agencies, businesses and other partners to unite behind this Strategy. A strong consensus on the way forward is the best way to secure the resources we require.

I wish HITRANS and its partners every success in taking forward this first Regional Transport Strategy.

Charlie King
HITRANS Chair

March 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

HITRANS was established as one of the seven Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships in December 2005. The Transport Scotland Act 2005 requires these Partnerships to prepare Transport Strategies for their regions which will enhance economic well being; promote safety, social inclusion and equal opportunity; plan for a sustainable transport system; and integrate across boundaries with other Partnerships. These Strategies must take account of future needs and set priorities for transport development and improvement.

Context

The Regional Transport Strategies do not sit alone. They are part of a suite of strategies and plans ranging from the National Transport Strategy, National Planning Framework, and national economic and sustainable development strategies, through various regional and local plans. We have taken account of these in preparing the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Strategy, and this is detailed in Part 2, the context section of this document.

Key Issue

Early in 2006 we held workshop meetings with key stakeholders throughout the region to discuss and agree the issues which this Strategy needs to address. This region is diverse and includes many islands, remote rural communities, and also fast growing urban areas. Essential journeys are long, often over mountainous terrain and sea crossings. Many of these essential journeys are using roads that are generally not of modern standards, and public transport that is infrequent and slow. The cost of daily transport for businesses and residents is high. The key issue that emerged from these discussions is the contribution that a modern transport system can make to the competitiveness of business and the enhancement of the region's viability, and the concern that much of our system is not adequate to meet this challenge. The region at present is at 80% of Scotland's average GVA (Gross Value Added) – a huge gap. Improvements to the transport network are vital if this gap is to be reduced.

Objectives

Therefore our primary objective for the Strategy is to improve the interconnectivity of the whole region to strategic services and destinations in order to enable the region to compete and support growth. Supporting objectives are to enable people to participate in everyday life; to improve the safety and security of travel; to improve people's health; and to manage impacts on our environmental assets. These objectives were developed at an early stage, and have informed the development of the strategy options through an objective led process.

Strategic Policy

The Strategy's overarching policy is to develop a fit for purpose, multi-modal transport system. It comprises a package of policies and measures under a number of horizontal themes which apply across the region, and a package of priorities for investment to improve the transport network, across all modes.

Horizontal Themes

We have ten horizontal themes where we intend to focus action and investment during the next 15 years. These are:

- Promoting the long term development of walking and cycling across the region to reduce the use of cars for short journeys and to contribute towards health.
- Preparing a strategy for investment in the region's bus services.
- Enhancing the aviation connections between islands and peripheral communities and the regional centres and national gateways to allow for better business opportunities.
- Improving the community transport and demand responsive transport offer in the region for those who have poor access to mainstream public transport.
- Increasing the efficiency of travel in and through urban areas by tackling congestion, reducing car use on short journeys and by improving the public transport offer.
- Assisting freight transport to shift mode from road to less environmentally damaging rail and sea.
- Developing a programme of investment to improve and maintain the locally significant rural road network which has suffered from under-investment in the past.
- Preparing a strategy for investment in ports and ferries.
- Developing initiatives for reducing the cost of transport and travel.
- Develop ways to reduce and mitigating the climate change impact of travelling in the region.

Transport Network Policy

We have developed a hierarchy for the region's multi-modal transport network which identifies the strategic links connecting us to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and the regional links which connect people to their main regional centre. We have set priorities for investment in this multi-modal network based on tests which assess its adequacy for current and projected traffic (informed by future land use developments) and the extent of the region served.

On the **strategic network**, priority action is required to further the Strategy objectives, in particular to reduce journey times and improve journey reliability on:

- The Western Strategic Corridor, that is the A82 corridor from Loch Lomond to Fort William
- The Central Strategic Corridor, that is the Inverness to Perth/central corridor
- The Eastern Strategic Corridor, that is the Inverness to Aberdeen corridor

On this strategic network we also require priority action to:

- Improve journey reliability connecting Argyll and Bute to Glasgow via the trunk roads and the West Highland Line.
- Reduce journey times to Caithness and Orkney from Inverness via the A9 and the Far North Line.

- Deliver the Inverness trunk link road to remove through traffic from the City centre and open up development land to the east of the City, and improve public transport services including Park and Ride to reduce growing levels of congestion.
- Improve the mainland road connections and sea crossings to the Western Isles.
- Improve Moray's road connections to the Inverness Perth corridor.

On the **regional network** we have identified priorities for investment in:

- Orkney inter-isle network of ferries and air services.
- Connections to the Argyll islands from the mainland
- The Western Isles spinal route
- Road improvement on Mull and between Oban and Loghgilphead.
- Road improvements to northwest Sutherland and Wester Ross from the inner Moray Firth growth area.
- Improvements to the Moray coastal roads.

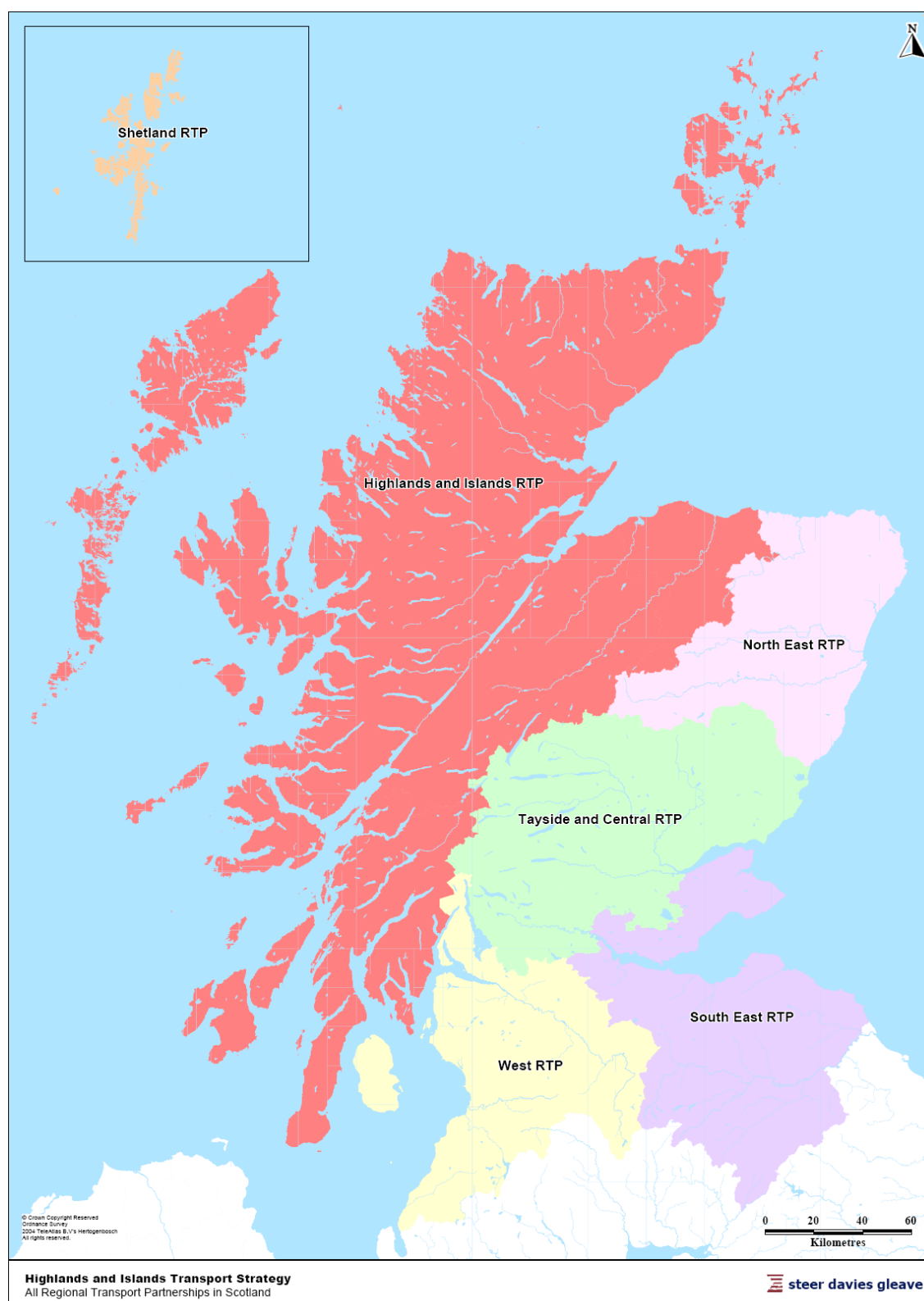
The Action Programme

We have developed proposals to deliver these priorities using the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance tests. These proposals are contained in the action programme annexed to the Strategy.

Monitoring and review

The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy is intended to be a live document, and needs to be reviewed and updated over its 15 year lifespan. HITRANS undertakes to prepare a monitoring strategy during the first year of the strategy which will inform Annual Progress Reports, with a full four-yearly review of the Strategy.

FIGURE 1 MAP OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP AREA



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The HITRANS statutory Regional Transport Partnership is tasked with preparing a strategy for the region. Indeed preparing, and maintaining, this Regional Transport Strategy is one of the Partnership's key functions. The Regional Transport Strategy (known here simply as 'the Strategy') identifies common issues, builds consensus on the ways to tackle these issues, and sets out the priorities for future investment in the region. The Strategy is therefore a framework against which policy initiatives and projects can be developed by all partners across the region and beyond the region.

1.2 The Strategy also seeks to promote the region's strategic priorities as policy develops at the national and local levels. Transport is vital to everyday life in the Highlands and Islands and enables economic development and social inclusion. Continued investment in the region's infrastructure and services will allow the region to make a full and effective contribution to national economic life. In particular, this will support the development of key and emerging sectors, such as renewable energy, tourism, food and drink and the knowledge economy. It will also enhance the region's place competitiveness by helping to attract and retain people with skills, through making it a better place in which to live and work.

The HITRANS Regional Transport Partnership

1.3 Regional Transport Partnerships came into being on 1st December 2005. HITRANS is the transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (excluding Shetland and Arran) and its first task was to draw up and submit a completed transport strategy for the region by April 2007. The Strategy will be the framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services and demand management measures. This document constitutes that Strategy.

1.4 The partnership comprises eight members: one councillor from each of the five local authorities (Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) and three other appointed members.

Previous HITRANS Strategy

1.5 The previous HITRANS strategy, was conceived by the voluntary partnership which preceded the current RTP ¹. The strategy contained a vision for a regional transport system which:

- Enables the optimum growth of the regional economy through a network which secures the efficient import and export of products; facilitates internal and external business travel; and encourages growth in tourism.
- Provides cost effective access to all regional transport services in pursuit of social inclusion.
- Is safe to use and operate.

¹ A Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands, November 2002.
<http://www.hitrans.org.uk/downloads/Regional%20Transport%20Strategy.pdf>

- Is sustainable and has minimal practical impact on the environment.
- 1.6 During the preparation of this Strategy, a review of the previous strategy was undertaken and consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders. The review of the 2002 strategy found that many of the priority strategic projects programmed for 2003-06 were expected to be substantially completed during the current Highlands and Islands Special Transition Programme, while a small number of significant others would not start under the current programme. However, it became clear that the issues of **cost**, **economic prosperity**, **safety** and **sustainability**, included in the original vision remain relevant today. The new Strategy therefore retains these ideals as its key foci.
- 1.7 Through consultation with HITRANS member bodies and other bodies across the region, the review identified the strengths of the Strategy as follows:
- Leverage of funding from the Public Transport Fund, leading to significant investment in public transport infrastructure ².
 - Assistance in lobbying for region interests.
 - Facilitation of partnership working at a regional level.
 - Prioritisation of projects at a regional level, which has supported individual project funding bids.
 - Facilitation of research on cross-boundary issues.
- 1.8 Meanwhile the identified weaknesses of the previous Strategy included:
- Low awareness of the strategy, particularly amongst transport operators.
 - Inadequate coverage of some issues such as concessionary fares, rail, accessibility and environmental sustainability.
 - A lack of focus in the delivery mechanisms.
 - Perceived as a political ‘wish list’ of projects.
 - Lack of monitoring framework.
- 1.9 The 2002 Strategy has clearly played a role in supporting the case for and delivery of certain projects, which have referred to the Strategy in their business case. Furthermore, it has strongly influenced the Public Transport Fund expenditure in the region, which has been guided by a set of Public Transport Fund investment themes developed from the 2002 Strategy. Thus, delivery in the field of public and sustainable transport has been achieved on the ground across the region using this set of funding.

² The Public Transport Fund was set up in March 1999, and has now allocated £235 million to help deliver over 100 local projects across Scotland. The Public Transport Fund has provided for all aspects of public transport – rail, bus, ferry, air, as well as measures to help disabled people and improve facilities for walking and cycling. The fifth and final round of Public Transport Fund awards was made in November 2002.

2. CONTEXT FOR THE HITRANS REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

- 2.1 The development of the Strategy has been steered by the overall vision of the Partnership, has followed guidance from the Scottish Executive, and has been informed by a number of key plans and policies, particularly those relating to national transport objectives, and those relating to health, social inclusion, economic development, sustainable development and land use planning at the regional and local levels. The final Strategy is the result of extensive consultation, including a period of public consultation from November 2006 to February 2007.
- 2.2 During the preparation of the Regional Transport Strategy, key policy documents in all of these areas were reviewed, and their objectives and priorities have fed into the Strategy. This review is presented in an accompanying report ³, and it helped to scope the key issues to be faced by the region over the Strategy's lifespan, and beyond.
- 2.3 The main points of this updated review are presented below, to illustrate the wide range of issues that have both informed the Regional Transport Strategy, and which the Strategy must take into account over the next 15 years. Transport does not stand alone – it is inextricably linked to the objectives of many other sectors, and affects everyone in their daily lives. Moreover, achieving improvements to our transport system requires effective partnership working.

Hierarchy of transport objectives

- 2.4 The Regional Transport Strategy sits within a hierarchy of transport policies and programmes, as follows:
- European Transport Policy White Paper.
 - National Transport Strategy for Scotland.
 - HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.
 - Local Transport Strategies, prepared by HITRANS' constituent local authorities.
 - Informal area-wide transport policies.
- 2.5 The Regional Transport Strategy provides a framework for the transport activities of constituent councils, health boards and others. It acknowledges that delivery of the Strategy objectives and policies are dependent upon partnership working with a wide range of bodies and funders, as the many areas of the Strategy relate to issues that will remain outside the Partnership's direct responsibility.
- 2.6 In addition, each local authority within the region is at different stage in developing a new Local Transport Strategy. The Guidance on preparing Local Transport Strategies states that they should cover a three-year period, whilst recognising that many transport projects will extend beyond this period. Progress on developing these strategies is mixed across Scotland and the region, and HITRANS will continue to work with local authorities to work towards common goals and objectives.

³ Review of the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Strategy_final report, October 2005, HITRANS

- 2.7 Moreover, Regional Transport Strategies are a statutory requirement, and will be binding on constituent authorities. Local Transport Strategies therefore need to be consistent with the objectives of the regional strategy.
- 2.8 Across the region, there are a number of sub-regional transport aspirations, expressed by communities in various forms. One example is the Caithness Transport Vision⁴, which brings together aspirations for an improved transport network across the Caithness area, including improved road and rail connections. There are specific transport infrastructure aspirations for the Inner Moray Firth, to support its substantial growth in development in recent and future years.
- 2.9 A wider partnership programme exists to promote a sustainable future for the most economically and socially fragile areas across the region, *Initiatives at the edge*⁵. A partnership of communities, local authorities and various agencies, it has existed since 1998 and represents the Isles of Jura, Coll, Eday, Sanday, Barra and Caithness Southeast, amongst others.
- 2.10 These tiers of policy are discussed in more detail below, together with a range of cross-sector policies of relevance to the far-reaching nature of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

European policy context

- 2.11 The European Commission in their 2001 Transport Paper⁶ and the mid term review⁷, set out policy guidelines and priorities for transport across Europe. The objectives for transport policy at the European level are to help provide Europeans with efficient, effective transportation systems that:
- Offer a high level of **mobility** to people and businesses throughout the Union.
 - **Protect** the environment, ensure energy security, promote minimum labour standards.
 - **Innovate** in support of the first two aims of mobility and protection by increasing the efficiency and sustainability of the growing transport sector.
 - **Connect internationally**, projecting the Union's policies to reinforce sustainable mobility, protection and innovation, by participating in international organisations.
- 2.12 The mid-term Review identifies the following key themes:
- Sustainable mobility in the internal market – connecting Europeans.
 - Sustainable mobility for the citizen – reliable, safe and secure transport.

⁴ Caithness Transport Vision, Caithness Transport Forum, 2006

⁵ <http://www.initiative-at-the-edge.org.uk/>

⁶ European transport policy for 2010: time to decide, European Commission, 2001, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/white_paper/index_en.htm

⁷ Mid-term review of the 2001 Transport White Paper “Keep Europe moving”, European Commission, 2006, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/transport_policy_review/index_en.htm

- Transport and energy.
 - Optimising infrastructure.
 - Intelligent mobility.
 - The global dimension.
- 2.13 Of particular relevance to the HITRANS context is the issue of optimising infrastructure. The White Paper mid-term review promotes investment in new or improve intelligent infrastructure to eliminate bottlenecks, to enable co-modal transport solutions as well as connecting peripheral and outermost regions with the mainland. Eliminating bottlenecks is particularly critical for many parts of the region where sub-standard sections of road still exist on long sections of high quality two track single carriageway, or where congestion exists within urban areas.
- 2.14 Other key areas of emphasis within the White Paper mid-term review which are relevant to the HITRANS context are (references to sections in the White Paper given):
- Promote rail freight (section 3.1).
 - Reducing negative environmental effects of a rapid growth in air travel whilst maintaining the competitiveness of the sector (section 3.2).
 - Further develop maritime policy, including short sea shipping (section 3.3).
 - Safety for transport users (section 4.3).
 - Promote energy efficiency and promote new technologies to reduce the impacts of transport on the environment (section 5).
- 2.15 ROADEX is a European initiative involving the Scandinavian countries of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Greenland as well as the local authorities of Highland Council and Comhairle nan Eilean in Scotland⁸. ROADEX was formed to share knowledge and carry out research on the roads, transport and freight movements in remote rural communities. The ROADEX initiative is now in its third cycle. One of the research projects is looking at the sustainability of rural communities and the problems of declining populations. Declining populations in remote areas is a common problem throughout northern Europe and the impact of transport on these areas is being analysed. The HITRANS area has a number of fragile areas with lifeline transport services and the outcomes of the ROADEX research will be of benefit within the Regional Transport Strategy context as well as to local strategies across the Highlands and Islands. When completed this research will be able to provide a package of transport measures which will hopefully reverse the trend declining populations in fragile communities.

Achieving National Transport Objectives

- 2.16 The development of the new Strategy is in keeping with the *Transport (Scotland) Act 2005*, which calls for the strategy to:

⁸ www.roadex.org

‘plan how transport in the region will be provided, developed, improved and operated so as to:

- *Enhance social and economic well-being.*
- *Promote public safety, including road safety and the safety of users of public transport.*
- *Be consistent with the principle of sustainable development and to conserve and enhance the environment.*
- *Promote social inclusion.*
- *Encourage equal opportunities and, in particular, the observance of the equal opportunities requirements.*
- *Facilitate access to hospitals, clinics, surgeries and other places where a health service is provided.*
- *Integrate with transport elsewhere.’*⁹

2.17 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 also calls for each Regional Transport Strategy to:

- Make provision in respect to how transport in the region needs to be provided, developed or improved, having regard to, among other things, future needs including those occasioned by demographic and land use changes; and what can be done, taking account of cost, funding and practicability.
- Provide an order of priority in which different elements of the provision, development and improvement of transport should be undertaken.
- Measure and monitor the achievement of the Strategy.

2.18 The **National Transport Strategy**, published in November 2006, provides national policy context and direction on how transport delivery contributes to the achievement of other national objectives, for example, on economic growth, climate change and social inclusion. The National Transport Strategy presents three key strategic outcomes that must be focused on to achieve the national vision and objectives for transport in Scotland. These three outcomes are:

- Improve journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety.
- Reduce emissions, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on our high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health.
- Improve quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.

2.19 The Strategy is intended to contribute to the overall vision, aim and objectives for transport in Scotland, as set out in the white paper **Scotland’s Transport Future** of June 2004, and confirmed in the National Transport Strategy. This vision is:

⁹ Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. Available at:
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/20050012.htm>

*'an accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that support economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use; a transport system that meets everyone's needs, respects our environment and contributes to health; services recognised internationally for quality, technology and innovation, and for effective and well-maintained networks; a culture where fewer short journeys are made by car, where we favour public transport, walking and cycling because they are safe and sustainable, where transport providers and planners respond to the changing needs of businesses, communities and users, and where one ticket will get you anywhere.'*¹⁰

2.20 The five high level objectives for transport in Scotland are:

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

2.21 The objectives of the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Strategy are consistent with these national objectives, as demonstrated in Table 4.2.

Furthering economic development goals

2.22 The HITRANS Strategy has also been developed to contribute towards Ministers' wider policy goals including their top priority of growing the Scottish economy, an issue which is particularly relevant in the Highlands and Islands context.

2.23 At the regional level, the Enterprise strategy for the Highlands and Islands, *A Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands*¹¹ presents an overall aim of enabling people living in the Highlands and Islands to realise their full potential on a long-term sustainable basis. This aim is supported by the Regional Transport Strategy, and has informed the overarching vision of **enhancing the viability of the region**.

2.24 Sub-regional economic and community development strategies set out local issues and priorities which the Regional Transport Strategy has to be aware of. For example, the Western Isles Community Planning Strategy: *Creating Communities for the Future*, recognises that transport has a role to play in the vision to revitalise the islands and to

¹⁰ Scotland's Transport Future: the transport white paper, June 2004, Scottish Executive.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/transport/stfwp-00.asp>

¹¹ Smart, Successful Highlands and Islands, An enterprise strategy for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, HIE, June 2005, <http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-HIE-corporate-documents-2005-06/a-smart-successful-handi-english.pdf>

transform the Western Isles into a net contributor to the Scottish Economy¹². *Moray 2020*¹³, the strategy for the diversification of the Moray economy, recognises the:

*“need to transform the infrastructure of the area in terms of transport links...to enhance our appeal as a location for inward investment, government dispersals and growing business.”*¹⁴

- 2.25 The strategy reports that the inadequacies of transport infrastructure in the area compound the relatively remote geographic position of Moray, and that this is the most all-pervading structural limitation on Moray’s prosperity. The *Community Plan for the Highlands*¹⁵ calls for infrastructure investment in transport as an essential requirement to attract higher levels of in-migration and to retain the resident population, by maintaining and underpinning the region’s economy (and its quality of life)¹⁶. The *Argyll & Bute Community Planning Partnership Detailed Action Plan* calls for transportation and accessibility needs to be addressed through the development of an integrated transportation network¹⁷. The *Orkney Community Plan* focuses on three principles of survival, sustainability and equity. In terms of transport, the aim is to facilitate:

*“...an effective and efficient transportation network that supports the economic vitality, community wellbeing and environmental integrity of all of Orkney.”*¹⁸

- 2.26 At a sub-regional level, there are aspirations for local economic and community development. Examples of these include the Sutherland partnership, a Community Planning Partnership, which exists to promote further community development across Sutherland. *A Strategy for Sutherland*¹⁹ contains an overarching aim for the area – “positively influencing population change in Sutherland to achieve, over time, a vibrant, viable and revitalised population that enjoys a high quality of life”.
- 2.27 Tourism has a vital role to play in economic development across the HITRANS area. The Highland Area Tourism Partnership has prepared a Highland Tourism Strategy and related Action Plan²⁰, which aims to grow the value of tourism by 4% annually. One billion pounds is already generated annually in the Highlands and Islands from tourism, a sector which accounts for 13.5% of employment (excluding self-

¹² *Creating Communities for the Future*: www.cne-siar.gov.uk/ccof/index.htm

¹³ *Moray 2020: Strategy for diversification of the economy of Moray following restructuring of the RAF bases at Kinloss and Lossiemouth*, <http://www.hie.co.uk/MBSE/9577-EXECUTIVE-SUMMARY.pdf>

¹⁴ *Moray 2020: Strategy for the diversification of the economy of Moray following restructuring of the RAF bases at Kinloss and Lossiemouth*: http://www.moraycommunity.org.uk/documents/Moray_2020.pdf

¹⁵ *Community Plan for Highland 2004/07*: <http://www.highland.gov.uk/cx/pdf/cp-highland.pdf>

¹⁶ As well as Community Infrastructure, Housing, Public Utilities, Telecommunications and Waste Management Facilities.

¹⁷ *Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership Detailed Action Plan Summer 2002*: http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/complan/pdf/Detailed_action_plan.pdf

¹⁸ *Orkney 2020: Our Community Plan 2007, February 2007*, : http://www.orkney.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6688&tt=orkneyv2

¹⁹ *A Strategy for Sutherland 2005-2009*, Sutherland Partnership

²⁰ *Highland Tourism Strategy*, Highland Area Tourism Partnership, 2006

employment) across the region. The majority of the tourism market is domestic – in 2005, 86% of visitors to Scotland (overnight stays) were from the UK, of which 45% were from Scotland. Ensuring the transport system can support this growing industry is vital.

Land use planning and the Strategy

- 2.28 The development of the Strategy has been informed strongly by development plans in each local authority area, as well as ensuring it is consistent with the key aims of the National Planning Framework.
- 2.29 Published in 2004, and the first of its kind in Scotland, the National Planning Framework sets out a framework to guide the spatial development of Scotland to 2025, with a vision of Scotland to which other plans and programmes are expected to contribute ²¹.
- 2.30 The key aims of the Framework for Scotland’s spatial development to 2025, which are consistent within the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy are:
- To increase economic growth and competitiveness.
 - To promote social and environmental justice.
 - To promote sustainable development and protect and enhance the quality of natural and built environments.
- 2.31 A key theme of the strategy is “a better transport system” which is viewed to be necessary to achieve the aims of the National Planning Framework. Within this, emphasis is placed on developing external links to and from Scotland, improving connectivity particularly through improving journey times, and promoting sustainable transport modes, particularly through the land use planning system. The Framework accepts that many parts of the Highlands and Islands will continue to depend heavily on road transport in the drive to improve connectivity.
- 2.32 These principles have informed the development of the Regional Transport Strategy, particularly the need to improve connectivity, which forms the key delivery objective of the Strategy (see Figure 4-1), and against which Strategy measures have been tested. The National Planning Framework identifies key transport corridors, with which this Strategy is consistent ²².
- 2.33 During preparatory work for the development of the statutory Regional Transport Strategy, structure plans covering the region were reviewed to assess aims, areas and issues of priority, and future demand which may be placed on the transport system from new development. The hierarchy of settlements and transport network contained within this Regional Transport Strategy has been directly informed by development plans across the region, and future demand has been considered in the assessment of

²¹ National Planning Framework for Scotland: Guidance for the spatial development of Scotland to 2025, 2004, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/04/19170/35317>

²² Map 22 of the National Planning Framework, *ibid*

the adequacy of the network, discussed further in Section 4.

- 2.34 Furthermore, the Cairngorms National Park Authority covers part of the region, and has a statutory National Park Plan which sets out its priorities for 2007 to 2012, as well as setting a longer term vision for the Park area over a 25 year period²³. Amongst the Plan's strategic objectives is ensuring that new development and infrastructure is "designed to complement and enhance the landscape character of its setting". The National Park Authority shares statutory planning functions with the four local authorities within the Park boundary, and is responsible for preparing Local Plans for the Park, as well as determining planning applications of significance to the Park. In addition, the Cairngorms National Park Authority has a role in transport provision. As an example, it part-funds the "Heather Hopper", an innovative cross-Park bus service.

The Strategy's links to health

- 2.35 A review of key health priorities was carried out in the development of the Regional Transport Strategy, and consultation has been carried out with representatives of the North of Scotland NHS Planning Group and individual health boards.
- 2.36 Some of the key challenges for the Regional Transport Strategy from the health sector over the next fifteen years are likely to include:
- A changing view of the NHS towards a service delivered predominantly in local communities rather than in hospitals.
 - Preventative, anticipatory care rather than reactive management – with this comes an emphasis on measures to promote health improvement, such as increased physical activity, to which greater levels of active travel can contribute.
 - Implications from the Scottish Ambulance Service Health Plan and Delivery Plan 2007-2010²⁴ which proposes to further tailor and prioritise Patient Transport Services, the non-emergency element of the service, to target those most in need, and work with local authorities and voluntary agencies for health and social care transport²⁵.
- 2.37 The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy is responding to these challenges, by working towards a transport network and infrastructure that is fit for purpose, improving passenger transport across the region, developing policies to promote community and health transport, and promoting active travel (see Section 4 and Appendix B in particular).

Sustainable development and climate change

- 2.38 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out of the HITRANS

²³ National Park Plan, Cairngorms National Park Authority, 2007

²⁴ The Scottish Ambulance Service Board Health Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10, incorporating Delivery Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10; and Development Programme, FIFTH VERSION
http://www.scottishambulance.com/docs/Health_Plans/HlthPlanDec-Jan.pdf

²⁵ Building a Health Service Fit for the Future, Scottish Executive, June 2005
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/05/23141307/13104>

Regional Transport Strategy, as required by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Scotland) Regulations 2004. This process has ensured that the strategic environmental impacts of the Strategy have been considered at every stage of planning, and mitigation measures have been put in place to minimise any negative environmental impacts arising from the Strategy. Indeed, an objective of the RTS is to *manage the impacts of travel on the region's natural assets* (see Figure 4-1). Furthermore, a specific horizontal sub-strategy on environmental impacts has been developed in response to consultation on the draft Strategy.

- 2.39 It is clear that the drive towards sustainable development and the requirements to respond to climate change present a significant challenge to all public policy makers. Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy ***Choosing our future***, signs up to the UK's Shared Framework for Sustainable Development, and sets the principles by which this will be adopted in Scotland. The Strategy recognises that the ability to travel is essential to maintaining a good quality of life and in helping communities to thrive, but at the same time, that it puts significant pressure on natural resources and impacts significantly on the environment. More sustainable travel choices, such as cycling and walking are recognised as bringing major health as well as environmental benefits.
- 2.40 In response to the climate change challenge, the Scottish Executive has published a Changing our Ways: Scotland's Climate Change Programme ²⁶. Scotland has set a target of exceeding the Scottish Share of carbon savings (1.7 megatonnes of carbon) by 1 million by 2010. In 2003, the transport sector was the second biggest contributor Greenhouse Gas emission, at 17%. The transport sector is also a major consumer of energy, the second largest after the residential sector. The need to reduce emissions is reflected in the National Transport Strategy's strategic outcome of reducing emissions.
- 2.41 Other key mechanisms for reducing transport's impact on climate change, as proposed in the Climate Change Programme, are:
- Working towards the inclusion of aviation and surface transport emissions in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.
 - Working towards a target of 5% biofuels of all UK fuel sold.
 - Promoting new and cleaner vehicle technologies and fuels.
 - Travel Plan officers in Regional Transport Partnerships, and support for travel behaviour change and modal shift to more sustainable modes.
- 2.42 The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy supports initiatives to promote travel behaviour change and modal shift in urban areas, in particular through our passenger transport, urban congestion and active travel sub-strategies, as reported in Section 5. We will develop further policies on sustainable fuel throughout the review process of the Strategy, as technologies in this field develop and become more applicable to the Highlands and Islands context. A set of policies on mitigating and reducing environmental impacts is contained within the horizontal sub-strategy on environmental impacts (Section 4 and Appendix B).

²⁶ Changing our ways: Scotland's Climate Change Programme, March 2006

- 2.43 In reality however, the Strategy is unlikely to achieve a net reduction in emissions in its lifetime, given the need to promote travel across the region to deliver our objective of improving interconnectivity (see Section 4). To mitigate impacts from a likely net increase in carbon emissions related to transport, HITRANS will work with partners to promote the development of alternative fuel technologies in the region, and will seek to promote off-setting of emissions by the region's developing renewable energy sector. HITRANS takes its duty to combat climate change seriously, and it is a longer term aspiration to seek to reduce emissions with the use of technology with regards transport, an increase in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and mobile services, more environmentally sustainable land use planning decisions, and modal shift to sustainable modes for business and community travel where feasible (noting the latter will require significant investment, in for example rail freight).

Partnership working with other Regional Transport Partnerships

- 2.44 The Chairs of the seven Regional Transport Partnerships and the lead officers meet regularly to discuss the development of their Regional Transport Strategies. Cross boundary issues form part of these discussions. HITRANS and NESTRANS (North East Scotland) are working jointly with Transport Scotland on the Aberdeen to Inverness Transport Corridor Study which will feed into the Strategic Transport Projects Review. HITRANS, NESTRANS, SPT (West of Scotland) and the Shetland Partnership have jointly commissioned work on ferry traffic and marine bulk freight. HITRANS, NESTRANS and TACTRANS are co-operating to secure train time improvements on the services into Edinburgh from the north. Where this Strategy identifies interventions outwith the HITRANS boundary, for example the A82 south of Tyndrum, the neighbouring Regional Transport Partnership is aware and has included similar action in its own Regional Transport Strategy.

Partnership working with key players

- 2.45 As is evident from this review of policy priorities, the delivery of HITRANS objectives will not be achieved by only working with local authority transport departments, other Regional Transport Partnerships, and the Scottish Executive / Transport Scotland. Delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy will require strong partnership working with other key stakeholders, including bodies involved in the delivery of transport and related infrastructure across the region (such as First Scotrail, Loganair, Highlands and Islands Enterprise Limited, TranServe, bus and coach operators, Network Rail, freight operators, community transport operators), bodies with a remit in road safety (local authorities and Police Forces across the region), bodies involved in economic development and sustainable development across the region (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Historic Scotland, National Park Authorities), and organisations committed to health improvement and social inclusion (such as Community Planning Partnerships, Health Boards). This list is not exhaustive.
- 2.46 Moreover, it is vital that the Regional Transport Strategy policy objectives become part of the wider policy making processes across local authority departments, and does not remain vested purely within transport policy – land use planning officers (both in terms of strategic planning and development management) are key to the delivery of the Strategy, as are health improvement officers, School Travel Plan Coordinators,

Road Safety Officers, Outdoor Access Officers, amongst others.

What do we expect the Regional Transport Strategy to do?

- 2.47 The Regional Transport Strategy contains strategies and interventions for the short, medium and long term and provides a framework for the transport activities of local authorities and others.
- 2.48 The Strategy makes proposals for improvements to services and infrastructure provided by others, including the Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland, where these have a regional impact. The full implementation of the Strategy will require additional funding or other action to be taken by the Scottish Ministers. The Partnership will use the Strategy to make the case to the Scottish Ministers for the inclusion of such proposals in forward investment plans.
- 2.49 The vehicle for doing this will be the Strategic Transport Projects Review, which will be carried out for the first time between 2006 and 2008 ²⁷. This Regional Transport Strategy will be the region's main input to that review process.

²⁷ Transport Scotland is undertaking the Strategic Transport Projects Review, a major study to help shape Scotland's transport network from 2012 onwards. The Review represents the first opportunity to carry out a nationwide, multimodal evaluation of Scotland's key strategic transport network. The scope of this work has been enhanced by the devolution of additional rail powers to Transport Scotland by the Railways Act 2005. At its conclusion expected in summer 2008, the Review will recommend a programme of improvements for implementation between 2012 and 2022. This could include new infrastructure projects, better incentives for alternative travel and more carefully targeted investment across the country.
<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/defaultpage1221cde0.aspx?pageID=253>

3. ISSUES

Introduction

- 3.1 The Strategy is based on a thorough understanding of the transport challenges faced by the region. In keeping with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance, it is important that the Strategy is based on a detailed and, where practicable, quantified understanding of the transport problems, constraints and opportunities within the region. In particular it is essential to understand where established policies and objectives are not being achieved as a result of deficiencies within the transport system.
- 3.2 The Highlands and Islands is a very diverse region, with a mixture of rural and remote rural areas, as well as several key urban centres. A large proportion of the region and its households are located in the remote and rural areas, in the islands and the west and north mainland, with significant implications for access to services and jobs. On the other hand, significant population numbers reside in the region's more urban areas including in Inverness, Oban, Stornoway, Kirkwall and Elgin.
- 3.3 The region is also a distinctive one. The Highlands and Islands region is unlike any other part of the UK and its current provision of transport reflect this. It is different in terms of the provision of services or lack of services, and the community-led schemes which prevail in many of the remote rural areas. Services are slowly being withdrawn from many of the more remote parts of the Highlands and if populations continue to shrink, the remoteness and fragility of the communities will only increase.
- 3.4 Efforts are ongoing to reverse population decline across the region, and some areas are starting to see a turnaround in depopulation with the assistance of Initiative at the Edge for example. Transport plays a key role in helping to reverse this trend and will help in contributing to sustainable communities and a healthy economy. Transport services therefore need to be sustained and developed to serve the unique situation which prevails across the Highlands and Islands. As an example of the distinctive issues the region faces, significant diversions are often required when access on poor quality roads is interrupted due to failure of the infrastructure, accidents or indeed weather or flooding. This results in adding to the cost of travel or in extreme cases results in the cancellation of necessary journeys, making journeys unreliable for both communities and businesses.
- 3.5 The area covered by the HITRANS Partnership includes the most sparsely-populated area of the United Kingdom. The region comprises a huge area of land, with an indented coastline and mountainous topography. As a result, journeys tend to be slower in this region than elsewhere in the UK.

Issues

- 3.6 Increasingly, the need to facilitate and improve access to all manner of opportunities is being recognised, as are the social and personal costs of the lack of transport and access to these services. The specific transport needs of rural areas have long been documented:

“The well-being of individuals, families and rural communities depends on access to employment and to basic services and amenities. Transport is the main agent in enabling people to satisfy these needs.”²⁸

3.7 This still remains true today, albeit referred to as ‘social inclusion’. The ability of amenities, educational centres and businesses to go about their activities or provide services is highly dependent on the level and quality of access. Transport is therefore a critical issue for businesses in rural areas, enabling them to access goods and move products to market, and so enabling them to support the sustainability of rural communities.

3.8 The remainder of this section provides the context and rationale for the focus on these key issues to the region.

Baseline transport situation

3.9 At 66 to 79%, **car ownership** levels in rural areas have, for many years, been higher than those in urban areas (typically 51 to 64%). The proportion of households having one, two or three or more cars is also greater in rural than in urban areas. This raises a number of significant issues in rural areas:

- A lack of public transport opportunities means that car ownership can be more of a necessity than a luxury and can impose high financial costs on relatively low-income families, meaning that expenditure on other items has to be forgone.
- Higher levels of car ownership, combined with the relatively low densities of population and long distances between settlements, mean that it is more difficult and expensive to operate an effective public transport network. This perpetuates the accessibility problems, so that where services are available journeys due to the distances and higher costs are more expensive to the user.
- Fuel costs are higher in the region compared to elsewhere in the UK and this, combined with generally longer distances travelled, means that expenditure on travel is much higher than in urban areas.
- Higher car ownership is often used as a proxy for levels of affluence. However, given the necessity of a car, this is frequently inappropriate for the region.

3.10 The 2001 Census collected data on the means of transport to work and study. Across the region these data show high levels of dependence on the car, public transport and walking. The data also show high incidences of working from home in the most rural and remote areas of Scotland. The data are presented in Table 3.1 below.

²⁸ Pacine M (1984) *Rural Geography* Harper & Row. Pp 281.

TABLE 3.1 MEANS OF TRAVEL TO WORK OR STUDY

	Work from home	Train	Bus, minibus, coach	Taxi, minicab	Car driver	Car passenger	Motorcycle	Bicycle	Walk	Other
Argyll & Bute	9%	4%	11%	1%	37%	11%	0%	1%	23%	2%
Eilean Siar	9%	1%	21%	1%	40%	13%	0%	1%	12%	2%
Highland	9%	1%	12%	1%	39%	11%	0%	3%	22%	1%
Moray	7%	2%	9%	1%	39%	11%	1%	4%	25%	2%
Orkney Islands	13%	0%	13%	0%	38%	10%	0%	2%	21%	3%
SCOTLAND	6%	3%	16%	1%	39%	11%	0%	1%	22%	1%

Source: Census 2001: Table UV40 Method of travel to work or study: resident population (Scotland)

- 3.11 The table shows that efficient access to employment opportunities, and all manner of other destinations, across the region for almost two-thirds of the region's working population is dependent upon an appropriate and efficient road network. Given that for many of those walking to work, the road network is also the main infrastructure for their journey, the road network arguably provides for almost 90% of all journeys to work across the region.
- 3.12 The region's **road network** comprises a mix of trunk and local roads (there are no motorways in the region). The management and maintenance of the trunk road network sits with Transport Scotland. The majority of the network is winding single carriageway roads, with limited passing places. This results in longer journey times, particularly in summer when traffic levels increase due to the volume of tourists visiting the region. The lack of suitable diversionary routes can be exacerbated by weather and topographical factors. Table 3.2 presents the public road lengths by local authority in April 2004.

TABLE 3.2 PUBLIC ROAD LENGTHS BY COUNCIL, 2004

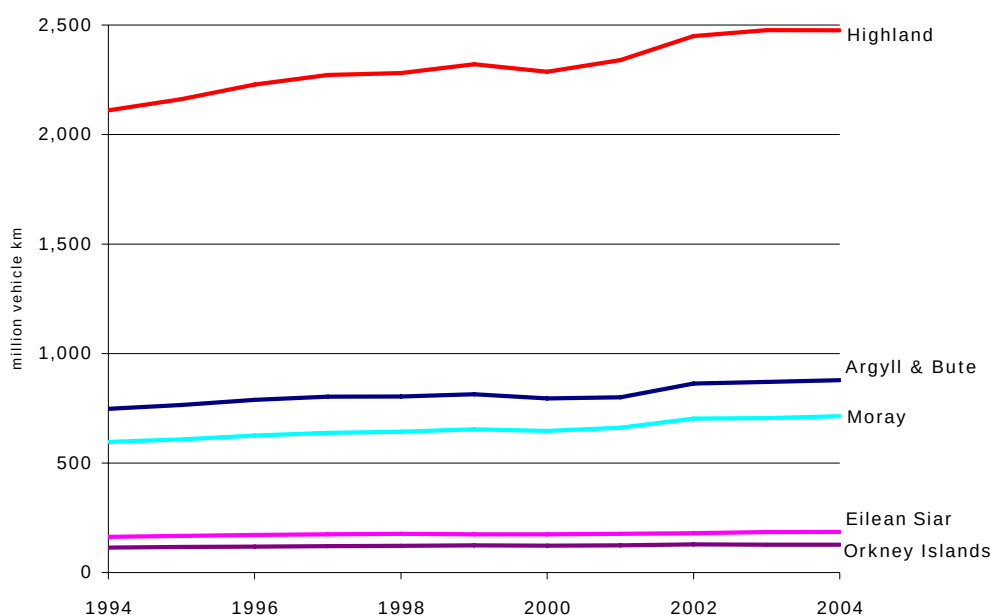
	Trunk			Local Authority					Total
	Motorway	A Roads	Total	A Roads	B Roads	C Roads	Unclassified	Total	All roads
Argyll & Bute	-	231	231	549	619	431	709	2,309	2,540
Eilean Siar	-	-	-	333	182	174	502	1,190	1,190
Highland	-	980	980	1,389	979	1,437	2,846	6,650	7,630
Moray	-	97	97	157	291	366	693	1,507	1,604
Orkney Islands	-	-	-	161	205	160	452	977	977
Total		1,308	1,308	2,589	2,276	2,568	5,202	12,633	13,941

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 24, August 2005, Chapter 5, Table T5.2.

- 3.13 Table 3.2 illustrates the dominance of unclassified roads across the region, followed

by almost equal proportions of A, B and C classified roads. Figure 3-1 shows traffic levels on all roads in each local authority area between 1994 and 2004.

FIGURE 3-1 TRAFFIC LEVELS ON ALL ROADS, BY COUNCIL AREA



Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 24, August 2005, Chapter 6, Table T6.5

- 3.14 Traffic volumes increase significantly in some areas during tourist season. For example, in 2004 the section of the A830 between Lochailort and Arisaig saw a 200% increase in traffic volumes in August compared to February of the same year.
- 3.15 **Bus services** throughout the Highlands and Islands may be sub-divided into separate categories as follows:
- Long Distance coaches (Express and frequent halt).
 - Tourist coaches.
 - Urban Services.
 - Subsidised rural lifeline bus services.
 - Education Services with public transport provision.
 - Subsidised taxi services and Post Buses.
 - Dial a Ride services.
- 3.16 Bus services carry by far the majority of public transport passengers. The long distance, tourist and urban services are in the main operated as commercial bus services and have a reasonable frequency throughout the day.
- 3.17 **Subsidised and lifeline bus services** make up a large proportion of the local bus network in the region. This is particularly the case across the Islands' networks. The remainder of the local bus network consists of commercial bus services, over which local authorities have limited influence. Many places are served by local services and the long distance coach routes, yet limited frequencies away from all but the main

routes severely limit opportunities for commuting and travelling to other time-sensitive destinations. Local transport services tend to consist of radial bus services out of the main built up areas, such as Inverness, Elgin, Oban, Fort William, Thurso, Kirkwall and Stornoway. The greater the distance these services are from built up areas the less the frequency, and many of these services will be at most hourly on six days per week. Furthermore, many places have only three or four buses per day and some of the more remote areas have only a daily Postbus or school bus. In the most remote areas, bus services tend to consist of a morning service and an afternoon service, perhaps with the addition of a shopping run in the middle of the day, none of which tend to be suitable for commuting.

- 3.18 Some areas which are classified as having buses have only a school service which is made available to the public as a public service vehicle. This service does not therefore suit shoppers or commuters to work, nor does it operate during school holidays or weekends. There is also a potential for generating efficiency in school/public transport by staggering school start and finish times, to enable one bus to be utilised for several schools, as already happens in the Western Isles and Orkney.
- 3.19 Research has highlighted the issue of poor public transport in remote rural areas. This poor transport leads to fragile communities with declining populations, difficult access to services, shopping and work. In these cases the elderly and younger element of the communities are isolated, forcing migration to centres of population. It is recognised that transport is an important element in sustaining rural communities and preventing a downward spiral of decline in terms of the economy and unemployment. Bus services in rural areas are recognized as lifeline services and for many are the only link with the rest of their community and the principal population centres where essential services are provided.
- 3.20 Provision for people with disabilities is limited. Many older, less accessible buses remain in use, particularly in the more rural areas, and few bus stops are designed for easy accessibility. Access to bus stops, especially but not only in rural areas, is often not easy for people with limited mobility.
- 3.21 Inverness is the hub of the region's **rail network**, with the north-south route (Thurso/Wick to Glasgow/Edinburgh) and east-west route (Aberdeen to Kyle of Lochalsh) passing through the city. Traditional long distance trains are now overlaid with Invernet services providing higher frequency links into Inverness from Lairg and Kingussie. The West Highland Lines run from Glasgow to Mallaig via Fort William and to Oban via Crianlarich.
- 3.22 Considering the high car ownership levels, it is not unexpected that the car is the main means of travel for the journey to work. Many of the region's areas have levels of more than 50% of such journeys by car. Most notably, in almost all of South Uist and Barra over 70% of journeys to work are by car. Areas with the lowest levels of car use for journeys to work are in the north of Highland, in the southwest of Moray and across Argyll & Bute.

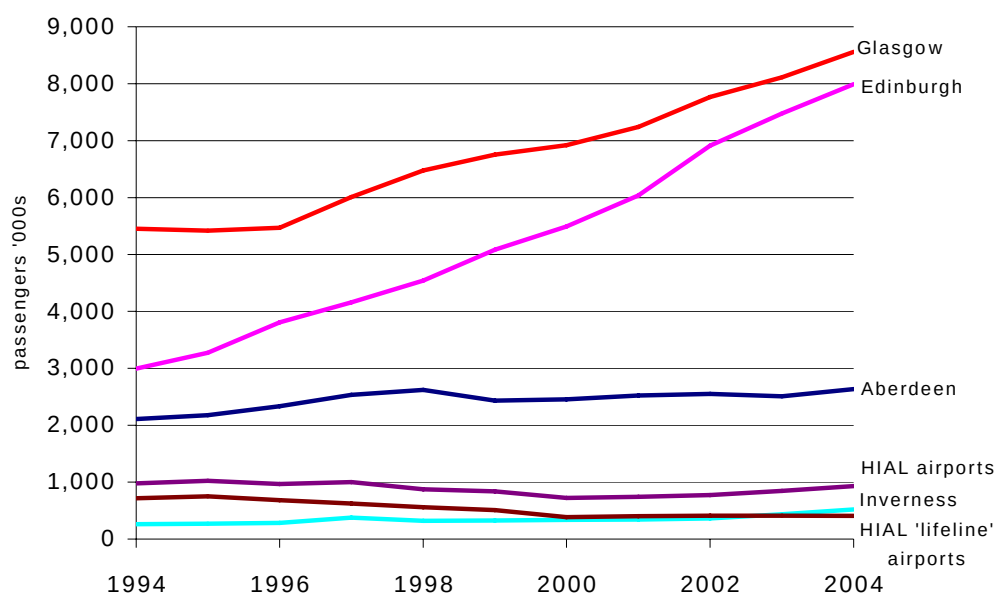
- 3.23 The highest proportions of public transport use for the journey to work are in the northeast of Highland, around Caithness and Wick (10-30%)²⁹, across significant parts of Western Isles, including Stornoway with 30%+ , and some parts of Orkney - South Ronaldsay (25%) and Evie, Rendell and the isles of Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre (25%). These data compare with the Scottish averages, of 15% of adults travel to work/education by bus and 3% travel by rail ³⁰.
- 3.24 **Lifeline ferry services** also make up an important part of the Highlands and Islands transport network and both mainland to island and inter-island services provide lifeline links for the populations of the islands and peninsulas. There is marked increase in network coverage and the frequency of sailings during the summer months to cope with the tourist trade. Communities benefit from increased summer schedules buoyed by tourist demand, but this then leaves deficiencies in service in the winter periods. There is poor integration, in terms of information, ticketing and timetabling, with other public transport ³¹.
- 3.25 The cost of providing the Caledonian MacBrayne and Northlink services is substantial. The resulting high fares on some routes can act as a disincentive to travel. The fare structure charged across the overall network is extremely variable, even for journeys of a comparable distance. On this basis, there seems to be scant economic rationale for the fare levels set across the region. Services are sometimes based around operational needs rather than those of the markets they serve, and whilst incremental improvements have been made over the years, the frequency on some routes remains poor, sometimes less than daily.
- 3.26 **Lifeline air services** in the Highlands and Islands are a crucial part of the transport network. The network is comprised of a combination of commercial and subsidised services (supported by Public Service Obligation), serving both internal routes and destinations external to the region. In 2001, the network of scheduled air services linking the ten airports of the Highlands and Islands to the Scottish Mainland cost £22.4 million to operate 'empty', before allowing for the marginal costs of carrying the current level of 383,000 passengers a year. At the same time, there is a general consensus that fare levels on these routes are very high compared to other domestic routes and that they are holding back the economic and social development of Scotland's peripheral regions. Growth of air traffic in the Highlands and Islands has been moderate for a few years while traffic to and from Central Scotland airports has continued to grow apace.
- 3.27 Figure 3.2 shows terminal passengers by airport between 1994 and 2004.

²⁹ This reflects the number of services that are provided to connect staff at shift start and end times to Dounreay.

³⁰ Scotland's People: Results from the 2001/02 Scottish Household Survey (Table 5.20).

³¹ A report for HITRANS: *Strategic Sea Crossings in the Highlands and Islands: Development Opportunities (2005-2025)*, November 2005. Prepared by Fisher Associates.

FIGURE 3-2 SUMMARY OF AIR TRANSPORT



- 3.28 In February 2006 the Scottish Government announced plans to employ the Aid of Social Character scheme to allow public sector support to reduce air fares in remote and peripheral regions on approval from the European Commission. The Air Discount Scheme enables residents of Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Islay, Jura, Caithness and North-West Sutherland to access a 40% discount on air fares to Inverness, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and local airports in the region. The Scheme is intended to better link isolated populations to commercial centres and so is not available to those whose main residence is not in the eligible geographic area, or on routes that are already operating under a Public Service Obligation.
- 3.29 There remains a need across the region for a more integrated internal UK service, which provides onward links to European destinations. This is particularly important for more remote communities within the Highlands and Islands. The Inverness Airport Master Plan sets out a programme of continued expansion of this important hub airport.

Current transport problems

- 3.30 A widely-dispersed **population** can make the delivery of public transport expensive and inefficient, leading to difficulties in providing an effective transport network. Poor transport networks detract from the attractiveness of an area to live and work in. Thin transport networks also limit the ability of businesses to compete with their counterparts in less peripheral areas.
- 3.31 The 2001 Census identifies 86 localities across the region, ranging from Aird with a population of 443 to Inverness with a population of 40,949. The region has two localities with populations greater than 10,000 people: Inverness and Elgin (20,829). There are a further 16 localities across the region with between 5,000 and 10,000 people.

- 3.32 There are many much smaller communities across the region, 29 localities with between 500 and 1,000 people, and many yet smaller settlements and hamlets dispersed across the region's vast area. Many of these areas are remote and peripheral in nature, particularly in terms of access to employment, services and facilities.
- 3.33 The Highlands and Islands region is home to approximately half a million people, living in an area of 39,000 square kilometres. The region is seeing a shift in its population dispersal with some areas seeing marked increases and others marked out-migration. Overall, the population of the region grew by 0.8% between 1991 and 2001 and is projected to grow by 2.3% in the twenty years to 2024³² & ³³ This growth is shown by local authority area in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3 POPULATION CHANGE 2004-2024

Local Authority area	Population 2004	Population projection 2024	Population change
Argyll & Bute	91,190	94,676	3.8%
Eilean Siar	26,260	22,413	-14.6%
Highland	211,340	218,894	3.6%
Moray	87,720	90,942	3.7%
Orkney Islands	19,500	19,108	-2.0%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland: Projected population by council and (NHS board) area (2004-based), 2004-2024. Table 1

- 3.34 However, authority-level population changes mask variations across the region and across local authority areas. The general population trend in the Highlands and Islands is that the more remote and peripheral areas are experiencing population decline, while population centres, especially around the Inner Moray Firth, are experiencing population growth. Despite these trends, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the island communities have a programme for revitalising communities which is expected to slow and even halt this population decline – improved transport has a key role. Furthermore, Orkney has experienced an upward trend since 2001.
- 3.35 Population growth in the Highlands and Islands is dominated by the Inner Moray Firth. The Inverness and Nairn area is home to 37% of the Highland (Council area) population and 45% of all employees in the region work there.³⁴ This generates a great deal of demand for travel, and the Inverness network must carry both these local trips and the travel demand of movements through Inverness. Inverness and the surrounding areas suffer from acute **congestion**, for example on the A96 through Moray. Bottlenecks on the network often exacerbate the problems associated with high levels of traffic.

³² Taken from Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network Economic Information, October 2003 Economic Update. Available from: <http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-highlands-and-islands-area-profile-2003.pdf>

³³ General Register Office for Scotland: Projected population by council and (NHS board) area (2004-based), 2004-2024. Table 1, available at: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/popproj/04pop-proj-scottishareas/list-of-tables.html#table1>

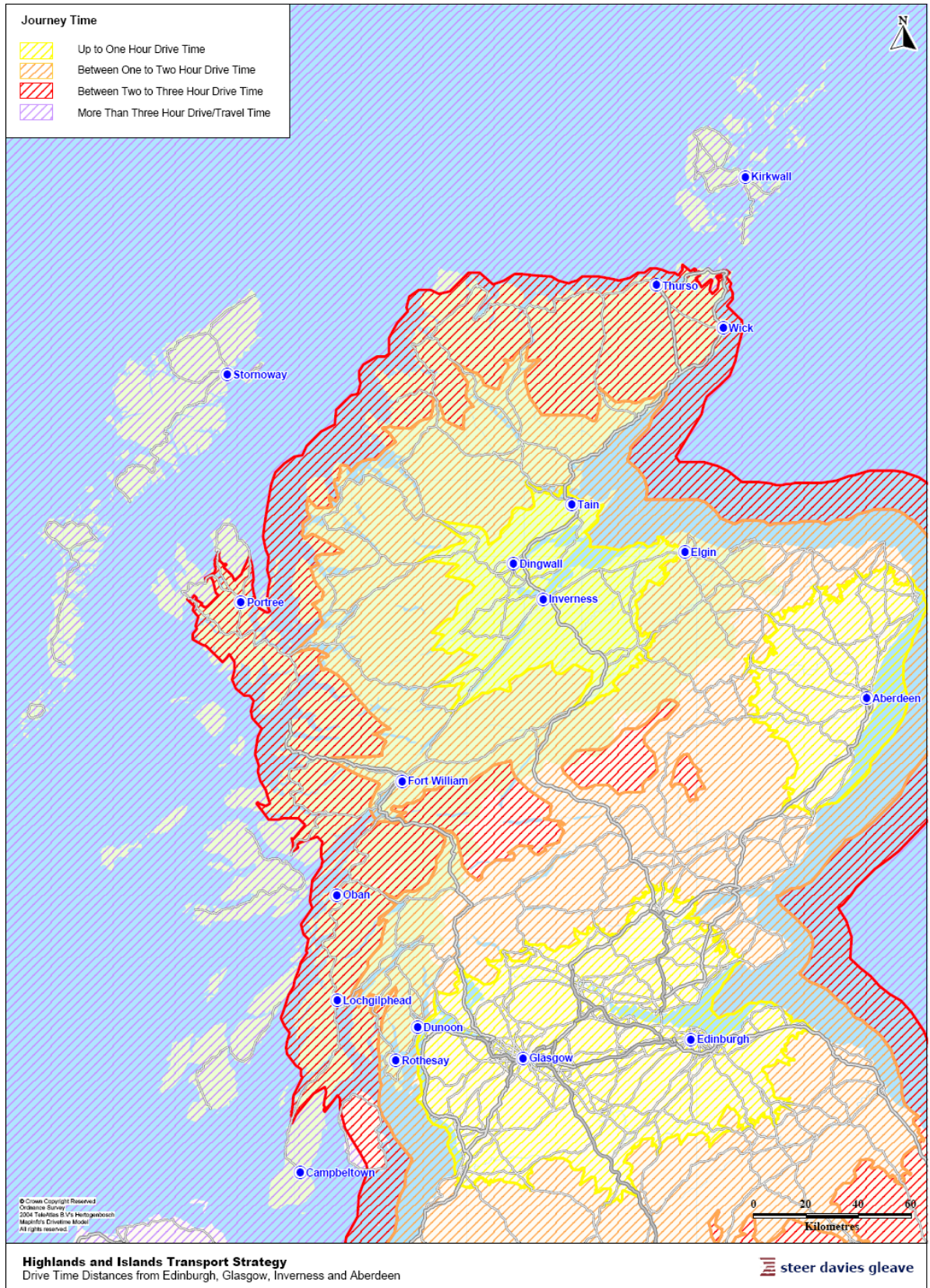
³⁴ Annual Business Inquiry, 2001.

- 3.36 Moreover, congested and queuing vehicles contribute to emission levels. There is a need to reduce the level of traffic in our urban areas, not only to reduce emissions but to improve the environment of town centres, enhancing the shopping experience and improving the quality of life for people living within the city environment. Addressing congestion at a local level will also contribute to the national traffic stabilisation target³⁵.
- 3.37 Local centres are also projected to continue to grow, including Stornoway, Kirkwall, Elgin and Oban. These too present travel demand issues, which may lead to localised traffic conflict / congestion.
- 3.38 Limited accessibility (and local facilities) can deter people from returning to their home to seek employment upon the completion of education or training programmes or a period of employment elsewhere. This is particularly the case in the most remote localities, such as islands, but also significant parts of the mainland such as Caithness. This means an ever-increasing loss of working-age population, which severely compromises the viability of island and remote communities³⁶. Moreover, some parts of the region are particularly affected by unemployment due to declining industries.
- 3.39 Due to the settlement patterns in the area, many journeys are relatively **long distance**, including transportation of goods to the marketplace, filling up with fuel, travelling to school, the shops, health services and the regional centres. Longer journey distances incur a time penalty (they take longer) and also add to the cost of travel. Across the region, 14% of people are travelling more than 20km to work, compared to 10% of the Scottish population as a whole.
- 3.40 Long journey distances, and slow and circuitous routes result in **long journey times** for private and public transport. The limited nature of diversionary routes for road and rail journeys mean should diversions be necessary (due to for example adverse weather conditions or accidents), journey times are significantly longer, and sometimes, journeys must be cancelled completely. Figure 3-3 shows the significant drive times involved from the national gateways across the region.

³⁵ The Executive's target (to stabilise road traffic levels at 2001 levels by 2021) was introduced in the Executive's transport report 'Scotland's Transport: Delivering Improvements'.

³⁶ Consultation report from workshop session, Tuesday 21st February 2006, Stornoway.

FIGURE 3-3 DRIVE TIME DISTANCES FROM EDINBURGH, GLASGOW, INVERNESS AND ABERDEEN



- 3.41 The significant journey times by rail are shown in the following maps, which display journey times from Glasgow and Edinburgh, and journey times from Inverness.

FIGURE 3-4 RAIL JOURNEY TIMES FROM GLASGOW AND EDINBURGH

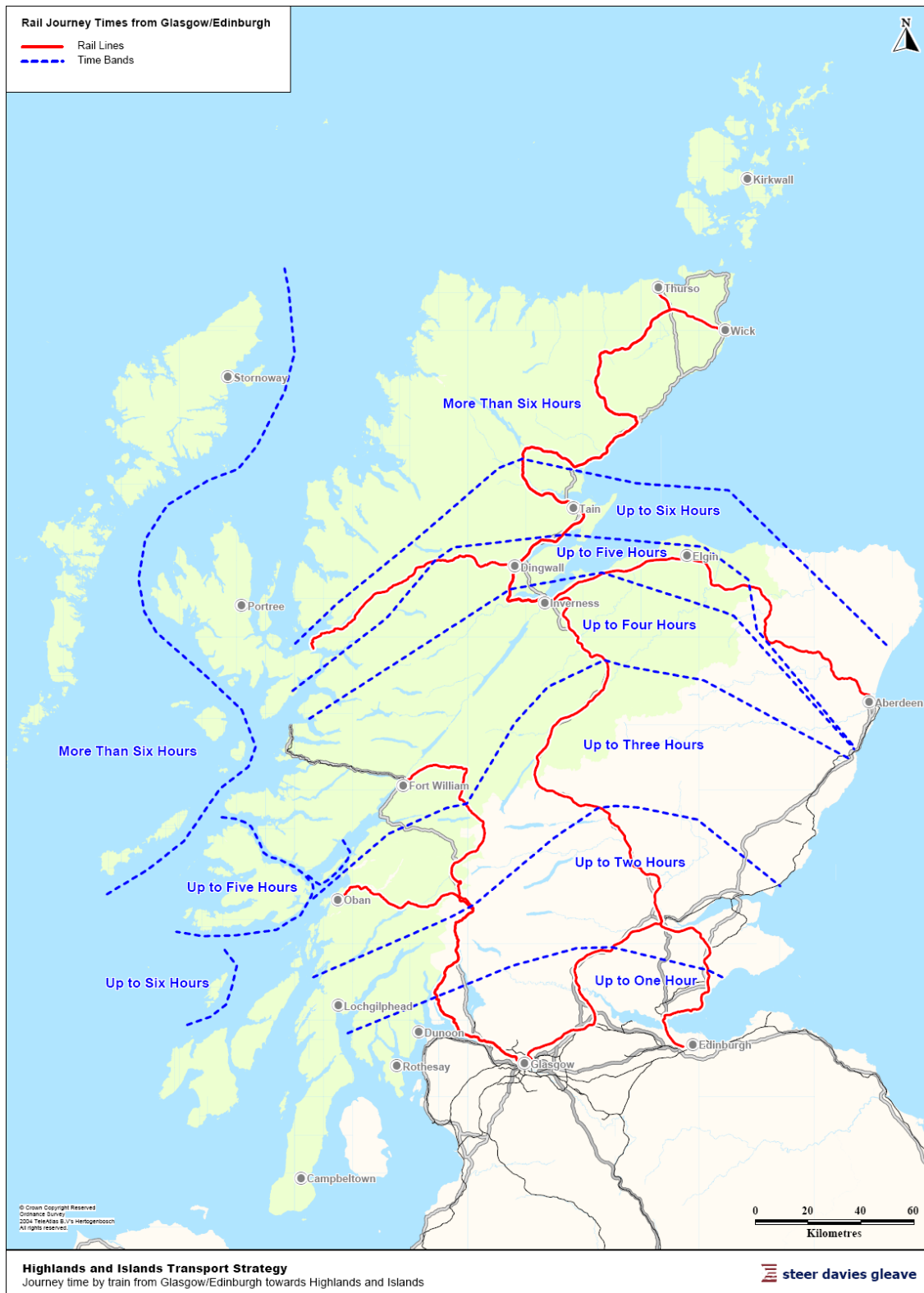
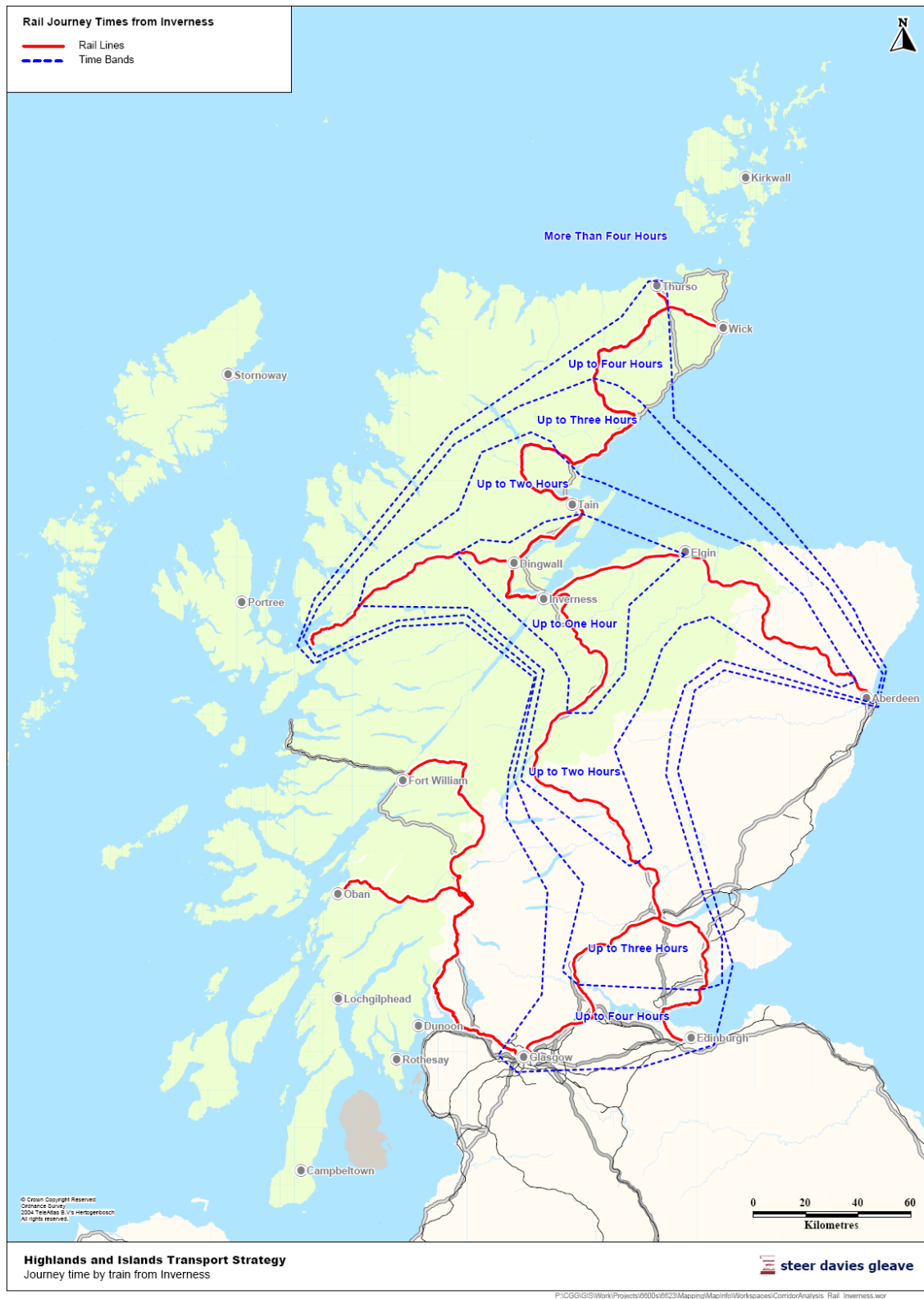


FIGURE 3-5 RAIL JOURNEY TIMES FROM INVERNESS



3.42 Figure 3-6 and Figure 3-7 show average travel speeds along the main corridor routes around the region and to key destinations outside the region, ferry and rail network, and road networks respectively.

FIGURE 3-6 AVERAGE TRAVEL SPEEDS ALONG MAIN FERRY AND RAIL ROUTES

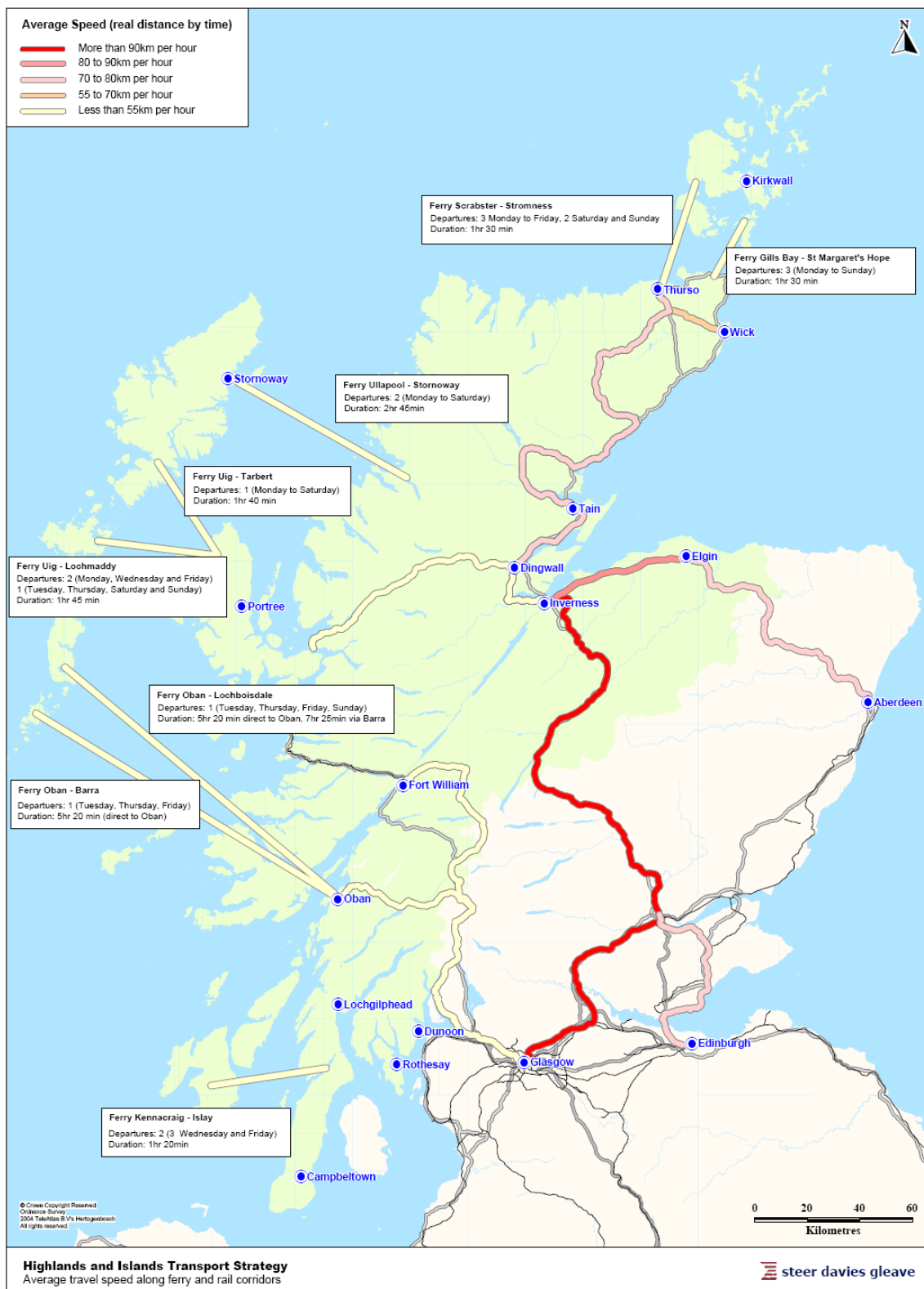
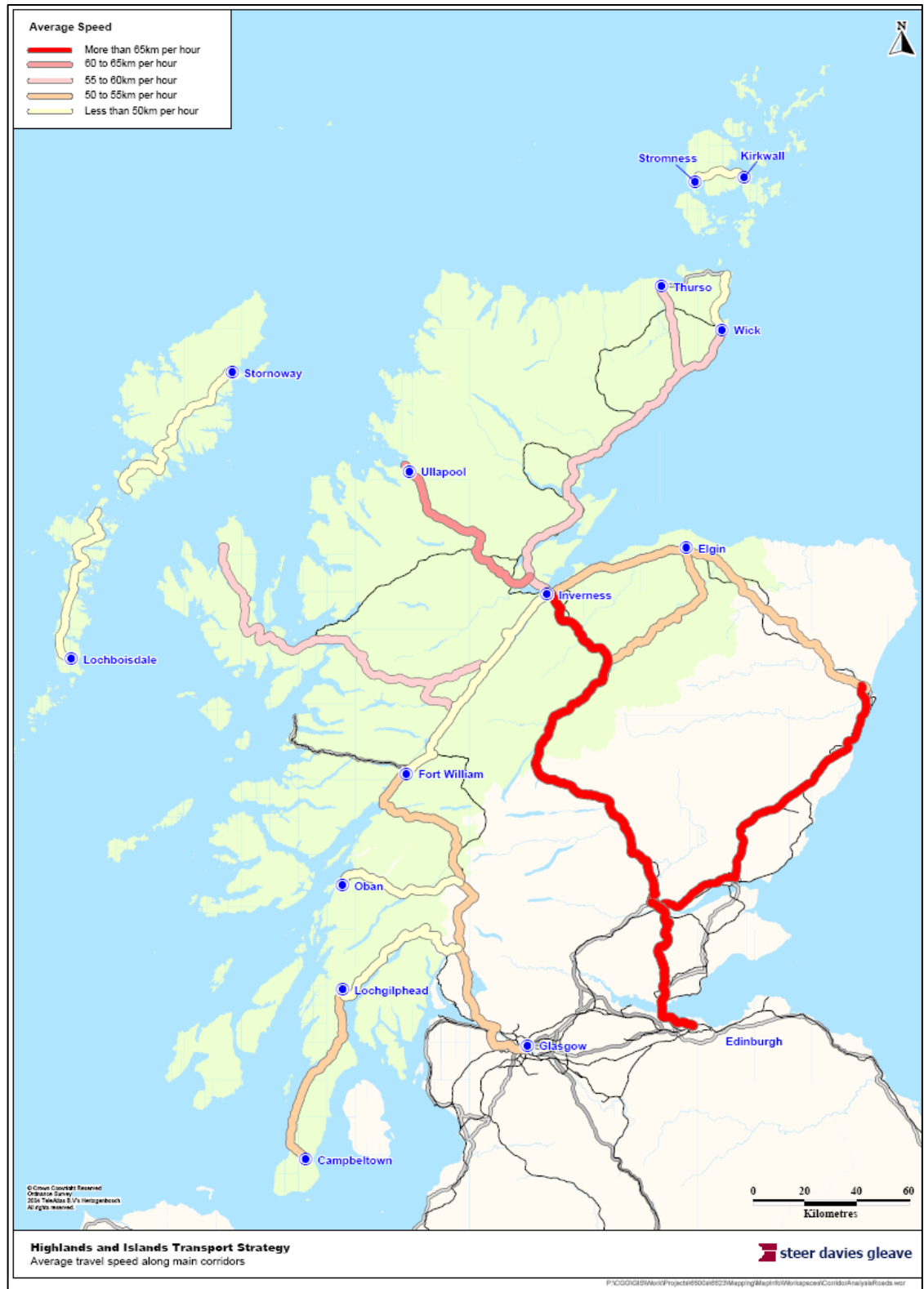


FIGURE 3-7 AVERAGE TRAVEL SPEEDS ALONG MAIN ROAD CORRIDORS



- 3.43 From Figure 3-6 it is possible to compare the relative travel speed along each of the corridors around the region. On pure journey time, the Inverness to Elgin (rail) and Inverness to Edinburgh (road) corridors appear the quickest, with average speeds of 65-70km per hour. The ‘slowest’ road routes around the region are the Western Isles spinal route, the Great Glen, and Oban and Lochgilphead to Glasgow. The ‘slowest’ rail routes are Caithness to Inverness and Oban and Fort William to Glasgow, while Inverness to Edinburgh is slightly ‘faster’ with a 3 hour 20 minute journey, but a very slow average speed south of Perth ³⁷.
- 3.44 Businesses have stated that the candidates most likely to be successful in getting a job are those who live close to their place of work. Therefore, those living in more remote areas with longer distances to travel are at a disadvantage. By virtue of the need to travel long distances across the region, combined with the fact that fuel is often up to 10% higher than, say, the Aberdeen price, **affordability of transport** is a more significant and widespread issue for the Highlands and Islands than for other areas across Scotland ³⁸.
- 3.45 Businesses commonly comment upon the **detrimental impact of transport to their business** or service. Businesses say that high travel costs mean that they can struggle to send staff to training courses, and that business growth and prosperity is constrained by high operating costs and a constrained geographical area from which to draw their staff. One business reported that it costs £1,400 to take a trailer load from Stornoway to Belgium and that half of this cost is accounted for on the leg of the journey from Stornoway to Ullapool ³⁹.
- 3.46 As discussed in Section 2, **economic development** is a focus for the region. Many of the issues affecting the region reported in this Section, such as long journey times, long distances, and high cost of travel could be inhibiting the development of a viable economy across the region.
- 3.47 The small scale of the internal market place within the region means that many of the region’s businesses have a strong outward focus, selling goods and services outside of the region. In 2002, Highlands and Islands companies exported over £1 billion of goods to countries outside of the UK, accounting for 16% of Scotland’s food and drink exports. For this reason the movement of goods is of critical importance to the region’s economic prosperity. Road transport is the dominant mode for **freight transport** in the region. Approximately 8.7 million tonnes of freight are lifted annually by UK HGVs in the Highlands and Islands (excluding Argyll & Bute). However, existing road traffic flows are such that present levels of HGV volumes on the region’s roads do not have significant negative environmental impacts ⁴⁰.

³⁷ Journey times are based on public transport timetable information and for private car travel from link speeds taken from TransportDirect (NADICS).

³⁸ A report for Highlands and Islands Enterprise: *Affordability of Travel for Work and Education in the Highlands and Islands*. September 2004.

³⁹ Consultation report from workshop session, Tuesday 21st February 2006, Stornoway.

⁴⁰ Scottish parliament local government and transport committee freight transport inquiry: submission by highlands and islands enterprise. Available at:

- 3.48 **Tourism** is a key sector for the economy of the region. The region has a strong national and international appeal as a visitor destination. This appeal stems from a diversity of activities, locations and attractions, built upon the natural and the built environment.
- 3.49 However, issues facing the development of the tourism sector in the region include:
- The area is perceived as remote to access.
 - Variable weather across the region.
 - Limited direct access flights.
 - Poor frequency for certain transport provision.
 - Relatively high cost of transport (fuel, internal flights and ferry services).
 - Increasing number of destinations offering similar experiences and more established “activity” from a lower cost base (for example, Eastern Europe) ⁴¹.
- 3.50 Globally, tourism is the world’s largest industry in terms of outputs, creating some 8% of jobs worldwide and expanding annually at the rate of 4-5%. The region has the potential to contribute to the *Tourism Framework for Change* and in delivering 50% growth in tourism revenues for Scotland by 2015. ⁴² Travel is an essential part of the visitor’s stay, and as most people will only be in the region for a short break (or at least a limited time period) the ability to move around quickly, easily and comfortably is directly related to the prosperity of the sector. The *Framework for Change* reports that most tourists travel to, and around, Scotland by car and so there is a commitment that the:
- “Executive will work to maximise the efficiency of the national motorways and trunk roads.”* ⁴³
- 3.51 However, as much of the region’s network connecting to tourist attractions consists of non-trunk roads, as well as the ferry, air, and public transport network, it is crucial that the efficiency of the whole transport network is considered for the purposes of tourism, in order that the region is not left trailing behind the remainder of Scotland.
- 3.52 Part of the attraction of the Highlands and Islands as a tourist destination is the remote and rural idyll, the island locations, the unique natural and built heritage and biodiversity that is prevalent across the region. The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Regional Transport Strategy, which has been carried out alongside the Strategy development, has explored the environmental baseline in full detail and has assessed the potential impacts of the Strategy on the **environment**. It is important

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/lg/inquiries/fti/Highland%20and%20Islands%20Enterprise.pdf>

⁴¹ Highlands and Islands Enterprise: Network Economic Information: *Tourism Economic Update*, March 2004: <http://www.hie.co.uk/sectoralprofiles-tourism20.pdf>

⁴² *Tourism Framework for Change – Scottish Tourism: the next decade*: <http://www.hie.co.uk/Tourism-Framework-for-Change.pdf>

⁴³ *Tourism Framework for Change – Scottish Tourism: the next decade*: <http://www.hie.co.uk/Tourism-Framework-for-Change.pdf>

to the future prosperity of the region that the region's environment is protected, not only that it remains an attraction for visitors, but continues to contribute to the quality of life and wellbeing of residents.

- 3.53 Environmental conditions are generally good across the region, although there are areas where the negative impacts of traffic are beginning to pose particular problems in terms of congestion, air quality and noise, for example. These areas concentrate on the most populated areas, such as Inverness, Elgin, Fort William, Oban and other district centres across the region. Conversely, many district and local centres across the region have historical townscapes, which provide attractive environments in which to walk and cycle for residents and visitors.

Conclusions on the key issues for the region

- 3.54 It is evident that the key issues facing the region today are consistent with those that were the focus for the voluntary partnership's first regional transport strategy. It has been useful to validate these issues, particularly through the consultation programme, and the reporting of the issues presented above are strengthened by the latest experiences of communities and businesses around the region.
- 3.55 Table 3.4 sets out a summary of the problems, constraints and opportunities identified for the region. These issues are then extrapolated to consider the future problems that could ensue under a no-change/known changes scenario.

TABLE 3.4 PROBLEMS UNDER A NO-CHANGE/KNOWN CHANGES SCENARIO

Issue	Problem, constraint, opportunity	Future problem / opportunity
Car ownership	High dependence on car. High cost associated with car use. Social exclusion resulting from unavailability of a car.	Increasing car dependence is expected, together with increasing costs associated with running a car. Widening divide in social outcomes between those who have and do not have access to a car.
The regions roads	Mainstay of road network. Winding single-carriageway roads with limited passing opportunities. High and seasonal volumes. Lack of alternative routes.	Worsening situation, whereby increased traffic and worsening conditions, without investment in maintenance and upgrading of the trunk road network, will result in longer journey times.
Subsidised bus network	Thin network, mainly radial out of built areas. Limited frequencies. Congestion in built up areas compromising service reliability and attractiveness. Some areas have no buses at all. More provision for people with disabilities is required.	Thinning out of routes as the car becomes more attractive. Increasing congestion in the most built up areas reduces the attractiveness of public transport as a journey option.
Rail network	Increasing populations and demand for rail services, including by tourists. Low frequency services. Poor passenger facilities.	Long lead times on service enhancements. Appetite for improving end-to-end journey times. Potential for rail commuting into Inverness and other growing Inner Moray Firth settlements. Worsening facilities as they age.
Ferries	High fares on some routes, with large variances for similar journeys. Services are sometimes based around operation needs rather than those of the markets they serve. Frequency on some routes remains poor, sometimes less than daily. Fragility of land-based infrastructure as a consequence of the effects of climate change.	Long lead times on service enhancements (tendering process and securing funding). Opportunities for mode shift for coastal shipping – therefore saved lorry miles. Vessels and infrastructure approaching the end of workable life. Requirements to meet legislation in respect to vessels may compromise provision. Requirements are for all vessels, but small operations face a higher relative cost and tend to operate at lower margins. Increasing fragility in respect to climate change effects.

Issue	Problem, constraint, opportunity	Future problem / opportunity
Air services	High costs for those not resident on Island. Limited route options. Capacity constraints.	High costs for those not resident on Island and relatively for those island residents on low incomes. Requirements to meet legislation in respect to airfields may compromise provision.
Population	Difficult to deliver efficient and effective transport systems. Poor transport networks detract from the attractiveness of an area to live and work in. Limit the efficiency of businesses to compete. Declining populations make rural communities hard to sustain.	Vicious circle, as area becomes less attractive to live in/stay, it becomes increasingly difficult to deliver transport to meet needs. Particularly felt as younger generations move away, and more importantly, do not return. Higher service needs and expectations of the aging and inward population. Revitalisation of islands and remote communities to stem population decline.
Long distances and lack of diversionary routes	Time penalty. High relative cost of travel.	Worsening network conditions will increase time penalties and the costs associated with maintaining vehicles and transport services.
Affordability of transport	Access to employment and education. Access to other services / amenities. Social exclusion.	In an increasing number of cases, high travel costs become a discernable barrier to individuals' ability to progress their career/education. For many others, travel costs become an increasingly limiting factor.
Detrimental impact of transport to business	Employer and employee skill levels. Artificially high costs for products and services. Declining business, job losses. Congestion in built up areas.	Under these threats to business, industries will continue to decline, leading to fewer employment vacancies. This could further fuel the trend of a declining population in the most remote area and particularly amongst the younger generations.
Economic development	Economic development is a focus across the region. Transport is recognised as an inhibitor to economic development.	Economic development will be inhibited further and businesses and then communities will become less viable, until they reach the point of collapse.
Freight	Relatively high levels of freight movement. Poor infrastructure / inadequate road network for internal and external journeys. High fuel costs / high ferry costs.	Worsening infrastructure, worsening journey times and reliability – businesses will be less able to compete. Potential for damage to infrastructure from freight traffic. Under these threats to business, manufacturing will continue to decline. Competition for capacity on rail (and ferry) routes.

Issue	Problem, constraint, opportunity	Future problem / opportunity
Tourism	Limited motorway and trunk road access to visitor attractions and so no Executive commitment to maximising the efficiency of said network. Poor frequency for certain transport provision. Relatively high cost of transport (fuel, internal flights and ferry services).	Widening gap as region's attractions become more difficult to access, and especially relative to competition from other destinations.
Environment	Extensive environmental assets. Increasing congestion in built up areas.	Worsening congestion across the network and specifically in regional and district centres. This will lead to worsening air quality, noise and an increase in CO ₂ emissions. Increasing congestion will constrain economic efficiency and development and will result in worsening health of those exposed to the worsening conditions.

3.56 A number of themes emerge from the analysis of problems, constraints and opportunities for the region:

- **Economic development.** There is consensus across the region on the need to grow business, to tackle economic inactivity and get more people into jobs.
- **Population change.** Population growth is mainly focussed around the Inner Moray Firth and the Skye and Lochalsh area. Remote and rural areas have however declined over recent decades, with steady population decline in Caithness and Sutherland, Argyll and the Islands and in Lochaber. The population of the region is slightly older than that of Scotland as a whole, and there is a trend towards an ageing population.
- **Accessibility.** Poor accessibility, in the form of affordability, availability, awareness and physical accessibility limits the people of the region from accessing life opportunities. This impacts upon all people, to varying degrees, but most severely on those who are recognised as being most prone to social exclusion – young people, those on low incomes, the unemployed, people in remote areas, those without access to a car and/or public transport services.
- **Congestion.** Inverness is one of the fastest-growing cities in Scotland and the popularity of the locality to live and work in is bringing with it increasing levels of congestion. Elgin and Oban are also particular growth areas in the region.
- **Environmental impacts.** The region has a multitude of environmental assets which are an attractor for tourists and provide the quality of life enjoyed by residents across the region.

4. THE CORE STRATEGY

Development of the vision, objectives and policy

- 4.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Strategy to provide for meeting the needs of all inhabited places particularly those that are remote or sparsely populated. It requires the Strategy to provide for meeting the need for efficient transport links between heavily populated places. The Act also requires the Strategy to enhance social and economic well being and public health; safety; the environment; social inclusion and equal opportunities; transport integration; and access to health service locations.
- 4.2 Various stages of consultation have fed into the development of a vision and objectives for the Regional Transport Strategy, which are reported separately ⁴⁴. These have included discussion of strategic issues at the Nairn National Transport Strategy Highlands and Islands Regional Consultative Event in 2005, the Regional Transport Strategy Spring 2006 stakeholder meetings, and at a Stakeholder Conference in Nairn in October 2006 ⁴⁵. The issues contained in the previous Strategy have been revisited to determine if they are still relevant.
- 4.3 The Strategy and its objectives fit with the previous HITRANS strategy and its objectives, which consisted of the following goals:
- *We want to see a reduction in costs to the users of the transport network and reduced costs in the movement of goods. Cost of transport is one of the most pressing concerns of communities and businesses in the region because of the long distances to be travelled.*
 - *We want to improve journey times by investment in better infrastructure particularly roads, public transport vehicles and vessels, and the rail network. Over the strategy period, modernising the road network will be a key priority.*
 - *We want to improve integration in public transport system to increase choice, reduce delays and waiting periods, and make public transport more attractive. We also want to increase the choice of destinations provided by public transport particularly for movements to centres outside the region. We want to improve the frequency and flexibility of public transport particularly in rural areas and in the external links to centres outside the region. Developing the region's air service network will be a key priority.*
- 4.4 The vision and objectives of the new strategy, presented below, are founded on the existing strategy combined with a clear understanding of the current and future problems, constraints and opportunities that are intrinsic to, and faced by, the communities of the region.
- The development of planning objectives has also been steered by the overall

⁴⁴ Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Strategy Consultation Report, March 2007

⁴⁵ The Regional Consultative Event for the Highlands and Islands took place on 25 August 2005 in Nairn. This event was held in conjunction with HITRANS. Details at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/NTS/HITRANS/HITRANS>

vision of the Partnership and fit with the Scottish Executive's five key transport objectives and those of other national and local policies and strategies, as discussed in Section 3 of this report.

4.5 The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) states that care must be taken when developing specific objectives to take account of the subtleties of the planning environment. For the development of this Strategy, the planning environment is the entire transport system as described in Section 3. The Strategy is concerned with the interconnectivity of this network for residents, business and visitors alike. This is a complex network which requires a strategic planning approach. Such a Strategy has to capture complex issues associated with the numerous transport challenges that are under scrutiny.

4.6 STAG offers some guidance in respect to such a case:

*“where the full set of potential proposals is unmanageably large, a transparent mechanism must be used to narrow the choice down to a selection that can be more thoroughly analysed...”*⁴⁶

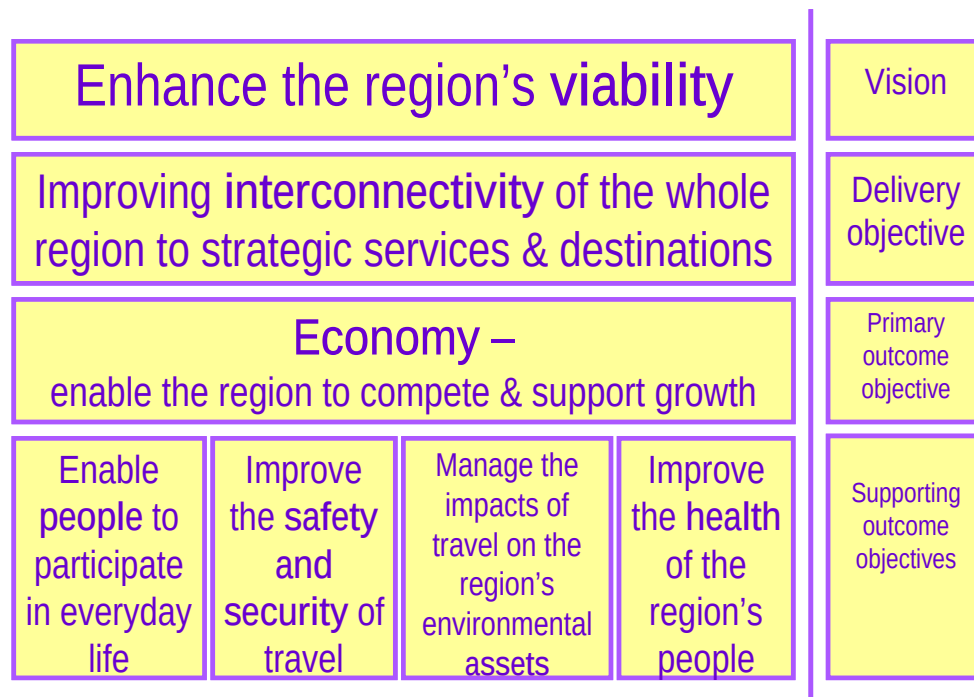
4.7 Objectives have therefore been developed that allow the study to hold true to the principles of enabling the development of apposite and creative proposals to the problems, constraints and opportunities that have been identified in the region.

Vision and objectives for the Regional Transport Strategy

4.8 The Strategy vision and objectives are presented in Figure 4-1. Overarching the Strategy is the vision for the region, which is to ***enhance the region's viability***, enhancing the region's place competitiveness and thereby attracting and retaining people in the region and making the Highlands and Islands a more attractive place in which to live, to work, to conduct business and to visit. The vision for transport in the region is a statement of the final high-level outcome the Strategy is intended to achieve.

⁴⁶ STAG para 29 of the Executive Summary.

FIGURE 4-1 STRATEGY VISION AND OBJECTIVES



- 4.9 To deliver the vision, the critical issue of connectivity needs to be addressed – improving how people and businesses get access to services and destinations. A delivery objective has therefore been developed for the Strategy: ***to improve the interconnectivity of the region to strategic services and destinations***. Improving connectivity is central to all the problems and constraints that have been identified through analysis of the issues and during consultation with stakeholders around the region.
- 4.10 From improved connectivity comes the focus on the desirable outcomes for the region, the more specific planning objectives that have shaped the Strategy and against which the initial range of Strategy options has been sifted. The planning objectives, while being focussed on the issues identified as being important to the region, are also designed to fit with Government's five main objectives for transport (economy, safety, accessibility, integration and environment).
- 4.11 The objectives are strategic in nature. They have been used to focus thought for the development of options and interventions, both in the initial process of assessment which has aimed to narrow the choice of these options into a workable package, and the later assessment process which has more thoroughly analysed and prioritised options.

4.12 The planning objectives for the Strategy are as follows, to:

- Enable the region to compete and to support growth – this is the primary planning objective, or desirable outcome. This fits with regional and national priorities. For example, in the Partnership Agreement⁴⁷, “*Growing the economy is our top priority.*”
- Enable the people of the region to participate in everyday life.
- Improve the safety and security of travel.
- Manage the impacts of travel on the region’s environmental assets.
- Improve the health of the region’s people.

4.13 The relationship between these objectives and the problems, constraints and issues that are described in the Section 4 is presented in Table 4.1 below.

TABLE 4.1 OBJECTIVES FIT WITH PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS

KEY	✓ Minor fit	Enable the region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the safety and security of travel	Manage the impacts of travel on the region's environmental assets	Improve the health of the region's people
	✓✓ Moderate fit					
	✓✓✓ Major fit					
Economic development		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓		✓
Population change		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Accessibility		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓		✓✓✓
Congestion		✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Environmental impacts					✓✓✓	✓✓✓

4.14 As well as ensuring that the transport planning objectives are relevant to the problems in question, it has also been necessary to assess their appropriateness in relation to the Executive’s five broad transport objectives: environment, safety, economy, accessibility and social inclusion, and integration (which relate to the three strategic outcomes for transport in the National Transport Strategy discussed in Section 3). Table 4.2 presents this assessment.

⁴⁷ A Partnership agreement for a better Scotland: Partnership Agreement.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/05/17150/21952>

TABLE 4.2 RTS OBJECTIVES AND THE EXECUTIVE'S FIVE BROAD TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

KEY	✓ Minor fit	Enable the region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the safety and security of travel	Manage the impacts of travel on the region's environmental assets	Improve the health of the region's people
	✓✓ Moderate fit					
	✓✓✓ Major fit					
Environment			✓✓		✓✓✓	✓✓
Safety		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓		✓✓
Economy		✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Accessibility and social inclusion		✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
Integration		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓

4.15 Each of the Strategy options has been appraised against the Regional Transport Strategy objectives and the Executive's five broad transport objectives. As part of this process, the potential strategic environmental impacts of each option have been considered, through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process.

4.16 The Regional Transport Strategy sets out HITRANS' vision and objectives for transport in the region over the period of 2008 to 2022. To achieve these objectives, a set of high level policies has been developed, together with measures to deliver these policies and consequently the Strategy objectives.

Strategic Policies

4.17 The overarching policy is focused on ***developing a fit for purpose, multi-modal transport system with associated infrastructure.***

4.18 In developing the Strategy, it has become clear that there are a number of key policy areas in which concerted effort is needed to deliver improvements across the region. Therefore, under this overarching policy, a package of sub-strategies and their related policies and measures has been developed by HITRANS and their partners. This has been subject to extensive consultation, as reported in the accompanying Consultation Report.

4.19 These key policy areas, which form the core of the Strategy, are as follows:

- Horizontal themes which apply across the region:
 - Active travel.
 - Aviation and the region's air network.
 - Community and health passenger transport.
 - Congestion and urban issues.
 - Freight transport.
 - Locally significant network and maintenance of the region's roads.
 - Mainstream passenger transport.

- Ports, ferries and waterway transport.
 - Cost of transport and travel.
 - Environmental impacts.
 - The strategic and regional network.
- 4.20 A proposed action programme of initiatives against each of these policy areas has been developed, and is presented in Appendix A. This covers each of the key policy areas, and each of the three time periods covered by the Strategy – short (2008-2012), medium (2013-2017), and long term (2018-2022). Whilst HITRANS is committed to aspirations within each of these policy areas, as discussed further in this section, further work is required to refine this programme in partnership with partners across the region, the Scottish Executive and Transport Scotland.
- 4.21 The rest of this section describes how these policies and associated measures have been developed, and provides further detail of the individual policy areas.

How our policies and associated measures have been developed

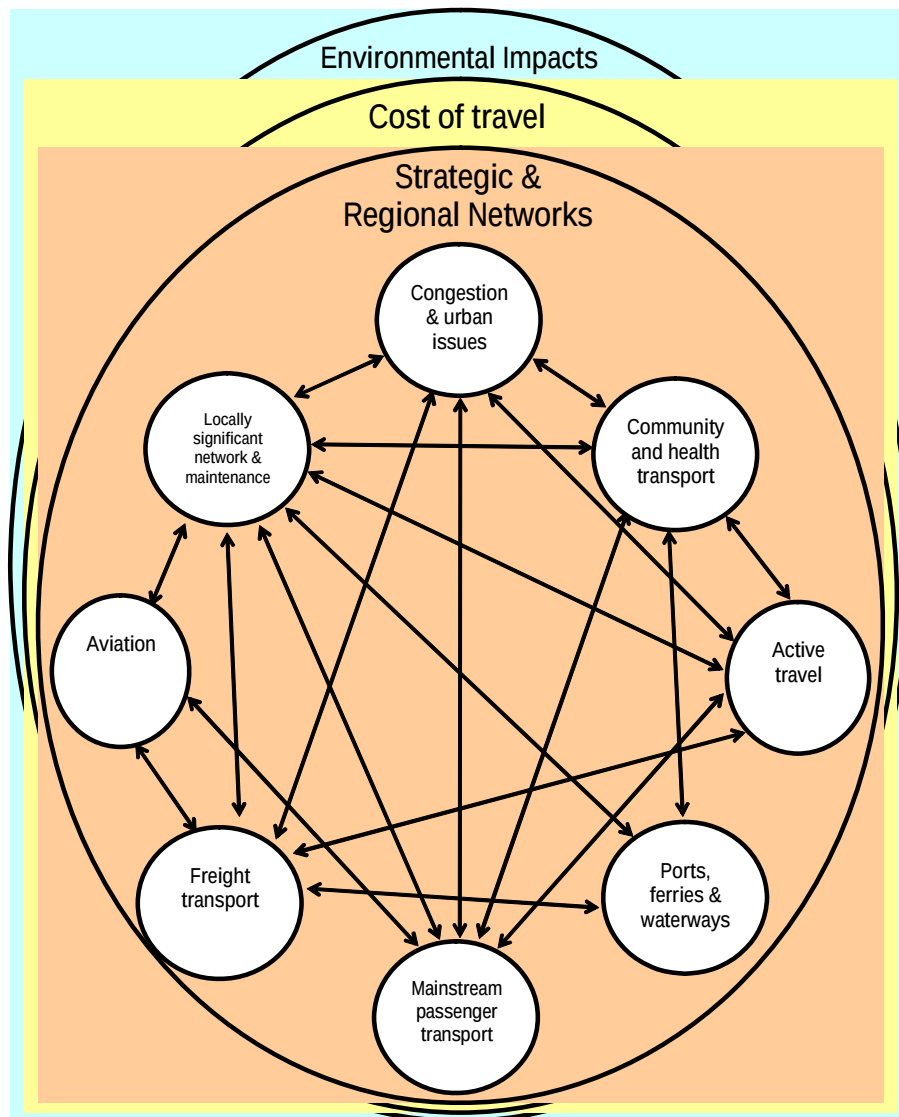
- 4.22 In this section the process used to generate Strategy options is described. The Regional Transport Strategy Guidance suggests that options should be packages of complementary measures such as:
- Improving strategic transport corridors (Act requirement regarding efficient transport between heavily populated places – for example, Inverness to Aberdeen; Inverness/Elgin to Edinburgh/ Glasgow; West of the region to Glasgow; Western Isles spinal; Western Isles, Orkney and Caithness to Inverness; Strategic sea crossings and air routes).
 - Dealing with neglect of the region's road conditions.
 - Securing capital and revenue support for thin routes/remote and sparsely populated communities (for example, Orkney internal ferries; island air services; rural bus services; fixed links).
 - Changing travel behaviour (for example, modal shift to coastal/rail freight; public transport improvement; increasing levels of walking and cycling; business/facility travel planning).
- 4.23 The generation of options has systematically followed on from the scoping, vision and objective-setting stages. However, in reality, options for projects, services and initiatives have been generated throughout the strategy development process, and indeed prior to commencing the development of the new Strategy. A two-part phased approach has been employed to systematically generate options that will contribute to the strategy objectives.
- 4.24 The Guidance on preparing Regional Transport Strategies is based on planning for integrated transport networks that take account of the needs of all users (road, rail, waterborne and air; personal and freight) and of the contribution that can be made by all means of travel, including walking and cycling. With this in mind it is apparent that there are two main types of issue of relevance to the Strategy. The first is those that have a relevance across the whole region and which cut across local circumstances (here referred to as 'Horizontal' Themes); and secondly those which have a particular spatial reference (the Strategic and Regional Network).

- 4.25 One part of the approach focused on the region's Strategic and Regional transport networks, whilst a parallel exercise focused on particular users of the region's transport network and other key cross-cutting (or 'horizontal') themes of relevance right across the region.
- 4.26 The Strategic Network, Regional Network and the Horizontal Themes were then assessed in terms of understanding functions and purpose; then evaluating problems, constraints and opportunities; and then developing options to overcome these problems and constraints and take advantage of the opportunities.

Horizontal themes

- 4.27 The Horizontal Themes relate to cross-cutting issues that are best progressed at a strategic, region-wide level, particularly where benefits arise from integration and uniformity. Horizontal issues relate to the entire population of the region and / or are relevant to certain groups which share travel patterns / needs and socio-economic / socio-demographic characteristics. The Horizontal Themes were identified through consultation with stakeholders across the region, as has the entire Strategy.
- 4.28 Each of the **Horizontal Themes** is inextricably linked to the region's transport network, since delivering improvements within each theme is dependent upon the use of an adequate transport network. If the network is of poor quality, for example a link with many pinch points and poor alignment, then the quality of the public transport offered will be adversely affected. Public transport journeys will be slow and unreliable, and will therefore not be an attractive alternative to the car. The nature of the service, and the impact on demand for that service, will constrain the public transport operator from developing the service.
- 4.29 The Horizontal Themes are often closely related in that they may work towards the attainment of similar outcomes, a desire for better integration between two different means of travel, or a (potential) conflict between the development of one over the other. Figure 4.2 shows the connections between the horizontal themes.

FIGURE 4-2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HORIZONTAL THEMES IN THE STRATEGY



4.30 For each theme the following assessment has been undertaken:

- i. **Assessing the key issues and key opportunities** for the theme in the region.
- ii. **Setting policy aspirations** for this theme within the Strategy.
- iii. **Generation of options.**
- iv. **Assessment of options to produce a final series of measures to help deliver the policy aspirations – contained within Horizontal Sub-Strategies.**

4.31 Aspirations for each theme were set to ensure that the emerging options for policies and initiatives within each Horizontal Sub-Strategy were developed to be consistent with the issues / inadequacies relating to that theme. The achievement of these aspirations for each theme relate closely to achievement of the Strategy objectives themselves. The aspirations for each of the themes are:

- **Active Travel:**

- Promote the long-term development of active travel across the region.
- Enable progress in active travel to be monitored across HITRANS.
- Promote partnership working in promotion of active travel.
- Achieve consistency of standards in infrastructure to support active travel.
- **Aviation:**
 - Enhance intra-regional connectivity between island and peripheral communities and regional centres and national gateways.
 - Retain and increase links with European and intercontinental services, in particular with the London Gatwick/Heathrow hubs.
 - Manage the environmental impact of the vital air services to, from and around the region without adversely affecting economic growth and sustainability.
- **Community and Health Transport:**
 - Increase the sustainability of the sector.
 - Achieve consistency of standards across the sector.
 - Improve communications internal to the sector and between the sector and other bodies.
 - Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector.
- **Congestion and urban issues:**
 - Reduce congestion and increase the efficiency of travel in and through urban areas.
 - Improve the reliability of journey times.
 - Improving accessibility and the attractiveness of public transport, walking and cycling.
 - Reduce car use, especially on short journeys, and increase average car occupancy.
- **Freight Transport:**
 - Enhance effectiveness and efficiency of freight transport.
 - Optimise modal shift opportunities for freight transit by rail and coastal shipping.
 - Enhance co-ordination within, and support for, the freight industry.
 - Co-ordinated freight policies and plans, locally, regionally and nationally.
- **Locally significant network and road maintenance:**
 - Asset management plans for all road infrastructure elements.
 - Sustainable programme of road maintenance and enhancement that allows control over future spending on maintaining the network.
 - Maintain access and connectivity between communities and Local and Regional Centres.
 - Improve the quality of travel for all travellers, focussing on enhancing the travelling experience for passenger and community transport.
- **Mainstream passenger transport:**
 - Develop a comprehensive bus and long distance coach strategy and investment programme.
 - Achieve consistency of standards throughout passenger transport in the region.
 - Improve communications between passenger transport providers.

- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of passenger transport.
 - Improve accessibility and enable greater confidence in, and usage of, passenger transport around the region, particularly for those with disabilities.
 - Improve integration and information.
 - **Ports, ferries & waterways:**
 - Develop a long term strategy for ports, ferries and waterways that is driven by socio-economic goals.
 - Encourage diversity and innovation in supply of services.
 - **Costs of transport and travel:**
 - Make travel more affordable to individuals and businesses.
 - Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all modes.
 - Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport.
 - **Environmental impacts:**
 - Develop ways to mitigate the climate change impact of socially and economically necessary travel across the region.
- 4.32 Further detail of the Horizontal Themes, and the Sub-Strategies of proposed policies and initiatives that have been developed in response to the themes is provided in Appendix B.

The Strategic and Regional transport network

Settlement hierarchy

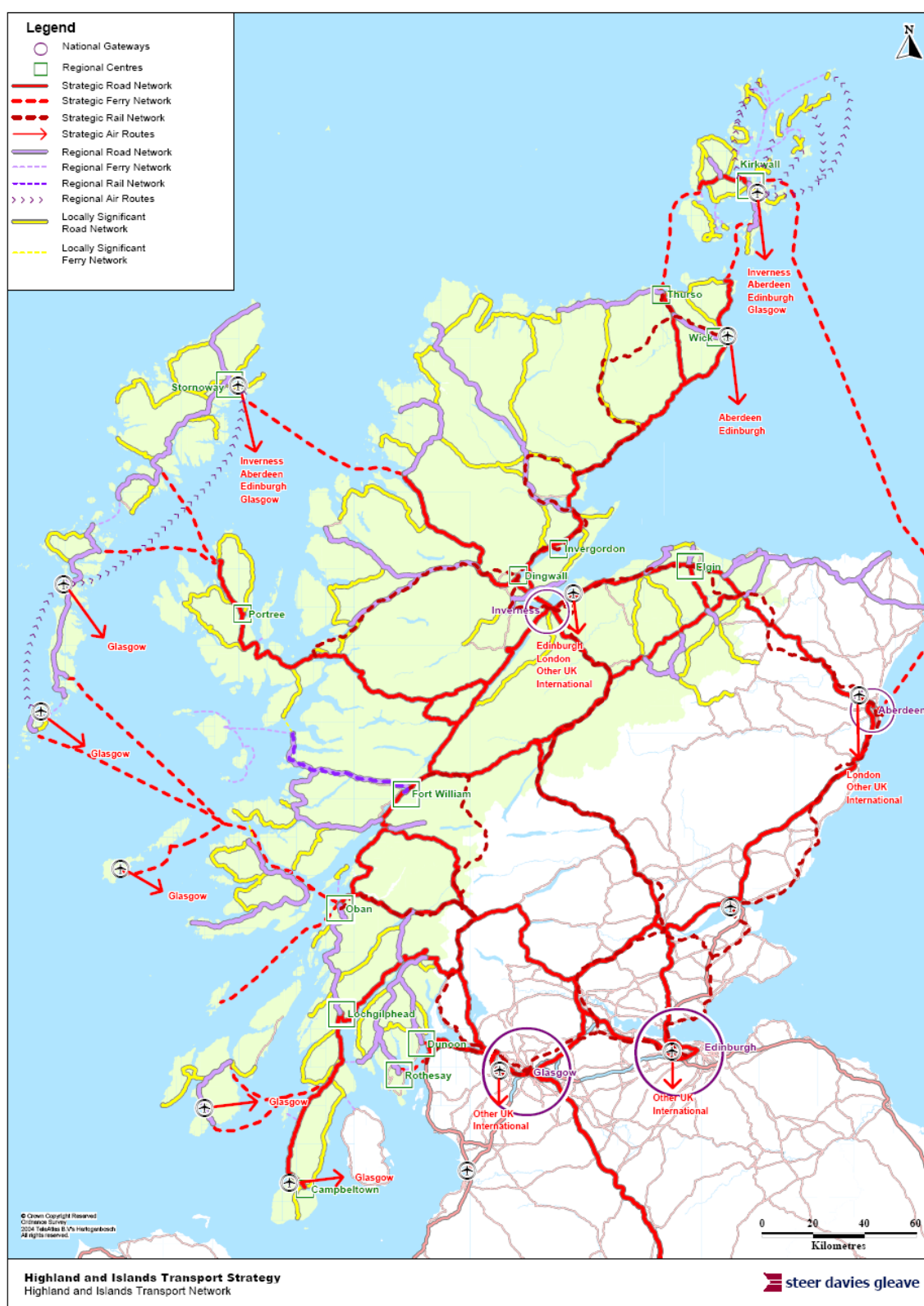
- 4.33 A hierarchy for the region's transport network has been agreed by the Partnership which is consistent with the settlement hierarchies in the Structure Plans in place across the region. The hierarchy has been defined using three levels of settlements: Each is described below and is shown in Figure 4-3.
- 4.34 **National Gateways** are settlements with direct onward connections to the rest of the UK and beyond. National Gateways provide a full complement of services and functions, such as employment, health, education, cultural, leisure and retail opportunities. Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow are the National Gateways for the region.
- 4.35 **Regional Centres** fulfil a wide range of functions and provide a range of services to support surrounding hinterlands. Some Regional Centres are the administrative centre for the local authority area and tend to be a focus for development and growth. Most Regional Centres function as gateways for onward travel from their hinterland to other Regional Centres and ultimately to the National Gateways. This is particularly the case for the region's island communities, although for some islands the connection to a National Gateway is via a route other than from the Regional Centre. These port / airport gateways have also been included therefore in the top level of the region's network hierarchy. The Regional Centres are: Kirkwall, Thurso / Wick, Dingwall / Invergordon, Elgin, Stornoway, Portree, Oban, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Fort William, Dunoon and Rothesay.
- 4.36 **Local Centres** provide a range of facilities and services and fulfil an important

function as a focus for the community and often for public transport. In rural areas, a range of shops and other facilities are provided in small towns and villages. These locations form an important part of a network as the uses provide vital local community and economic services. Their loss can therefore have a severe impact not only on small settlements but also on the surrounding rural hinterland. As Paragraph 9 of *Scottish Planning Policy 15* indicates, planning policy should support the vital role of these centres. Protecting and enhancing such centres is therefore a key consideration which underpins Government policy⁴⁸.

- 4.37 The Local Centres as defined in Structure Plans are: Aberlour, Aird, Alness, Balivanich, Beaully, Bettyhill, Bowmore, Buckie, Burghead, Castlebay, Coll, Craigellachie, Craginure, Cullen, Dounby, Drumnadrochit, Dufftown, Fochabers, Forbes, Fort Augustus, Fortrose, Gairloch, Golspie, Grantown-on-Spey, Hopeman, Inveraray, Kames/Tighnabruaich, Keith, Kingussie, Kinlochbervie, Kinlochleven, Kinloss, Kyle of Lochalsh, Lhanbryde, Lochboisdale, Lochcarron, Lochinver, Lochmaddy, Lossiemouth, Mallaig, Mosstodloch, Nairn, Nis, Port Ellen, Portgordon, Portknockie, Rothes, Scarinish, St Margaret's Hope, Sandwick, Stromness, Strontian, Tain, Tarbert (Argyll & Bute), Tarbert (Western Isles), Taynuilt, Tobermory, Tomintoul, Tong and Ullapool.

⁴⁸ SPP15 Planning for Rural Development, Scottish Executive, 2005 (ISBN 0-7559-2527-0).

FIGURE 4-3 **NETWORK AND SETTLEMENT HIERARCHIES**



Network hierarchy

- 4.38 The highest level of the network hierarchy is the **Strategic Network**. The Strategic Network provides connections between Regional Centres and National Gateways and comprises all modes of transport. The National Planning Framework for Scotland recognises that:

*“place competitiveness relies heavily on adequate investment in infrastructure, including transport and communications networks... Small economies have the potential to adapt to changing economic circumstances more readily than their larger competitors. However a common thread running through all economic scenarios is the importance of infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure.”*⁴⁹

- 4.39 The next level of the network hierarchy is the **Regional Network** which provides connections between Local Centres and Regional Centres. Again, the Regional Network comprises all means of transport – road, rail, air and sea.
- 4.40 Finally, the **Locally Significant Network** provides connections between smaller and dispersed communities and Local Centres, and links into other parts of the Strategic and Regional Networks.

Assessing the Strategic and Regional network

Strategic network assessment

- 4.41 The first step towards identifying options for the Strategic Network was to assess each link in the network. This assessment has been done by:
- i. **Assessing ‘functionality’** – scoring each link based on the number of Regional Centres which it connects to National Gateways.
 - ii. **Assessing ‘adequacy’** – scoring each link based on the number of defined adequacy tests which it fails.
 - iii. **Assessing future transport needs** – adjusting the adequacy score of each link to reflect the future transport needs occasioned by demographic and land use change.

Assessing functionality

- 4.42 Each link in the Strategic Network has been scored based on its function. This score relates to the number of Regional Centres that this link connects to one or more of the National Gateways. For example, the A82 road corridor provides a connection between six Regional Centres and Glasgow. These Regional Centres are Fort William, Portree, Stornoway, Oban, Lochgilphead and Campbeltown, as well as providing a connection for other crossings from the Western Isles via Uig or Oban. Therefore, for example, the A82 road corridor has a high function score.

⁴⁹ National Planning Framework for Scotland: guidance for the spatial development of Scotland to 2025, Scottish Executive, 2004. (ISBN 0-7559-4195-0).

Assessing adequacy

- 4.43 Each link in the Strategic Network has also been given an ‘adequacy score’. This score relates to the current adequacy of the link in performing its strategic function. A set of adequacy tests have been applied and these vary depending on the means of transport – road, rail, air or sea. For example, the A82 road corridor is given a low adequacy score due to its performance against the following criteria: alignment / topography, limited overtaking opportunities, pinch points, accidents / safety, environmental risks, alternative route availability and passenger transport provision.
- 4.44 Further information on the adequacy testing is contained within the supporting technical report - see Appendix C.

Assessing future transport needs

- 4.45 Each link in the Strategic Network has been assessed in respect to the potential impact of future development over the lifetime of the Strategy. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the Partnership and Strategy to have regard to future needs, including those occasioned by demographic and land-use changes. This assessment is intended to ensure that future changes in land-use and demographics are taken into account in the generation and appraisal of Strategy options.
- 4.46 A subjective assessment has been made for each link in the Strategic Network as to the magnitude of the land-use changes. The ‘adequacy score’ has then been adjusted to reflect this assessment. For example, the A96 corridor will see significant development over the course of the Strategy period and beyond. The adequacy score for the A96 corridor is thus reduced to reflect the future demand on this transport corridor, and the future transport problems that will ensue without intervention.

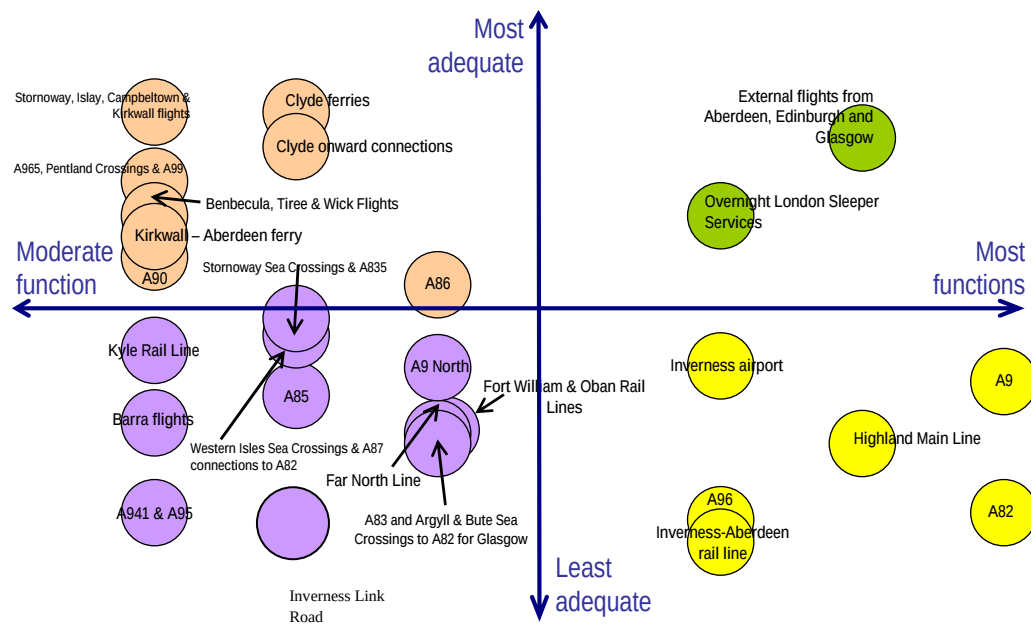
Regional network assessment

- 4.47 A similar process as described above for the Strategic Network has been applied to the Regional Network. However, in this case each of the links connect just one Local Centre to Regional Centres(s), and so the function of each link is alike.
- 4.48 The adequacy of each link in the Regional Network has been assessed according to the adequacy tests, giving an ‘adequacy score’ for each link. The link has then been considered in respect to future demands.

Priority links

- 4.49 The function and adequacy scores of each link in the Strategic Network were plotted against each other. By comparing function and adequacy (see Figure 4-4) in this way four types of links emerged: those with high function and low adequacy; those with moderate function and low adequacy; those with high function and high adequacy; those with moderate function and high adequacy.

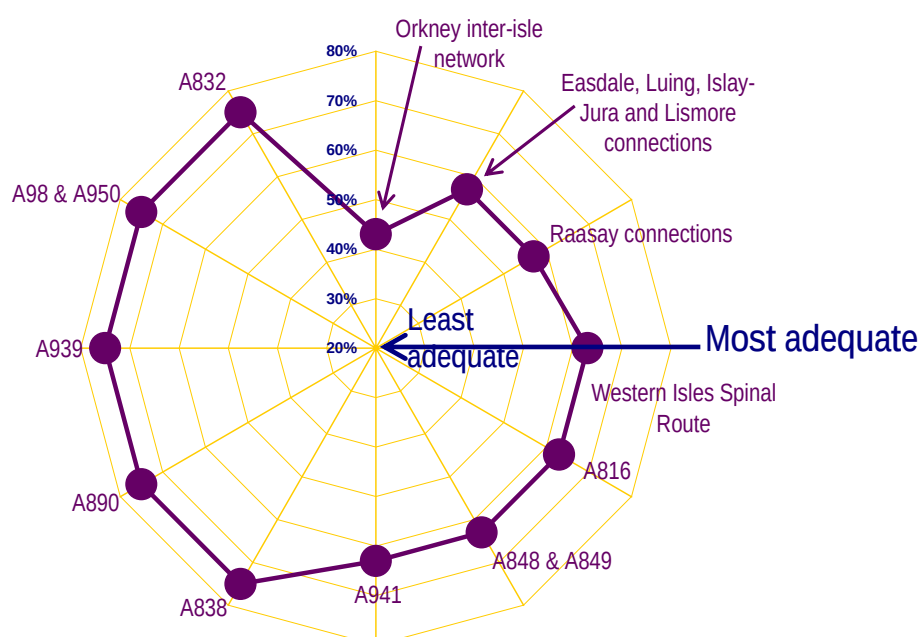
FIGURE 4-4 STRATEGIC NETWORK FUNCTION AND ADEQUACY SCATTER CHART



- 4.50 The Guidance on preparing Regional Transport Strategies states that, at the time of these (first) Strategies being developed:

“...there are a number of proposals for projects and interventions in each region at various stages of development, including those that have already undergone a full appraisal; prioritisation should be used to decide which of the new or current identified projects should move forward to the next stage of development and which should not (at least not yet).”

- 4.51 By assessing and comparing the function and adequacy of links in the Strategic Network, and the adequacy of links in the Regional Network (see Figure 4-5), links have been identified which are seen as priorities for intervention. In the Strategic Network, links that have high or moderate function and low adequacy are the priority links. These are the links below the x-axis in Figure 4-4. In the Regional Network, links that have low adequacy are priority links.

FIGURE 4-5 REGIONAL NETWORK ADEQUACY RADAR CHART

- 4.52 Whilst addressing these top Priority Links in the first instance, the Partnership will also undertake research into those issues which currently lack an evidence base. This will enable the Partnership to be in an informed position for future refinement of the Strategy and for future Investment and Delivery Plans. In addition, the links in the network that are not identified as Priority Links will be monitored for any changes in their adequacy. All links in the Strategic Network have both a degree of Strategic Function and a varying degree of inadequacy. Similarly all links in the Regional Network have a degree of inadequacy.
- 4.53 It is intended that, in time, all inadequacies in the network are tackled, including those which may be identified in the future. In this first Strategy however, it is important that there is a focus on those links in the Strategic and Regional Networks that have been shown to be most in need of attention.
- 4.54 Descriptions of the Priority Links in the Strategic and Regional Networks are provided in Appendix B.

Generating options for the Strategic and Regional Network Priority Links

- 4.55 Outcome aspirations are identified for each of the Priority Links; which describe what is hoped to be achieved for each link. They are intended to ensure that the emerging options for each link are developed to be consistent with the issues / inadequacies of that particular link. The achievement of these aspirations anywhere in the network would generally enable the satisfaction of the Strategy objectives. Table 4.3 demonstrates the fit between link aspirations and the Strategy objectives. An 'other' category of aspirations provides scope for flexibility in the aspirations. Typical 'other' aspirations include modal shift and improving integration.

TABLE 4.3 LINK ASPIRATIONS VERSUS THE STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

	Improve journey reliability	Reduce journey time	Increase journey frequency	Improve journey consistency	Provide a daily link	Enable a days' business	Improve safety and security	Other
Enable the region to compete and support growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Enable people to participate in everyday life	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Improve the health of the Region's people							✓	✓
Improve safety & security of travel	✓		✓				✓	
Manage the impacts of travel on the region's natural and built heritage assets			✓	✓				✓

4.56 The aspirations for each of the Priority Links in the Strategic and Regional Network are provided in Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 respectively.

TABLE 4.4 LINK ASPIRATIONS FOR THE PRIORITY LINKS IN THE STRATEGIC NETWORK

	Journey reliability	Reduced journey time	Journey frequency	Journey consistency	Daily link available	Days business / commute	Safety	Other
A82 Corridor (Road)	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Highland Main Line		✓	✓					✓
A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)	✓	✓						
A96 Corridor (Road)	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Inverness Trunk Road Link	✓	✓		✓				✓
Inverness-Aberdeen rail line (A96)		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Inverness airport and flights						✓		✓
A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Far North Line		✓	✓			✓		
Fort William & Oban Rail lines (A82)		✓	✓			✓		
A9 north (Road)	✓	✓						
Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow	✓	✓					✓	
Western Isles Sea Crossings & A87 connections to A82 for Glasgow		✓			✓	✓		
Stornoway Sea Crossings and A835 to Inverness		✓			✓		✓	✓
Kyle Rail line						✓		✓
Moray A941 and A95 to A9 for Edinburgh	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Barra airport and flights			✓	✓		✓		✓

TABLE 4.5 LINK ASPIRATIONS FOR THE PRIORITY LINKS IN THE REGIONAL NETWORK

	Journey reliability	Reduced journey time	Journey frequency	Journey consistency	Daily link available	Days business / commute	Safety	Other
Orkney internal connections	✓					✓		✓
Easdale, Luing, Islay-Jura, Lismore and Raasay ferry connections			✓			✓		✓
Western Isles spinal route (A859, A867, A865, A888) & Sound of Harris and Barra crossings	✓	✓	✓	✓				
A816 Oban to Lochgilphead	✓	✓		✓			✓	
A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort & Iona ferry	✓			✓				
A941 Dufftown to A95	✓			✓			✓	
A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg	✓							
A890 Lochcarron to A832	✓			✓			✓	
A939 Tomintoul to A95	✓						✓	✓
A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh & A950 to Peterhead							✓	
A832 Gairloch to Garve	✓			✓			✓	

4.57 The next stage in developing the Strategy was, for each Priority Link, to develop options designed to achieve these aspirations, and ultimately to achieve the Strategy objectives.

4.58 The types of interventions considered can be grouped into three broad categories which reflect the existing evidence base in the region and beyond, the need to make the best use of existing and future resources and assets. The interventions or options categories are:

- **Network development options:** interventions to make best use of, or enhance, the transport network, including roads and the rail network, and infrastructure pertaining to aviation and ferries.
- **Service options:** interventions to enhance the passenger transport provision across the region, including the bus, coach, rail, ferry and air network. These interventions are intended to enhance service connectivity, and, where passenger transport is a viable alternative to the car, to make it more attractive than the car.

- **Demand management options:** interventions here are intended to change travel choices. Measures in this category may ‘ration’ use of the transport network in favour of travel means at the top of Scottish Planning Policy 17⁵⁰ hierarchy, that is walking, cycling and public transport. They may include promotion of these alternatives through information / marketing, together with measures to help individuals, business and organisations to plan travel using these alternatives to the car.

Long list options for the Strategic and Regional Network and Horizontal themes

- 4.59 The outcome of the processes discussed above was a long list of potential options for inclusion within the Strategy. This long list of options set out interventions that would assist in realising the Strategy objectives. The long list of options comprised interventions for the Strategic Network, the Regional Network, and each of the Horizontal Themes.

Sifting and prioritising the strategic options

Prioritisation step 1

- 4.60 In the first stage of the prioritisation process, each of the interventions identified was tested against the objectives of the Strategy in order to sift out those which did not achieve the necessary outcomes. This is a requirement of the STAG process and has been detailed in supplementary guidance on prioritisation for the Regional Transport Strategies from the Scottish Executive.

- 4.61 Assessment against the strategy objectives was undertaken using a three point scale, as follows:

- **☑ Green: the option will have an unambiguously positive impact on the objective.**
- **⊗ Amber: the option will have a positive impact, but this will be lesser and / or may have mixed or a distribution of positive and negative impacts.**
- **✗ Red: the option will have an adverse impact on the objective. This is a warning for the option development / refinement to consider.**

- 4.62 In the assessment against the **Environment** objective (manage the impacts of transport on the Region’s natural and built heritage assets) a fourth score was used which indicated if this option interacted with one of the following environmental issues, that have been identified through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- Nature Park.
- Special Area of Conservation.

⁵⁰ Scottish Planning Policy 17: Planning for Transport gives the order of priority for personal travel: walking, then cycling, then public transport, then other motorised modes.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/16154406/44078>

- Special Protection Area.
- Wetland Area.
- Historic Gardens and Design Landscapes.

Options that would come into such an area are flagged thus: ☒

- 4.63 As a result of the assessment exercise, a number of options on the network and in the horizontal themes were dropped, refined or packaged with other options.

Prioritisation step 2

- 4.64 The second step in the prioritisation process was to test the remaining options against their contribution to achieving the **connectivity** objective and the national objectives of improving the environment, health and safety. A similar process to that described for Step 1 was employed, whereby each of the options were given a score on the three point scale in relation to their contribution to the policy tests of connectivity, environment, health and safety.

- 4.65 The policy tests were:

- **Connectivity** for the economy:
 - Option reduces journey time to national gateways and beyond.
 - Option improves journey reliability to national gateways.
 - Option allows a days business at a national gateway and vice versa.
 - Option removes / reduces road congestion.
 - Option improves journey consistency.
 - Option increases journey frequency for passenger transport.
- **Connectivity** for accessibility:
 - Option improves accessibility to labour market / jobs.
 - Option improves accessibility to training and education.
 - Option reduces affordability barriers.
 - Option reduces physical barriers.
 - Option extends the reach of passenger transport.
 - Option makes passenger transport more attractive than the car.
- **Environment, health and safety:**
 - Option enables shift in freight transport from road to rail and water.
 - Option reduces transport emissions.
 - Options increases active travel.
 - Option reduces road accidents.
 - Option reduces traffic speeds in sensitive areas.

- 4.66 From this assessment, a set of ‘best fit’ options were identified. ‘Best fit’ options are those which have scored the greatest number of ‘greens’ in the assessment against these tests.

- 4.67 These best fit options form the core action plan of the Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands from 2008 to 2022, and are presented in Appendix A.

Costing and prioritisation Step 3

- 4.68 Guidance from the Scottish Executive recommends a final stage of prioritisation within Regional Transport Strategies, focusing on the key principles of feasibility and deliverability; effectiveness; acceptability; and policy. This final stage was applied to the proposed options for the Strategic and Regional Networks, whilst measures within the “horizontal” themes have been packaged into sub-strategies.
- 4.69 The principle of effectiveness was applied to the generation of options in Steps 1 and 2 of Prioritisation described above. In addition, the principle of policy was applied through the testing of all options against a hierarchy of policy objectives. Therefore, this final stage of prioritisation focused on deliverability and acceptability. Acceptability was largely measured through the consultation process of the draft Strategy.
- 4.70 In terms of deliverability:
- A short summary note on each option was prepared in consultation with HITRANS authorities, highlighting the key impacts of options where such information was available, and critically, identifying key issues for delivery including potential costings.
 - A broad estimate of existing annual transport expenditure in the Highlands and Islands was developed, to inject a sense of realism about potential funding available for the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.
 - Workshops were held with HITRANS Permanent Advisors to cost the proposed programme of measures, and to prioritise based on deliverability. The criteria focused on were cost, deliverability and planning stage of the proposed measures. Key risks to deliverability were examined for each option – for example, significant environmental constraints such as landscape designations or topographical constraints.
- 4.71 The key outcomes of this process has been:
- A Short Term Action Plan, prioritised with measures for the first five years of the Strategy – further detail is shown in Appendix A.
 - A methodology for prioritisation based on deliverability which can be applied to future iterations of the Strategy as it is reviewed, should funding constraints or opportunities require it.

5. DELIVERY AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY

Overview

5.1 A Strategy is nothing without a plan to deliver it. As the Scottish Executive sets out in its Guidance to Regional Transport Partnerships on the development of Regional Transport Strategies, there should be a hierarchy of plans to assist with the delivery of the Strategy, as follows:

- The Regional Transport Strategy - the 15-year strategy reviewed, revised and refreshed every 4 years in line with the local government electoral cycle.
- Investment Plan: investment plan covering the first 5 to 10 years of the strategy that sets out a programme of capital investment required for the successful implementation of the RTS. This would need to be updated when the Regional Transport Partnership judged it appropriate.
- Delivery or business plan: three-year plan for the implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy, updated annually to reflect local and central government planning and funding cycles. Includes plans for revenue and capital spending and borrowing.
- Annual report: Yearly update of progress

5.2 This section of the Strategy sets out our approach to delivery, as follows:

- Discussion of functions which the Regional Transport Partnership could take on to assist with delivery.
- A proposed monitoring framework, including indicators which relate directly to our vision and objectives.
- The programme for review of the Strategy.

5.3 During the review process of the previous non-statutory Regional Transport Strategy, HITRANS collected an extensive body of information on the policies and priorities of sectors relevant to the HITRANS Strategy (including health, land use planning, economic development, sustainable development), and also carried out a review of existing data sources to inform the development of a monitoring framework for the statutory Strategy. This work has been revisited, updated and drawn on extensively in the development of this monitoring framework.

5.4 Highlands and Islands Enterprise currently carries out an annual monitoring of transport provision and expenditure across the region. HITRANS will work in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to avoid any duplication of resources and ensure that information gathered is of benefit to all parties.

Functions of the Regional Transport Partnership

5.5 Delivery of the Strategy is very much linked to the functions the statutory Regional Transport Partnership will take on. In the case of HITRANS, this issue will be discussed in the first year of the Strategy, during which time our partners will be consulted further. Decisions made on this issue will be reported upon in future updates of the Strategy, most likely in the first four year Review of the Strategy in 2011.

The need for monitoring

- 5.6 HITRANS has a duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to monitor and measure the progress of the Regional Transport Strategy. Moreover, such monitoring is crucial to measure how the Strategy is making progress towards its objectives.
- 5.7 In addition, HITRANS has a duty to monitor the impacts of the Strategy through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. A set of indicators has been developed through this process, which are summarised in this Strategy for the sake of completeness (see Table 5.2). Further detail on the indicators relating to the Strategic Environmental Assessment however can be found in the Environmental Statement for the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy, which accompanies this document.
- 5.8 A comprehensive review of available data was carried out in a review of the previous HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (see section 2 for reference), specifically aimed at informing the development of a monitoring framework for the statutory Strategy. Where significant gaps in data exist, HITRANS is working with partners to develop data collection systems.

Developing a monitoring framework

- 5.9 In developing a monitoring framework for the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy, a number of sources of information has been drawn upon, in particular:
- The strategic outcomes and related indicators identified in the National Transport Strategy for Scotland.
 - Indicators being developed by the individual local authorities within HITRANS in their Local Transport Strategy development process, and within land use Development Plans.
 - Indicators related to other partners who will have a role in helping HITRANS to deliver the Strategy and have a role in monitoring the outcomes of their own strategies and plans, in particular, neighbouring Regional Transport Partnerships (NESTRANS, TACTRANS and SPT), Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the NHS.
 - Indicators developed as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process for the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.
 - Relevant transport indicators from Audit Scotland.
- 5.10 The indicators presented in the National Transport Strategy are shown in the following table. HITRANS agrees that Regional Transport Strategy indicators should be consistent with the national set to enable regional efforts to contribute to national objectives. At the same time however, indicators at the regional level need to reflect regional priorities and objectives, as well as data availability at the regional level. There may be a need to develop indicators that take account of the spatial variability within the region, from islands to mainland, remote rural to urban.

TABLE 5.1 NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY INDICATORS

Strategic outcome	Indicators
Improve journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety	• Congestion – through the existing measure of time lost on trunk roads due to congestion (or other causes) and, if appropriate, through the development of new measures (see box on traffic growth) • No. of international routes from Scottish airports • ScotRail passenger kilometres • Rail punctuality
Reduce emissions, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on our high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health	• Carbon emissions from the transport sector • Tonnes of carbon saved • Average distance walked and cycled per person per year
Improve quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car	• Passenger numbers on buses, through lifeline airports and on lifeline ferries • Satisfaction of bus and rail passengers • Walking time to nearest bus stop and frequency of bus service at nearest bus stop (for urban and rural areas) • Access to key services

- 5.11 A review of other relevant indicators which have been developed by HITRANS' partners within and outwith the region has been carried out, and is presented in Appendix C. It should be noted that not all local authorities have developed their Local Transport Strategies at the time of writing, and therefore this list is incomplete. To make the monitoring of the Regional Transport Strategy as effective and efficient as possible, however, HITRANS are aiming to utilise data collection and monitoring systems at the local level as far as possible, to avoid the need for extensive new data collection.

Proposed monitoring framework for HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy

- 5.12 Having considered the data collection ongoing in the region for related indicators amongst HITRANS' partners, and the best-fit of indicators to measure progress against the HITRANS objectives and policies, the set of draft indicators has been developed. However, further work is required to develop an appropriate monitoring strategy for the Strategy, and this will be done within the first year of the Strategy. Consequently, indicators and any related targets will be reviewed throughout the first year of the statutory Strategy, and any amendments will be reported in the first Annual Report of the Strategy in 2008.

TABLE 5.2 HITRANS DRAFT MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Indicator	Data source	RTS Objective and sub-policy area
National Transport Strategy indicators in Highlands and Islands context		
Congestion	Through the existing measure of time lost on trunk roads due to congestion (or other causes) and, if appropriate, through the development of new measures	Economy, Environment, Health – Active Travel, Passenger Transport, Congestion and Urban issues, Environmental Impact
No. of international routes from Highlands and Islands airports	HIAL	Economy – Aviation
No. of national routes from Highlands and Islands airport	HIAL	Economy – Aviation
No. of London routes from Highlands and Islands airports	HIAL	Economy – Aviation
ScotRail passenger kilometres	First Scotrail	Economy, Environment – Passenger transport
Rail punctuality	First Scotrail	Economy, Environment – Passenger transport
Carbon emissions from the transport sector	See indicator in SEA section below	Environment, Health – Environmental impact
Tonnes of carbon saved	See indicator in SEA section below	Environment, Health – Environmental impact
Average distance walked and cycled per person per year	Local authorities	Environment, Health – Environmental impact, Active Travel
Passenger numbers on buses	Operators and local authorities	Environment, Participation in everyday life – Passenger transport, Congestion and Urban issues
Passenger numbers through lifeline airports	HIAL	Economy, Participation in everyday life – Aviation

Indicator	Data source	RTS Objective and sub-policy area
Passenger numbers on lifeline ferries	Operators and local authorities	Economy, Participation in everyday life – Ports and ferries
Satisfaction of bus and rail passengers	Rail and bus operators	Environment, Participation in everyday life – Passenger transport, Congestion and Urban Issues
Walking time to nearest bus stop and frequency of bus service at nearest bus stop (for urban and rural areas)	Scottish Household Survey	Participation in everyday life – Passenger Transport, Active Travel, Congestion and Urban Issues
Access to key services	Scottish Household Survey, new regional accessibility model	Participation in everyday life – Passenger Transport, Active Travel, Congestion and Urban Issues, Community and health transport
Other suggested indicators		
National Cycle Network length	SUSTRANS	Environment, Health – Environmental impact, Active Travel, Congestion and Urban Issues
Travel to work (modal share)	Scottish Household Statistics	Participation in everyday life, Environment, Health – Active Travel, Passenger Transport, Congestion and Urban issues
Travel to school (modal share)	Scottish Household Statistics	Participation in everyday life, Environment, Health – Active Travel, Passenger Transport, Congestion and Urban issues
Road safety (general, fatalities and casualties)	Road Accident Statistics	Safety and security
Road safety (children, fatalities and casualties)	Road Accident Statistics	Safety and security
Public transport information provision	Existing rail performance monitoring (SQUIRE), data gap for bus, ferry, rail	Participation in everyday life, Environment – Passenger Transport, Congestion and Urban Issues
Removal of freight road miles	Scottish Executive (FFG)	Environment – Freight, Environmental impacts

Indicator	Data source	RTS Objective and sub-policy area
Proportion of bus fleet DDA compliant	Operators	Participation in everyday life
Proportion of ferry fleet DDA compliant	Operators	Participation in everyday life
Population change (growth or decline)	Census	Viability of the region
Indexing of ferry, air, rail and bus fares on selected routes	Operators and local authorities	Economy, Participation in everyday life – Ports and Ferries, Travel Costs
Indexing of journey times by road and rail	Operators, Scottish Executive	Economy, Participation in everyday life – Passenger transport, Freight, Locally significant roads
Rail and bus journey times	Scheduled timetables	Participation in everyday life, Environment, Economy – Passenger Transport, Congestion and Urban Issues
Maintenance/quality of road infrastructure	Local authorities	Economy, Participation in everyday life, Safety and Security – locally significant roads
Proportion of carbon emissions from transport offset by other reductions across the region	HITRANS and HIE	Environment, Health – Environmental impact
Strategic Environmental Assessment of HITRANS RTS		
Noise: Prediction of road traffic noise at key locations on the road network	Tbc	Environment
Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Predicted emissions of CO ₂ from transport	Tbc	Environment
Air quality: NO₂ : Annual mean, PM₁₀ : Annual mean	Local authority Air Quality Monitoring Reports	Environment
Water: The quality of river, coastal and estuary waters	Tbc	Environment
Soils: Presence of contaminated land	Tbc	Environment
Biodiversity: Number of designated sites affected in RTS	Tbc	Environment

Indicator	Data source	RTS Objective and <i>sub-policy area</i>
Landscape: Area (in ha.) of areas of protection designated to protect visual amenity affected	Tbc	Environment
Cultural Heritage: Number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, Historic Gardens, Designed Landscapes and areas within a World Heritage Site affected by RTS	Tbc	Environment
Health: Air quality indicators (respiratory health) The proportion of the population feeling in 'good health'	Scottish Household Survey	Environment

Review process

- 5.13 The review process for the Strategy is formalised within statutory guidance from the Scottish Executive. This guidance states that the Section 7 of the Act requires Regional Transport Partnerships under review. The Strategy should be reviewed and rolled forward every 4 years.
- 5.14 HITRANS undertakes to prepare an Annual Report of the Regional Transport Strategy, reporting on progress and achievements, as well as identifying areas which require attention to progress. Any information available to assist with monitoring will be included in the Annual Reports, although a full review of progress indicators will take place at the four-yearly Review. These four-yearly Reviews will provide an opportunity to revisit the policies and programmes within the Strategy.
- 5.15 In addition, during 2007/08, HITRANS undertakes to assess additional proposals that have come forward during the consultation period from HITRANS partners. These additional proposals emerged during the consultation period and need to be assessed as to whether they should be included in the Strategy fifteen-year programme. For more information on these, see Appendix A5.

APPENDIX A

ACTION PROGRAMME OF STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

**A1. ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
2008 – 2022**

Package of strategy policies and initiatives

- A1.1 Through the strategy development process, discussed in Section 5, a number of “best fit” options have been generated, aimed at meeting the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy, and delivering the overarching policy of ***developing a fit for purpose, multi-modal transport system with associated infrastructure.***
- A1.2 The following tables list the ‘best fit’ options for the horizontal sub-strategies, Strategic and Regional Network priority links. Network options are grouped under their link in their respective network, and horizontal sub-strategy options are grouped under their respective theme. An assessment of the contribution that that option makes to the Strategy objectives is also given, indicated using the scoring system described at the start of this section.
- A1.3 Some options have not been subject to an individual STAG study so far, and therefore will require further work in this area before final commitments are made to implement them.
- A1.4 In the design of schemes, the appropriate national policy guidance will be used. In particular, the principles of *Scottish Planning Policy 17 Planning for Transport* will be applied, which include designing for a hierarchy of sustainable transport means (walking, cycling, public transport and motorised modes). In addition, an Active Travel audit will be carried out on relevant initiatives, together with any Appropriate Assessments in terms of environmental impacts.
- A1.5 Following the assessment of contribution to the Strategy objectives, the options have been programmed into the 15 year period of the Strategy in three five-year periods as follows: 2008-2012, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022. As necessary, time has been allocated for research and for scheme preparation, such as land acquisition and design for example. Where a scheme will require a significant undertaking the scheme has been spread over an appropriate time period.
- A1.6 Schemes outside the region, where they are on the strategic corridors, have also been included.

APPENDIX: TABLE A1.1

HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGY POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
Active travel										
H27a	Clearer policy to promote in land use planning and development control processes across the region, including Active Travel audits on all RTS and LTS measures									
H27b	Active travel infrastructure audits in Regional Centres and other localities around the region		Would advance all							
H27c	Longer-term investment programme in response to audits									
H27d	Travel behaviour change programme									
H27e	Bespoke Travel Plan elements and support									
Aviation										
H28a	Evaluate economic and social opportunities of providing other / enhancing existing air connections around the region									
H28b	Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of Air Discount Scheme. Assess options for further development									
H28c	Development of direct rail services between Inverness and									

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
Edinburgh airport										
H28d	Continue to press and collaborate with others for slots for Inverness services at London Gatwick/Heathrow hubs									
Community and health transport										
H29a	Baseline review including gap analysis			Could advance all						
H29b	Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working									
H29c	Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for region			Could advance all						
H29d	Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate									
H29e	Training and mentoring programme for sector									
H29f	Common standards to guide decision making on procurement of local transport services									
H29g	Sharing of resources (e.g. vehicles) and knowledge (e.g. good practice)			Could advance all						
H29h	Integration of services & with mainstream passenger transport (including interchange facilities)									

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
H29i	Car sharing (lifts)									
H29j	Car sharing (community)									
Congestion & urban issues										
H30a	Improve transport infrastructure including bus priority									
H30b	Travel demand management package									
H30c	Package to increase the appeal of active travel and public transport									
H30d	Strategic Park & Ride sites and services									
H30e	Evaluate options for parking / pricing strategy for urban centres									
H30f	Enhance connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre, and other peripheral retail parks and town centres									
H30g	Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards									
Freight transport										
H31a	Freight Quality Partnership									

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
H31b	Addressing inefficiencies and constraints in the transport network									
H31c	Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs		Could advance all							
H31d	Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods									
H31e	Take forward outcomes of HITRANS sea freight study									
H31f	Work with partners to shift the transfer of freight to rail where feasible									
Locally significant network & road maintenance										
H32a	Attract additional funding									
Mainstream passenger transport										
H33a	Multi-modal / operator ticketing system									
H33b	Comprehensive and user-friendly information and mapping									
H33c	Consistent standard for supporting infrastructure									
H33d	Integrated timetabling across the region									
H33e	Hub and spoke interchange network, including infrastructure									

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
H33f	Targeted support for socially excluded groups to improve access opportunities. This could include tackling any aspect of accessibility – physical, awareness, affordability, acceptability and availability.									
H33g	Development of taxi sector as part of passenger transport network									
H33h	Develop Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts where appropriate									
H33i	Upgrade poor quality transport terminals and vehicles (including continued investment in accessible vehicle fleet)									
H33j	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental programme of improvements to the region's rail network									
H33k	Develop a comprehensive bus and coach strategy for the region									
K33l	Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads									
H33m	Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, building on the new DRT fund delegated to Regional Transport Partnerships									
Ports, ferries and waterways transport										

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
H34a	Understand origin and destination patterns for passengers and freight		Could advance all							
H34b	Rationalise the waterborne transport network in partnership with Scottish Executive, pending outcome of Executive's review of lifeline ferry services (National Transport Strategy commitment)									
H34c	Enhance ferry services and develop fit for purpose timetables									
H34d	Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms		Could advance all							
H34e	Develop a regional investment strategy									
Costs of transport and travel										
H35a	Make travel more affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries									
H35b	Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes									
H35c	Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport									
Environmental impacts										
H36a	Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region									

APPENDIX: TABLE A1.2

STRATEGIC NETWORK PROPOSALS FOR PRIORITY LINKS

Map ID ⁵¹	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	 Unambiguously positive contribution  Lesser positive impact or distribution  Negative impact  Protected area  research and scheme preparation  delivery								
A82 Corridor (Road)										
S1a	Western bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel						 			
S1b	Ballachulish to Fort William route enhancements						 			
S1c	Tarbet to Ballachulish strategy (road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan & route enhancement Tyndrum to Ballachulish)						 	 Tarbet to Inverarnan  Tyndrum to Ballachulish	 Tyndrum to Ballachulish	
S1d	Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness						 			
S1f	Strip-widening Inverness to Glasgow						 			
Highland Main Line										
S2a	Journey time and frequency improvements (hourly departure)							 		

⁵¹ Map ID – refers to identifier code of schemes on interactive maps which display RTS proposals, available on HITRANS website during Draft RTS consultation.

Map ID ⁵¹	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
including both infrastructure upgrades and service improvements										
A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)										
S3	Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (including existing programme of dualling Perth to Pitlochry, and strategic work Inverness to Pitlochry by Scottish Executive programme of 2 plus 1s)									
Inverness airport and flights										
S4a	Surface Access Strategy to deliver better integration									
S4b	Terminal building, runway extension and taxiway								(terminal)	(runway)
Inverness-Aberdeen Rail Line										
S5a	Commuter services Elgin-Inverness									
S5b	Dalcross Station at Inverness airport									
S5c	Journey time improvements and hourly departure Inverness to Aberdeen									
A96 Corridor (Road)										

Map ID ⁵¹	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
		✓ Unambiguously positive contribution ⚠ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➡ delivery								
S6a	Dual carriageway Inverness to airport		✓			✓	✗	▲ ➡		
S6b	Fochabers bypass		✓			✓	✗⚠	▲ ➡		
S6c	Elgin bypass with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through Elgin, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R		✓			✓	✗⚠	➡ demand management / local internal improvements	➡ bypass	
								▲ bypass		
S6d	Other bypasses on route (including Nairn and Keith) with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through settlements, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R		✓			✓	✗⚠	➡ demand management / local internal improvements	▲ bypasses	➡ bypasses
								▲ bypasses	➡ bypasses	
S6f	Strategic dualling of the A96		✓			✓	✗⚠	▲	➡	➡
A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow										
S7a	Modern 2-track standard Campbeltown to A82		✓			✓	✗	▲	➡	
S7b	Address pinch points on route		✓			✓	✗	➡	➡	
Far North Line										
S8a	New station at Canon Bridge		✓			✓	✓	➡		

Map ID ⁵¹	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
S8b	Speed enhancement measures including level crossing upgrades and further research work into loop and line speeds									
A9 North including A99										
S9a	Berriedale Braes crossing									
S9b	Bypass settlements on route, specifically Brora and Golspie									
S9c	Provision of roadspace for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness & P&R facilities and services									
S9d	Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes between Tore and Cromarty Bridge and other improvements									
S9e	Passenger transport access to Wick airport									
Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow										
S10a	Oban Development Road and demand management measures in Oban									
S10b	Oban Rail Line rail service enhancement / frequency increase									
Western Isles & Skye connections to A82 for Glasgow										
S11a	Skye air service to central belt									
Kyle Rail Line										

Map ID ⁵¹	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	✔ Unambiguously positive contribution ⚠ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✖ Negative impact ⓧ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➡ delivery								
S12a	Commuter service to Inverness		✔	✔		✔	⚠	➡		
Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh										
S13a	Elgin to Craigellachie A941 road improvements		✔			✔	✖	➡	➡	
S13b	A95 road improvements, including bridge improvements		✔			✔	✖	▲	➡	➡
Barra airport and flights										
S14a	Fixed landing strip and surface access strategy to deliver better integration		✔	✔		✔	✖	▲	➡	
Inverness										
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road in phases. This project will also include demand management interventions for Inverness, to include Park and Ride, bus lanes, traffic lights integration, parking management, and real time information systems.		✔	✔	⚠	✔	✖ ⓧ	▲	➡	➡

APPENDIX: TABLE A1.3 REGIONAL NETWORK PROPOSALS FOR PRIORITY LINKS

Map ID	Link	KEY ✔ Unambiguously positive contribution ⦿ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➡ delivery	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme			
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural</u> and <u>built</u> <u>heritage</u> <u>assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)	
Orkney inter-isle connections											
R15a	Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements including priority action on ferry links most at risk in the short term		✔	✔		⦿	⦿	▲	➡	➡	➡
Easdale, Lismore, Luing and Islay-Jura ferry services											
R16a	Replacement vessels and / or infrastructure		✔	⦿			⦿	▲		➡	➡
Raasay ferry terminal											
R17a	New terminal at Churchton Bay and associated Sconser Ferry Terminal improvements		⦿	⦿				▲	➡	➡	
Western Isles spinal route											
R18a	Fixed links on the Sounds		✔	✔		⦿	✗	▲			
R18b	Faster, more frequent ferry crossings		⦿	⦿			⦿	▲			
R18c	Road improvement to complete a programme of improvements on the spinal route		✔	⦿		⦿	✗	▲	➡	➡	➡
A816 Oban to Lochgilphead											
R19a	Road improvement options		✔	✔		✔	⦿	▲	➡		

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural</u> and <u>built</u> <u>heritage</u> <u>assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort and Iona Ferry										
R20a	Route enhancement of remaining five mile section									
A941 Dufftown to A95										
R21a	Road improvement including addressing pinch points and providing overtaking opportunities									
A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg										
R22a	Removal of single-track section at Laxford Bridge									
R22b	Route enhancement									
A890 Lochcarron to A832										
R23a	Route enhancement on two sections including single track sections and visibility improvements in vicinity of Achnashellach. two sections with the first lying between Strathcarron junction and Balnacra level crossing (short term); the second section, Achnashellach Improvement which currently has a height restriction at a railway underbridge									
A939 Tomintoul to A95										
R24a	Road improvement options									

Map ID	Link	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to <u>compete</u> and support <u>growth</u>	Enable people to <u>participate</u> in everyday life	Improve the <u>health</u> of the Region's people	Improve <u>safety</u> and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's <u>natural and built heritage assets</u>	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	Option	Unambiguously positive contribution Lesser positive impact or distribution Negative impact Protected area research and scheme preparation delivery								
A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh and A950 to Peterhead										
R25a	Road improvement options									
A832 Gairloch to Garve										
R26a	Road improvement options Slattadale to Gairloch ,which is a last remaining section of single track and passing place road on the A832 into Gairloch, and trunk road section from Contin to Garve									

A2. INDICATIVE COSTINGS OF THE STRATEGY PROGRAMME**Indicative costings**

- A2.1 HITRANS has developed a set of indicative costings of everything within the programme shown above. It should be noted these are indicative costings, developed with the best available information, although may be subject to change as the detail of initiatives are developed. For the sake of consistency, any costings that had Optimism Bias applied (such as costs prepared by external bodies), this percentage has been subtracted where known, with the aim of making all costs comparable.
- A2.2 Costs are spread across a three period framework for the Strategy – short (2008-12), medium (2013-17), and long (2018-22).
- A2.3 Costs of initiatives will be further updated in subsequent reviews of the Strategy.

Notes on the costings table

- A2.4 Items in the following table marked with an asterix (*), indicate a requirement for research and/or further feasibility work. The costs of this work will largely be taken from the HITRANS research budget, estimated at £2m in total for each five year period, although individual authorities may fund research / feasibility of some projects within their areas.
- A2.5 As discussed further in section A3 below, each initiative or measure has been allocated to a general area or corridor of connectivity. This allocation is shown in the first column of the following table, and explained in full in section A3. As an example, WSC indicates Western Strategic Corridor.

APPENDIX: TABLE A2.1 REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY OUTLINE PROGRAMME COSTINGS - 2008 TO 2022

£m	Delivery agents - funding expectations	Short £m	Medium £m	Long £m	Total £m
	Scottish Executive (ferry and air)	78.5	25.0	25.0	128.5
	Transport Scotland	170.4	549.0	164.0	883.4
	Network Rail	4.8	20.0	0.0	24.8
	HIAL	45.4	14.0	0.0	59.4
	ABC	58.7	19.6	12.6	90.9
	MC	38.5	28.5	0.0	67.0
	OIC	3.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
	CNES	19.5	15.0	115.0	149.5
	HC	36.5	25.5	0.0	62.0
	HITRANS	94.7	87.1	85.0	266.8
	ERDF	10.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
		559.9	783.7	401.6	1745.3

			Cost £m			DELIVERY AGENTS
			Short (2008-12)	Medium (2013-17)	Long (2018-22)	
		HITRANS Research and Development	2	2	2	HITRANS
		A82 Corridor (Road)				
WSC	S1a	A82 Western Bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel	7.6			TS
WSC	S1b	A82 Ballachulish to Fort William route improvements*		20		TS
WSC	S1c	A82 Tarbet to Ballachulish strategy (road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan & route enhancement Tyndrum to Ballachulish)	6			TS
WSC		A82 Tyndrum to Ballachulish*	5	10		TS
WSC	S1d	A82 Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness*	15	2.5	2.5	TS
IC	S1e	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - EAST*	15	22.5		TS
IC	S1e	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - WEST*		37.5		TS
WSC	S1f	Strip widening of A82 Inverness to Glasgow*	5			TS

		Highland Main Line			
CSC	S2a	HML Journey time and frequency improvements (hourly departure)*	7	47.5	TS
		A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)			
CSC	S3a	Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (including existing programme of dualling Perth to Pitlochry, and strategic work Inverness to Pitlochry based on upgrading Scottish Executive programme of 2 plus 1s)*	28	170	60 TS
		Inverness airport and flights			
ESC	S4a	Inv airport Surface Access Strategy to deliver better integration	2.1		HIAL
ESC	S4b	Inv airport Terminal building	28.3		HIAL
	S4b	Inv airport Runway extension		4	HIAL
		Inverness-Aberdeen Rail Line			
ESC	S5a	Commuter services Elgin-Inverness	0.8		TS
ESC	S5b	Dalcross Station at Inverness airport	1		TS
ESC	S5c	Journey time improvements and hourly Inverness to Aberdeen*		8.5	8.5 TS
		A96 Corridor (Road)			
ESC	S6a	Dual carriageway Inverness to airport	30		TS
ESC	S6b	Fochabers bypass	30		TS
		Elgin bypass with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through Elgin, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*		46	
ESC	S6c	Elgin demand management	1		TS
ESC	S6c	Other bypasses on route (including Nairn and Keith) with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through settlements, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*		35	MC
ESC	S6d	Nairn and Keith demand management	1.5		TS
ESC	S6d	Nairn and Keith demand management	1		HC
ESC	S6d	Nairn and Keith demand management			MC
ESC	S6f	Strategic dualling of the A96*		50	50 TS
		A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow			
ABC	S7a	Modern 2-track standard Campbeltown to A82		27	TS

ABC	S7b	A83 Address pinch points on route	7.5	7.5		TS
		Far North Line				
NHOC	S8a	New station at Conon Bridge	0.2			HITRANS
NHOC	S8b	Measures to speed up FNL	4.8	20		Network Rail
		A9 North and A99				
NHOC	S9a	A9N Berriedale Braes crossing*		30		TS
NHOC	S9b	A9N Bypass settlements on route*			23	TS
NHOC	S9c	A9N Provision of roadsapce for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness & P&R facilities and services	2			TS
NHOC	S9d	A9N Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes and other improvements	10.5	10		TS
NHOC	S9e	Passenger transport access to Wick airport	0.05			HITRANS
		Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow				
ABC	S10a	Oban Development Road and demand management measures in Oban*	7	7		ABC
ABC	S10b	Oban and Fort William Rail Line rail service enhancement / frequency increase	2.1	2.1		HITRANS
		Western Isles & Skye connections to A82 for Glasgow				
WHWIC	S11a	Skye air service to central belt*		10		HIAL
		Kyle Rail Line (North Highland Lines)				
NHOC	S12a	Kyle Commuter service to Inverness (no cost)	0.3			HITRANS
		Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh/Glasgow				
MC	S13a	Elgin to Criagellachie A941 road improvements	6	17		MC
MC	S13b	A95 road improvements*		10	20	TS
		Barra airport and flights				
WHWIC	S14a	Barra Fixed landing strip and surface access strategy to deliver better integration*	15			HIAL
		Orkney inter-isle connections				
NHOC	R15a	Orkney Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements*	50	25	25	SE
		Easdale, Lismore, Luing and Islay-Jura ferry serices				
ABC	R16a	A&B Replacement vessels and infrastructure*		12.6	12.6	ABC

		Raasay ferry terminal				
WHWIC	R17a	Raasay new terminal - but include Sconser?	10	5		HC
		Western Isles spinal route				
WHWIC	R18a	WI Fixed links on the Sounds (cost for Harris only)*			100	CNES
WHWIC	R18b	WI Faster, more frequent ferry crossings*	0.5			SE
WHWIC	R18c	WI Road improvement options*	15	15	15	CNES
		A816 Oban to Lochgilphead				
ABC	R19a	A816 Road improvement options*	30			ABC
		A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort and Iona Ferry				
ABC	R20a	A848 A849 Route enhancement of remaining five mile section*	13.2			ABC
		A941 Dufftown to A95				
MC	R21a	A941 Road improvement including addressing pinch points and providing overtaking opportunities*	8.5			MC
		A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg				
NHOC	R22a	A838 Removal of single-track section at Laxford Bridge*		1		HC
NHOC	R22b	A838 Route enhancement*	2.5	2.5		HC
		A890 Lochcarron to A832				
WHWIC	R23a	A890 Route enhancement including single track sections and visibility improvements in vicinity of Achnashellach*	7	7		HC
		A939 Nairn and Tomintoul to A95				
MC	R24a	A939 Road improvement options	17			MC
		A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh and A950 to Peterhead				
MC	R25a	A98 Road improvement options*		11.5		MC
		A832 Gairloch to Garve				
WHWIC	R26a	A832 Road improvement options*		10		HC
WHWIC	R26a	A832 trunk road section*		15		TS
		Active Travel				
	H27a	Clearer policy to promote in land use planning and development control processes across the region, including Active Travel audits on all RTS and LTS measures	5	5	5	HITRANS
	H27b	Active travel infrastructure audits in Regional Centres and other localities around the region				HITRANS
	H27c	Investment programme in response to audits				HITRANS

H27d	Travel behaviour change programme		HITRANS
H27e	Bespoke Travel Plan elements and support		HITRANS
Aviation			
H28a	Evaluate economic and social opportunities of providing other / enhancing existing air connections around the region*		HITRANS
H28b	Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of Air Discount Scheme. Assess options for further development*		HITRANS
H28c	Development of direct rail services between Inverness and Edinburgh airport		TS
H28d	Continue to press and collaborate with others for slots for Inverness services at London hubs		HITRANS
Community and health transport			
H29a	Baseline review including gap analysis	35	HITRANS
H29b	Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working		HITRANS
H29c	Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for region		HITRANS
H29d	Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate		HITRANS
H29e	Training and mentoring programme for sector		HITRANS
H29f	Common standards to guide decision making on procurement of local transport services		HITRANS
H29g	Sharing of resources (e.g. vehicles) and knowledge (e.g. good practice)		HITRANS
H29h	Integration of services & with mainstream passenger transport (including interchange facilities)		HITRANS
H29i	Car sharing (lifts)		HITRANS
H29j	Car sharing (community)		HITRANS
Congestion & urban issues			
H30a	Improve transport infrastructure	10	HITRANS
H30b	Travel demand management package	10	HITRANS
H30c	Increase the appeal of public transport investment package	10	HITRANS
H30d	Strategic Park & Ride sites and services		HITRANS
H30e	Evaluate options for parking / pricing strategy for urban		HITRANS

	centres				
H30f	Connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre				HC
H30g	Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards				HC
Freight transport					
H31a	Freight Quality Partnership	0.005			HITRANS
H31b	Addressing inefficiencies / constraints in the transport network*				HITRANS
H31c	Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs*				HITRANS
H31d	Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods*				HITRANS
H31e	Take forward outcomes of HITRANS sea freight study				HITRANS
Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network	12	40	40	HITRANS
H32a	Locally significant network	10			ERDF
H32a	Locally significant network	4.5			HC
H32a	Locally significant network	1.5			ABC
H32a	Locally significant network	1.5			CNES
H32a	Locally significant network	1			OIC
H32a	Locally significant network	1			MC
H32a	road maintenance	28			SE
H32a	road maintenance	11			HC
H32a	road maintenance	7			ABC
H32a	road maintenance	5			MC
H32a	road maintenance	3			CNES
H32a	road maintenance	2			OIC
Mainstream passenger transport					
H33a	Multi-modal / operator ticketing system	25	25	25	HITRANS
H33b	Comprehensive and user-friendly information and mapping				HITRANS
H33c	Standard for supporting infrastructure				HITRANS
H33d	Integrated timetabling				HITRANS
H33e	Hub and spoke interchange network				HITRANS
H33f	Targeted support for socially excluded groups				HITRANS
H33g	Development of taxi sector				HITRANS

H33h	Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts					HITRANS
H33i	Invest in poor quality transport terminals and vehicles					HITRANS
H33k	Develop a comprehensive bus strategy and investment programme for the region					HITRANS
H33l	Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads					HITRANS
H33m	Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, building on the new DRT fund delegated to Regional Transport Partnerships					HITRANS
H33j	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental improvements to the rail network (focused on FNL?)	5	5	5		HITRANS
Ports, ferries and waterways transport						
H34a	Understand origin and destination patterns*					HITRANS
H34b	Rationalise the waterborne transport network*					HITRANS
H34c	Enhance ferry services and develop timetables					HITRANS
H34d	Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms*					HITRANS
H34e	Regional investment strategy					HITRANS
Costs of transport and travel						
H35a	Make travel more affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries*					HITRANS
H35b	Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes*					HITRANS
H35c	Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport*					HITRANS
Environmental impacts						
H36a	Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region*					HITRANS

A3. SHORT TERM DELIVERY PLAN 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11**Context**

A3.1 To fit within the timescales of the Scottish Executive's Spending Review (2008-2011), each Regional Transport Partnership must prepare a three year delivery plan as part of their Regional Transport Strategy.

A3.2 The HITRANS Delivery Plan 2008-2011 sets out the areas for prioritised spending over the three financial years, starting April 2008 and ending March 2011. The areas of priority have been focused on the following:

- **Making progress on the horizontal sub-strategies of active travel, passenger transport, community and health transport, congestion and urban issues:** much of the content of the horizontal sub-strategies is aimed at promoting sustainable travel activity by people and by goods, thus working towards the reduction of emissions from transport activity across the region. Many of the initiatives proposed can be started within the first three years of the Strategy, and examples of specific actions are provided in the table below.
- **Tackling the backlog of maintenance across the region, and progressing works to improve the locally significant road network:** ERDF funding will assist with this, but substantial investment is planned by HITRANS, subject to a successful funding bid to Transport Scotland.
- **Addressing inadequacies on the Strategic and Regional Network:** action has been targeted on key corridors within the region, which have been identified through the generation of options to further the objectives of the Strategy. It is anticipated that Transport Scotland will provide the bulk of funding for improvements on the three key corridors that HITRANS wish to prioritise action on, which are:
 - The Central Strategic Corridor (CSC), linking Inverness to the central belt of Scotland.
 - The Eastern Strategic Corridor (ESC), linking Inverness and Aberdeen.
 - The Western Strategic Corridor (WSC), linking Inverness to the West of Scotland.
- Furthermore, a series of actions on five key corridors which are critical to connectivity around the region have been identified in this Delivery Plan. The five corridors, on which it is anticipated HITRANS and its constituent local authorities will focus their spending on, are:
 - Inverness Connectivity (IC)
 - Moray Connectivity (MC)
 - Argyll and Bute Connectivity (ABC)
 - North Highland and Orkney Connectivity (NHOC)
 - Western Highlands and Western Isles Connectivity (WHWIC)

Funding Sources in the three year Delivery Plan period

A3.3 The key partners whom HITRANS anticipate will contribute to the delivery of the 2008-2011 Delivery Plan are as follows:

- **Transport Scotland** – Current annual capital expenditure in the region is not

known but it is thought to be less than £20m on trunk roads and rail. The Regional Transport Strategy argues that that this has been insufficient. Our bid over the Delivery Plan period is for **£102.3m**.

- **HITRANS** – Current annual grant from the Scottish Executive is £5m with a further £7m expected for Demand Responsive Transport (DRT). We anticipate a significant increase in capital grant from the Executive to deliver the Regional Transport Strategy, which includes rail, road, bus, walking and cycling improvements. Our bid over the short term is for **£118.15m**.
- **ERDF** – The previous programme allocated £6m per annum to transport. The current programme will be no more than one third of this. HITRANS have agreed to concentrate this on locally significant roads. Total from the ERDF is anticipated to be **£6m**.
- **HIAL** – Current five year capital expenditure plans for the airports comprise £45m, and therefore expenditure within the Delivery Plan period is anticipated in the region of **£30.4m**.
- **Scottish Executive** – The current annual grant for ports and harbours is approximately £15m per annum. This grant can be theoretically spent across Scotland. Our Delivery Plan action programme concentrates on Orkney which will require **£30m**.
- **Councils** – Council capital expenditure on roads and transport has risen from £35m in 2002/3 to £42m in 2004/5. It is anticipated that Councils will allocate £50m annually to delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy. It is intended that at least 50% of this amount will be spent on strategic horizontal measures and the regional network totalling for the short term in the region of **£57.2m**.
- **Network Rail** – in the first three year period, it is anticipated that Network Rail will contribute **£2.9m** towards line speed enhancements across the region.
- **TOTAL** for the three year Delivery Plan programme is **£347.1m**.

APPENDIX: TABLE A3.1 SHORT TERM DELIVERY PLAN 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 – HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGIES

RTS Initiatives	Cost	Delivery partner(s)
Active Travel package	£3m	HITRANS £3m
Community and Health transport package including Demand Responsive Transport	£21m	HITRANS £21m
Congestion and urban issues package focused on Inner Moray Firth area	£6m	HITRANS £6m
Passenger transport package (minus rail improvements) focused on Inner Moray Firth area	£15m	HITRANS £15m
Passenger transport – incremental rail improvements, Challenge Fund e.g. station improvements	£3m	HITRANS £3m
Locally significant network (for improvements to the “yellow” locally significant network identified in the RTS which will enhance accessibility to remote rural communities)	£25.1m	HITRANS £12m
		ERDF £6m
		HC £2.7m
		A&BC £0.9m
		CnES £2m
		OIC £0.7m
		MC £0.9m
Road maintenance – investment to reduce the backlog across the region	£34m	HITRANS £16.8m
		HC £6.6m
		A&BC £4.2m
		MC £3m
		OIC £1.2m
Feasibility, STAG and research monies	£1.2m	CNES £2m
		HITRANS £1.2m
Sub-total	£108.3m	HITRANS £78m
		ERDF £6m
		Highland Council £9.3m
		Argyll and Bute Council £5.1m
		Moray Council £3.9m
		Orkney Islands Council £1.9m
		Comhairle nan Eilean Siar £4m

Strategic and Regional Network

Central Strategic Corridor		
Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (A9 upgrade package announced by Transport Scotland 2006)*	£28m	Transport Scotland
Highland Main Line – loop to provide additional capacity	£7m	Transport Scotland
Sub-total	£35m	Transport Scotland
Eastern Strategic Corridor		
Inverness Airport, terminal extension and Surface Access enhancements	£30.4m	HIAL
Rail improvements Elgin to Inverness including Dalcross station	£1.8m	Transport Scotland
Road improvements including dualling Inverness to airport and Fochabers bypass	£36m	Transport Scotland
		HITRANS £1m
Demand management at Elgin, Nairn and Keith	£3m	Highland Council £1.5m Moray Council £0.5m
		HIAL £30.4m
		Transport Scotland £37.8m
Sub-total	£71.2m	HITRANS £1m Highland Council £1.5m Moray Council £0.5m
Western Strategic Corridor		
A82 Western Bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel	£6.5m	Transport Scotland
A82 road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan	£4m	Transport Scotland
A82 Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness(Lochy Bridge)*	£0.5m	Transport Scotland
Strip widening of A82 Inverness to Glasgow *	£1m	Transport Scotland
Sub-total	£12m	Transport Scotland £12m

North Highland and Orkney Connectivity		
Far North Line – Conon Bridge and speed enhancement measures	£3m	HITRANS £0.1m Network Rail £2.9m
A838 route enhancement	£1.5m	Highland Council
A9N Provision of roadspace for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness	£1m	Transport Scotland
Passenger transport to Wick airport	£0.05m	HITRANS
A9N Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes and other improvements	£10.5m	Transport Scotland
Orkney Inter-Isles Ferry and Air Connectivity (prioritised improvements to ferry network)	£30m	Scottish Executive, Orkney Islands Council and others
Kyle Rail Line Commuter service to Inverness – timetable enhancements and work towards fourth daily train	£0.3m	HITRANS
Sub-total	£46.4m	Scottish Executive £30m Transport Scotland £11.5m HITRANS £0.45m Network Rail £2.9m Highland Council £1.5m
Inverness Connectivity		
Inverness trunk road link – eastern section to A9/A96 including active travel infrastructure	£15m	HITRANS
Moray Connectivity		
Elgin to Craigellachie A941,	£3.6m	Moray Council £1.3m HITRANS £2.3m

A939 improvements	£3.5m	Moray Council £1.2m HITRANS £2.3m
Sub-total	£7.1m	Moray Council £2.5m HITRANS £4.6m
Argyll and Bute Connectivity		
A848/A849 route enhancement	£8m	Argyll and Bute Council £4m HITRANS £4m
A83 Addressing pinch points on route	£6m	Transport Scotland
Oban Development Road and demand management	£4m	Argyll and Bute Council £1m HITRANS £3m
Oban rail capacity enhancements	£2.1m	HITRANS
Sub-total	£20.1m	Argyll and Bute Council £5m HITRANS £9.1m TS £6m
West Highland Western Isles Connectivity		
A890 improvements	£7m	Highland Council
Western Isles Spinal Route	£15m	CNES £5m HITRANS £10m
Raasay ferry terminal	£10m	Highland Council
Sub-total	£32m	Highland Council £17m CNES £5m HITRANS £10m

APPENDIX: TABLE A3.2 ANTICIPATED SPLIT OF FUNDING REQUIRED FROM PARTNERS 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11

Partner body	Funding total
HITRANS	£118.1m
Transport Scotland	£102.3m
HIALL	£30.4m
Scottish Executive	£30.0m
Highland Council	£29.3m
Argyll and Bute Council	£10.1m
Moray Council	£6.9m
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£9.0m
Orkney Islands Council	£1.9m
ERDF	£6.0m
Network Rail	£2.9m
TOTAL 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11	£347m

APPENDIX: TABLE A3.3 ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURE ON KEY CORRIDORS 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11

Partner body	Funding total
Central Strategic Corridor	£35m
Eastern Strategic Corridor	£71.2m
Western Strategic Corridor	£12.0m
North Highland and Orkney Connectivity	£46.4m
Inverness Connectivity	£15m
Argyll and Bute Connectivity	£20.1m
Moray Connectivity	£7.1m
West Highland and Western Isles Connectivity	£32m

A4. LONGER TERM ASPIRATIONS FOR REVIEW DURING THE RTS

A4.1 HITRANS holds some long term aspirations for major improvements to the transport network in the region which realistically may not be achievable within the current Strategy's lifespan, that is, 2008 to 2022. Despite these being omitted from the current action plan, work will continue to build a case for these improvements, which are as follows:

- **A82: A modern two-track standard road between Inverness and Glasgow** – in the current Strategy, work will be ongoing on selected strip-widening along the A82, with the future aim of upgrading the road to a modern standard, subject to the outputs of further feasibility work.
- **A96: A dual carriageway from Inverness to Aberdeen** – in the current Strategy, exploratory research and development on this long term aspiration will be ongoing, as well as work to improve strategic sections. However, it remains a long term goal to have a dual carriageway standards on this vital economic link.
- **Western Isles Spinal Route: Upgrading to modern two track standard on remaining 80km/50miles** – progress has been made on a programme of upgrading this lifeline link, although substantial funding is required to complete the Spinal Route work. Therefore, it is proposed that work continues during the lifespan of this Strategy, but with the proviso that funding will be required in the next Strategy (beyond 2023) to complete the full route upgrade.
- **A9: Dualling from Inverness to Perth** – in the current strategy, work will continue on upgrading strategic sections. It remains a long term goal to have dual carriageway standards on this vital economic link.
- **Highland Main Line: Two track railway from Inverness to Perth** – strategic improvements will be carried out within the current strategy, but given the significance of this route, and the need to make it competitive with road journey times for passengers and freight, a long term goal is for a two track railway.
- **Modern ferry network for the 21st century**: work will continue on sustaining and upgrading the ferry network across the region. However, there is a need for investment to continue beyond the lifetime of this Strategy as significant improvements need to be made to bring services and related infrastructure up to modern standards.
- **Exploration of the role of fixed links**: the complexity and high cost of fixed links can often act as a barrier to implementation. However, as technological innovations become more mainstream, the feasibility of fixed links connecting island communities both internally and to the mainland should be considered in the longer term.

A5. INITIATIVES FOR ASSESSMENT AND CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE STRATEGY

- A5.1 The Regional Transport Strategy underwent a comprehensive consultation process during its development in 2006/2007. During this time, a number of additional initiatives were proposed for inclusion within the Regional Transport Strategy by HITRANS members, which are listed below. As initiatives proposed within this Strategy have been developed through a bespoke assessment process which has followed the principles of STAG, the inclusion of additional initiatives which had not been subject to this assessment process was not viewed as desirable by HITRANS. Therefore, judgement has been reserved on the appropriateness of including new, untested initiatives in this Strategy, although each will be assessed as to whether they should be within the Strategy during the first year (2007 - 2008). A decision on whether to include them in later iterations of the Strategy will be made at the first annual “mini-review” in 2008, and will be reported in the first Annual Report. This is distinct from the formal three-yearly review process, the first of which will be in 2010.
- A5.2 It should be noted that the Regional Transport Strategy will essentially be a living document, with regular reviews and updates. Ongoing review is crucial as circumstances change, and particularly as Local Transport Strategies are developed across the region.
- A5.3 The list of initiatives that emerged during the consultation process from HITRANS local authorities, which need to be assessed in the first year of the Strategy, is set out below. However, this list is not exhaustive, and will be reviewed throughout the first year of the Strategy.
- Highland Council
 - A87 to Uig road improvements: A87 Breakish to Portree, Breakish/Broadford bypass (cost £6m), A850 Glen Varrigill, section of road on the southern approaches to Portree which is extremely poor in terms of both its vertical and horizontal alignment and is in need of upgrading to a modern standard.
 - Fort William Bypass A82.
 - A887 at Torgoyle Bridge with 2km of single track and passing place approaches to the west of Invermoriston.
 - A99 Keiss to north of Keiss.
 - A836, a final single track section of road that needs upgrading to twin track road immediately to the east of Bettyhill.
 - A861 Drynie Hill – the last remaining section of single track and passing place road on the link between Lochailort and Acharacle is of a poor standard and in need of upgrading to a twin track standard.
 - Freight horizontal sub-strategy– Inverness Freight Transport facility.
 - Passenger transport horizontal sub-strategy – Interchange Information Services Development.
 - Argyll and Bute Council
 - Breakwater at Wemyss Bay (to improve reliability of Rothesay ferry service).

- Ballycastle ferry service.
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 - Uig Pier improvements, Skye.
 - Mallaig/Lochboisdale ferry service.
- Moray Council
 - A98 Route Action Plan.
- HIAL
 - GPS system at Wick Airport
- Orkney Islands Council
 - Car club
 - A964 and B967 Route Strategies
 - Kirkwall Traffic Management and active travel measures
- Moray Council
 - Elgin Traffic Management
 - A941 Route Action Plan

APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTIONS OF HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGIES AND PRIORITY LINKS IN THE STRATEGIC AND REGIONAL NETWORKS

B1. HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGIES**Introduction**

- B1.1 This section provides more detail of the HITRANS sub-strategies, each of which deal with a cross-cutting priority issue for the RTS over the next 15 years.
- B1.2 A package of policies and measures are set out within each sub-strategy. The sub-strategies are closely linked, and some share common policies (for example, passenger transport, and congestion and urban issues).

Active travel

- B1.3 Active travel refers to non-motorised travel, commonly walking and cycling, although horse riding and travel by waterway are also included. Active travel can be a means of travel in itself, and is also a key part of multi-modal journeys, for example at the beginning and end of bus and rail journeys. Active travel contributes to four public policy areas: health improvement; mode shift; environmental protection and growth in domestic and visitor tourism.
- B1.4 People in some parts of the region are more physically active than those in other parts. Physical activity is a key determinant of health outcomes. Creating the right environment (physical and cultural) to encourage more walking and cycling, has been shown to deliver excellent returns on investment.⁵²
- B1.5 Barriers to active travel have developed over a long period and it is important to work towards long-term changes to overcome these barriers. Barriers include:
- Planning and design that has not prioritised or provided for active travel.
 - Poor infrastructure and facilities to support walking and cycling.
 - A culture that promotes use of the car and a lack of understanding of the benefits of and the know-how to walking and cycle.
 - Maintenance funding issues that result in the deterioration of established and new infrastructure.
 - Constrained road space, limiting opportunities for providing walking and cycling infrastructure.

⁵² Benefit to cost ratios in the order of 20:1 have been calculated. *Economic appraisal of local walking and cycling routes*, Sustrans, 2005.

B1.6 Active travel is a low cost means of travel compared to the car, and also leads to only few or no emissions of pollution. The health benefits potential from increasing levels of active travel in the region are massive.

B1.7 The key policies for active travel within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H27a: Clearer development control policies requiring walking and cycling infrastructure and promoting Travel Plans through conditions. Scottish Planning Policy 17 sets out the order of priority for personal travel as follows:
 - Walking.
 - Cycling.
 - Public transport.
 - Other motorised transport.
- Land-use planning control should recognise this hierarchy, and should necessitate the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of planning requirements. Decisions on the location and design of new developments should pay particular attention to the ability to deliver subsequent connectivity in keeping with this hierarchy of access. Additionally, Active Travel audits of initiatives to be taken forward within the RTS should highlight improvements or amendments to initiatives to promote walking and cycling. An example of this would be the incorporating of a facilities for cyclists into trunk /local roads improvement schemes.
- H27b: Infrastructure audits of regional centres to provide baseline information. These audits to include appearance, road safety, personal security, pedestrian facilities, cycling facilities, public transport facilities. In addition, these audits should consider improvements in infrastructure for those with disabilities. Identification and assessment of key walking and cycling routes in the areas, in terms of existing and potential new routes, to promote development of active travel particularly in relation to travel to work (including to Council offices), leisure destinations, health care sites, and to school. This process could be used to identify inadequate links in the active travel network, where infrastructure is inadequate or non-existent. This process should work in partnership with core paths teams in local authorities and other agencies.
- H27c: Longer-term core funding for a programme of investment in response to the audits. The programme of investment could include infrastructure, information and promotion. Focus in the programme would be on mode shift to walking for functional journeys of less than two kilometres and to cycling for less than five kilometres. Also, development of standards for infrastructure, including common signage and branding.
- H27d: Travel behaviour change programme, initially targeted at employees / jobseekers; and/or, development of toolkit for local authorities / health boards to implement behaviour change campaigns at local / site-specific levels. This element could also include developing a training programme for active travel, for both young people and adults, and for people with specific learning or mobility needs. Such travel training could be equally applied to other means of travel, for example passenger transport and community transport.
- H27e: Development of bespoke Travel Plan elements to fit the specific nature of the HITRANS regional and local centres. HITRANS support for Local Authorities, Health Sites and businesses to develop Travel Plans that befit their individual problems, issues and opportunities.

Aviation

- B1.8 Aviation is of critical importance for the region, more so than for almost any other region of the UK. Being remote from all major domestic centres of commerce and Government, the importance of aviation in the region is evident. Three other features have a bearing on the importance of aviation in the region, each reflecting a different facet of the unique nature of the Highlands and Islands:
- Rail services are few and far between, and often poorly timed for day return trips to the National Gateways.
 - The indented coastline of the region and the mountainous topography makes road journeys slower in the region than elsewhere in the UK.
 - A significant proportion of the region's population resides on islands, for which surface journeys involve ferries that are generally slow, often infrequent and not always reliable, especially in winter.
- B1.9 Air services are vital in a region that is distributed over such significant distances, minimum surface journey times by comparison for routes in the region are four and a half to almost 15 hours.
- B1.10 Some areas are not well served by air and have extremely long surface journey times to the National Gateways. The existence of some current services are / have been threatened. The Air Discount Scheme has reduced the cost of air travel for island / remote residents. Affordability issues still exist, and the Air Discount Scheme does not address the cost of friends, family, tourists and business travel to these areas.
- B1.11 The key policies for aviation within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:
- H28a: Evaluate the economic and social opportunities of providing new or enhanced air connections around the region and externally. Investigate devising a broad policy for when an air service would be particularly valuable, for example in relation to surface travel times.
 - H28b: Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of the Air Discount Scheme. Assess the options for further development.
 - H28c: Encourage the development of direct rail services between Inverness and Edinburgh Airport, with one very early departure from Inverness to offer the widest range of onward air services, and a late departure from the airport.
 - H28d: Continue to press and collaborate with others for the retention and development of slots for Inverness services at London Gatwick/Heathrow hubs.

Community and health transport

- B1.12 This theme covers services provided for community and health purposes, such as community and voluntary transport, local authority provision for transport to school and for social services, and transport provision by health boards and the Scottish Ambulance Service.
- B1.13 Community transport offers a valuable service to communities and specific socio-economic groups across the region. It has wide socio-economic benefits by enabling

people with limited transport opportunities to access vital services, such as social care and health, as well as everyday activities such as shopping, visiting friends and family, and leisure opportunities.

B1.14 Provision across the region is varied. Provision is often developed by the community in response to inadequacies in mainstream passenger services.

B1.15 There is rising demand for the sector from an ageing population across the region. Services tend to run with uncertain financial stability, and there can be underutilisation of vehicles and a lack of collaboration to deliver efficient services. There is a lack of clear understanding of the 'gaps' in accessibility right across the region.

B1.16 Furthermore, there is a need for a coordinated approach to improving infrastructure across the region for people with disabilities.

B1.17 The key policies for community and health transport within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H29a: Baseline review of community and health transport sector (and council and patient transport) in the region including a 'gap' analysis what is being provided, level and nature of need being met, funding levels for the sector. A robust analysis of the sector will act as a platform for development. A review should also assess unmet demand for community and health transport in the region, particularly amongst target/excluded populations. This will help develop a better understanding of how to focus funding from HITRANS, previously Scottish Executive, on rural community transport and Demand Responsive Transport.
- H29b: Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working.
- H29c: Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for the region, enabling the costs and benefits to be assessed and using the results to continuously feed into the future development and improvement of the sector.
- H29d: Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including exploration of different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate.
- H29e: Developing a training and mentoring programme, specifically aimed at training in passenger care, and support for volunteers as service providers. This option would explore opportunities for operators, drivers, escorts, passengers, including through:
 - Networking and information exchange.
 - Provision of courses, including remotely.
 - Mentoring scheme.
- H29f: Developing a common set of standards to guide how decisions are made in procuring transport services which best meet local needs, in terms of accessing community facilities, public services and health.
- H29g: Sharing of resources and knowledge including:
 - Sharing best practice and experience between staff of different schemes.
 - Vehicle sharing / brokerage to result in improved utilisation of vehicles.
- H29h: Integration:

- Integration of services to benefit passengers. For passengers, enabling greater reach of community and voluntary transport through use of neighbouring schemes. For example, development of a Travel Dispatch Centre concept, providing integrated services from a users' viewpoint.
- Interchanges for Community Transport / Demand Responsive Transport and Public Transport on radials to enable interchange between rural Community Transport and the higher frequency mainstream passenger transport links into main centres (this could be facilitated by Real Time Information). Facilities and coordination with operators on key corridors to enable such integration.
- H29i: Car sharing (lift) scheme for access to work, education and training opportunities.
- H29j: Region-wide car sharing network for communities.

Congestion and urban transport issues

- B1.18 Around 30% of the region's population live in the inner Moray Firth, and 40% in urban areas or settlements with 5,000 people or more. The targeted management of congestion and traffic growth within the largest and fastest growing built-up areas is essential.
- B1.19 Within a number of Regional Centres, and including Inverness, the main trunk roads tend to provide a dual purpose, carrying both long distance through-traffic **and** providing local connections. This traffic competes for road space and often conflicts. Consideration will need to be given to physically removing extraneous traffic from some places as well as the contribution that can be made by challenging why and how people travel the way they do.
- B1.20 Congestion adversely affects all travellers, people walking and cycling, people travelling by car, those travelling by coach or bus and business travellers and heavy goods vehicles. Congestion affects the economy and left unchecked is a vicious circle.
- B1.21 The key policies for tackling congestion and specific urban transport issues within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are shown here. It should be noted that many of these policies are strongly linked to those within the Passenger Transport sub-strategy:
- H30a: Improve transport infrastructure - options could include removing extraneous traffic from congested areas through the provision of bypass arrangements. Bus priorities where appropriate should be developed, including bus lanes and bus priority at junctions.
 - H30b: Travel demand management package
 - Increased support for uptake of Travel Plans in schools, workplaces and other organisations through support from the HITRANS Travel Plan Officer. This should include development and ongoing coordination of a HITRANS Travel Plan Network for Workplaces (including local authorities) engaged in the process of Travel Planning in the region. Also investment in Travel Plan developed site-specific interventions.
 - Working with local authorities, businesses and schools to encourage greater spreading of peak demand for travel including alterations to school/start finish times and support to organisations to adopt flexible working practices.

- Sharing of best practice with other RTPs and organisations outside Scotland to increase effectiveness of travel demand measures in the region.
- Continue to promote measures to reduce the need to travel (such as video conferencing and home working), and provide other organisations' information about how Information and Communication Technologies can assist in reducing the need to travel.
- Travel behaviour change programme, including personalised travel planning for example.
- H30c: Increasing the appeal of public transport and active travel together:
 - Work in partnership with public transport providers and local authorities to improve integration between public transport and walking and cycling, for example consideration of increased opportunities for bus-bike interchange and bike carrying bus services. Improve integration between different public transport services within urban centres.
 - Improve transport access to, and quality of public transport information across the Region, in all formats including online, on street and paper based formats.
 - Partnership working with First Scotrail and the Highland Rail Partnership to secure service provision improvement on the key commuter routes into Inverness, Oban and Fort William.
 - Multi-operator ticketing and cross-city / town through tickets.
 - Re-allocation of road space within urban centres and installation bus lanes and bus priority on key routes / corridors. Enforcement of bus priority measures.
 - Increase take up of Passenger Transport Quality Partnerships and Contracts.
 - Investment in accessibility enhancements, speed the continued progress towards full Disability Discrimination Act compliance across the network.
 - Increasing the appeal and validity of active travel in the urban environment:
 - Actively promote active travel as a valid means of transport for short trips for business, leisure and tourism. Refer to the active travel section for more information.
- H30d: Strategic Park and Ride sites:
 - Consider the feasibility of Park & Ride for the key localities of Inverness, Elgin, Oban and potentially Fort William.
 - This will be best combined with measures above to increase the attractiveness of passenger transport. Bus priority will be a key success factor.
- H30e: Evaluate options for a parking / pricing strategy for urban centres:
 - Coordinate the development of a parking strategy with an aim of managing demand for travel while supporting local economies around the region.
 - Better enforcement of parking controls.
 - Application of maximum parking standards.
- H30f: Enhance connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre:
 - The Inverness retail park has been identified as a site that requires far better connectivity to Inverness city centre. Work is ongoing to develop improvements as part of a major development initiatives to the East of Inverness.

- H30g: Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards across the region. Management of parking is a key tool in managing traffic growth and promoting modal shift to sustainable modes, particularly in urban areas. Consistency is required to avoid competition between places.

Freight transport

- B1.22 Efficient freight transport is essential to the economy and quality of life in the region. Economic growth generates growing demand for freight transport. In order to meet the needs of business in the region, goods need to be transported easily, reliably and efficiently. This is not always the case in the region. Much of the region's transport network is inadequate, and this adversely affects freight users as much as it does other users of the network.
- B1.23 A diverse range of goods and items are transported around the region. This includes frozen goods, bulk, forestry and agriculture, fish, food and drink and manufactured produce. Specialist transport is often required, which in some cases is only required for very short periods of time over the course of the year. Because of the distances and the sea crossings that are often required, this disadvantages businesses based in the region compared to their counterparts located closer to the markets.
- B1.24 Whilst it is a challenge to shift freight transport to rail for most of the traffic in the region due to lack of infrastructure access and / or uneconomical commodity characteristics, HITRANS will explore ways in which freight can be moved to rail and sea transport where feasible.
- B1.25 The key policies for freight within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:
- H31a: Development of a Freight Quality Partnership. This would aim to facilitate safe, efficient and environmentally-friendly solutions to freight transport issues at a regional level. A Freight Quality Partnership could:
 - Better understand the needs of the freight transport industry and its customers, and the views of other legitimate stakeholders.
 - Provide a single contact point for early consultation on improvement initiatives, yet represent a large number of organisations.
 - Agree realistic and achievable actions that provide clear economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - Provide an effective working forum in which to agree and deliver solutions.
 - H31b: Address the causes of inefficiency in the transport network. This would include:
 - Examining root causes affecting reliability such as the condition of strategic road infrastructure (for example the A9, A82, A96) and bottlenecks in the locally significant road network.
 - Reviewing capacity and schedules of vehicular ferry services. This could include dedicated freight services, alternative origins and destinations, and increased frequencies. This should only be undertaken as part of a comprehensive review of the network.
 - Examining the potential of coastal shipping to serve the region and key origins / destinations.

- Support work of the Timber Transport Forum.
- H31c: Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs;
 - A Freight Innovation Fund could assist with trials of opportunities.
- H31d: Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods to and from the region's islands, including a potential review of ferry fare tariff structure.
- H31e: Take forward the outcomes of the HITRANS sea freight study (study outputs in 2006/07).
- H31f: Work with partners to shift the transfer of freight to rail where feasible.

Locally significant network and road maintenance

- B1.26 The Locally Significant Network has been defined as part of the assessment of the region's transport network (see Section 4). The Locally Significant Network connects communities to their local centres and onwards to the Regional Centres and National Gateways. The Locally Significant Network makes up a large part of the region's entire network, and in most cases these roads are the only connection that a community has. All roads are significant in the region; in most cases any given road is the only connectivity between communities and Local Centres, Regional Centres and National Gateways. This lack of an alternative route, particularly in the west, is a key factor that differentiates the region from many other areas across Scotland.
- B1.27 The adequacy of the network determines the adequacy of the walking and cycling environment, the adequacy of passenger transport and community and voluntary transport, and the adequacy of freight transport. The study of Lifeline Roads in the region in 2004 highlighted the generally poor condition of selected routes, with many of them presenting severe constraints to travel. The conclusion from the audit in this study was that the majority of lifeline roads were not considered to be 'fit-for-purpose'. Approximately 5,000 jobs are at stake due to the fragility of this network.⁵³
- B1.28 Significant parts of the network suffer from a lack of appropriate funding levels, inadequate for even routine maintenance. This has led to a considerable backlog of identified maintenance work across the region. Where parts of the network do not come up to a 6m wide standard (or wider as appropriate), damage can occur to structures, surfaces and verges when heavy vehicles need access, whether this be for short-term or for prolonged periods. In some instances weight restrictions or structures prohibit certain vehicles from using parts of the network. Such prohibitions mean that communities at the end of that route are isolated. There are weight restrictions on many single track roads around the region.
- B1.29 Furthermore, locally significant routes provide a safety valve for the strategic routes when the latter are closed, for example, due to landslips or accidents. These routes need investment to make them safer routes during these unpredictable situations.
- B1.30 The main policy under this sub-strategy is as follows:
- H32a: Attract additional funding:
 - The approach to dealing with the locally significant road network recognises the need to identify more resources, especially for road maintenance. Current levels of investment through the Grant Aided Expenditure to Local Authorities are not adequate. These levels of funding do not address the routine maintenance let alone the backlog maintenance work.

⁵³ *Investment in Lifeline Rural Roads, Stage 2 Final Report*, September 2004.
<http://www.hitrans.org.uk/downloads/Final%20stage%20Two%20Report%204th%20Draft%20side.pdf>

- Without significant additional funding then it will not be possible to deal with the issues that have been identified. An element of this option may comprise ring-fencing of budgets in order that Grant Aided Expenditure allocations to local authorities are spent on this issue. However, it is considered that yet greater allocations are required in order to manage the problems and work towards a maintenance programme that is sustainable.
- There is therefore a need to investigate the options for attracting this additional funding for this specific issue. Addressing the issues associated with the locally significant road network and road maintenance in the region fits with all of the Strategy objectives.

Mainstream passenger transport

- B1.31 Mainstream passenger transport in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland comprises air, rail, local and long distance bus, coach and ferry services. To be effective these means of transport must integrate with one another to provide a network of services which offer a genuine alternative to the car. They must also integrate with community and voluntary sector transport and taxis, including in many rural areas where low population densities make conventional bus services unviable.
- B1.32 Subsidised bus services make up a large proportion of the network in the region. Frequencies of passenger transport tend to be limited away from all but the main routes. This limits opportunities for commuting and for travelling to other time-sensitive destinations.
- B1.33 There is still work to be done to improve understanding of the all forms of passenger transport supply and demand around the HITRANS region as a whole, how it integrates and how it compares from areas to area; and whether it is most effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of communities, business and tourists.
- B1.34 Gaps in passenger transport inhibit social and economic outcomes in the region. Many ferries, buses, coaches and air services are difficult to access for people with disabilities. It is costly to access the region and to travel around it. Affordability of transport is a barrier to access to employment, education and training.
- B1.35 The Scottish Executive's Bus Route Development Grant Scheme offers an opportunity for HITRANS to identify gaps in the quality and frequency of bus services that can be eliminated. The Scheme allows services to be kick started by pump priming the routes on a declining subsidy basis for a three year period with the enhanced service becoming commercially viable in its fourth year of operation.
- B1.36 The Highlands and Islands has already benefited from a number of successful bus route development scheme projects that have benefited, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray and Orkney. These projects have seen the introduction of new environmentally friendly easily accessible buses and more frequent services. HITRANS hopes to build on these successful projects with more in the future, and deliver a step change in quality of provision on bus networks across the region.
- B1.37 The key policies for passenger transport within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:
- H33a: Investigate the feasibility of delivering a multi-modal/multi-operator ticketing system.
 - H33b: Develop high quality passenger transport user information and mapping, potentially to present a hierarchy of transport in the area. An example hierarchy could be as follows:
 - Gateways into the highlands – airports, main rail stations.
 - Strategic routes (express coaches, vehicle ferries, and rail routes).
 - Regional routes (regular, long distance bus routes, rail routes).
 - Local routes (shorter distance bus routes).

- Main interchange points (Inverness, Oban etc).
- Interchange sites (smaller settlements and rural interchange points).
- Information on taxi services.
- H33c: Develop a consistent standard for supporting infrastructure. Provision of interchange points with passenger facilities including seating, bus shelters, real time information, way-finding, accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities, and so on. Integrate these facilities with tourist information centres where appropriate.
- H33d: Work towards integrated timetabling whereby all modes change timetables on the same day. This would mean aligning timetables with rail timetable change dates as these are set nationally. However it will not always be possible to align with rail timetable changes as these are set by a European standard.
- H33e: Examine the potential for a hub and spoke interchange network for interchange to Postbus, community transport and/or taxis for onward travel in rural areas into local/regional centres, and within the local and long-distance bus network.
- H33f: Explore mechanisms for targeted support for socially excluded groups. This could include partnership working with JobCentre Plus network for example and would cover all aspects of ‘accessibility’ – physical accessibility, awareness, affordability, acceptability or availability.
- H33g: Evaluate options for the development of the taxi sector as part of passenger transport network. Consider the role that taxis can play, in both rural and urban settings, and in respect to all aspects of accessibility.
- H33h: Exploration and support for Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts where appropriate to enable frequency enhancements and extending hours of operation.
- H33i: Investment in infrastructure:
 - Upgrade poor quality transport terminals which are of poor quality, bringing them up to a consistent standard.
 - Replacement of vehicles which fall short of accessibility standards.
 - Invest in infrastructure facilities such as bus shelters.
- H33j: Rail service /frequency enhancement Challenge Fund, administered by HITRANS.
- H33k: Develop a comprehensive bus strategy for the region, which will be based on the development of a region-wide accessibility model.
- H33l: Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads. Fast-tracking of bus lay-by schemes on trunk/local roads, to enhance safety and promote use of buses.
- H33m: Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, building on the new DRT fund delegated to Regional Transport Partnerships.

Ports, ferries and waterways

- B1.38 Ferry services operate in all parts of the region except Moray. Almost all services receive operating deficit finance, either directly from the Scottish Executive or via

local authorities. Thirty per cent of the population of the Highlands and Islands⁵⁴ live on more than ninety inhabited islands. Sea transport therefore forms a vital social and economic role in supporting the island communities, businesses and tourism. With the exception of a few relatively low capacity air services to some islands, ferries are responsible for carrying all passenger movements and the majority of goods traffic to, from and between the islands.

- B1.39 There is a poor understanding of the ultimate passenger and freight origins and destinations around the region⁵⁵. There is limited frequency on much of the network, with some islands being connected less than daily, and particularly so in the winter months. Interchange opportunities to other means of transport, including bus and rail, are lacking at some points in the network; ferries, road, bus / coach and rail sectors are managed by various different bodies / organisations.
- B1.40 There is limited life expectancy of vessels and infrastructure around the region and the network is at risk from the impacts of climate change and tidal surges, for example.
- H34a: Understand origin and destination patterns for passengers and freight. Develop a strategy and evaluate long-term network options such as exploring concentration of activity on a hubs and spokes network. Study of origins and destinations could also assist in identifying how the region's canals could play a greater role in the market.
 - H34b: Explore rationalisation of the waterborne transport network in partnership with the Scottish Executive, who have committed to "a comprehensive review of lifeline ferry services to develop a long-term strategy for lifeline services to 2025" in the National Transport Strategy⁵⁶.
 - H34c: Enhance ferry services and develop fit for purpose timetables:
 - Provide for daily commuting to and from key economic, education and health centres.
 - Review timetables and sailing hours, with earlier starts and later finishes.
 - H34d: Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms, including for example, introducing yield management mechanisms and marginal cost pricing.
 - H34e: Develop a regional investment strategy which is consistent with:
 - The requirements of a strategic review of the future sea-crossing network.
 - The opportunities to facilitate modal transfer to coastal shipping through improved port infrastructure.
 - The opportunities to facilitate modal transfer and use of the canal network.
 - Support for enhancing port facilities, for example in respect to accessibility and port handling facilities.
 - Improved efficiencies through investment in modern vessel technology.
 - Sustain the network whilst climate change ensues.

⁵⁴ Highlands and Islands Enterprise area.

⁵⁵ A study is currently ongoing that is looking at ferry traffic origin and destinations. This research follows the recommendation of the Strategic Sea Crossing Study completed in 2005. The survey will be carried out in August and November 2006 on all strategic crossings.

⁵⁶ National Transport Strategy, 2006, Scottish Executive, para 189

- Catering for proven demand for new routes.

Costs of transport and travel

- B1.41 This sub-strategy has been developed in response to consultation responses to the Draft Regional Transport Strategy.
- B1.42 Whilst the environmental impacts of reducing the costs of road-based transport are recognised to be undesirable, and unsustainable, HITRANS wishes to promote the case for reducing the costs of travel for its communities and businesses, which tend to be significantly higher than for other communities and business across Scotland.
- B1.43 In particular, there is a need to continue to make travel on lifeline services affordable to all users. Currently, concessionary travel discounts are available to certain sections of the community, older people, individuals with disabilities, and young people, on certain modes – rail and bus primarily. However, discrepancies in concessionary travel entitlements remain, particularly in areas of the region with poor or non-existent rail or bus services, particularly communities who depend on ferry services, or community transport services.
- B1.44 Affordable fares are necessary to promote modal shift, and to provide mobility/social inclusion to people on low incomes.
- B1.45 The cost of freight within region is significant, due to long distances travelled, regulations over working hours for drivers, and additional costs incurred when ferry links are required.
- B1.46 Policies within this sub-strategy are as follows:
- H35a: Make travel affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries.
 - H35b: Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes.
 - H35c: Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport.

Environmental impacts

- B1.47 HITRANS recognises its duty to promote sustainable development in the region. Moreover, the region is home to a significant proportion of Scotland's designated landscapes, species and habitats, as well as a rich historical heritage. This heritage is an asset, and needs to be protected both for future generations, and for the continued economic development of the region.
- B1.48 HITRANS looks beyond the current Regional Transport Strategy with regards its contribution to sustainable development, and whilst in this first fifteen year strategy, a net increase in travel may occur to promote economic development, it is the intention of HITRANS to seek to mitigate these impacts to minimise the region's carbon footprint.
- B1.49 The key policy within this sub-strategy is therefore:
- H36a: Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region.
 - Continue to promote and increase levels of Active Travel across the region.
 - Continue to focus on promoting modal shift away from the private car in areas where public transport is a real choice, particularly the Inner Moray Firth area.
 - Explore ways to increase the modal transfer of freight from road to rail and short sea shipping, where feasible
 - Work with partners, particularly Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to progress the up-take of alternative fuels for all transport modes.
 - Work with partners, particularly Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to integrate renewable energy generation into some transport projects where feasible (an example of this is the potential for renewable energy projects to be included within proposals for fixed links in the Western Isles).
 - Monitor the proportion of carbon emissions from the transport sector that are being actively offset by other initiatives across the region, working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise in particular.
 - Support the adopted policies of local development plans across the region to ensure that new developments are planned in areas that are in close proximity to local services and amenities in order to reduce the need to travel longer distances; and work with local authority planners to ensure that transport accessibility is considered at an early stage in the planning process.
 - Ensuring, with local authority partners, that the Appropriate Assessments are carried out on transport proposals supported by the Strategy – this is to ensure that proposal/project level mitigation measures are taken forward as the strategy is implemented.

The nature of the priority strategic and regional network

- B1.50 To further the HITRANS policy objective of building a fit for purpose multi-modal transport infrastructure, analysis has identified a multi-modal, priority Strategic and Regional Network which needs to be improved (reported in Section 5 of the main Strategy document). The following describes these priority links in more detail.

The Strategic Network

- B1.51 The Strategic Network makes up the principal links between Regional Centres and the National Gateways of Scotland.
- B1.52 The efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategic Network is vital to the social and economic vitality of the region. Efficient transport network support the economy in a number of ways. For example by improving access to jobs, thereby increasing employment opportunities and extending labour markets; improving access to education and training opportunities, so improving the skills of the workforce; supporting tourism, by ensuring access to the region; and by closing the distances between companies and their customers and suppliers.

A82 and Fort William and Oban Rail Lines

- B1.53 The A82 is the main route from Glasgow to Inverness which runs along the west side of Loch Lomond to Tarbet, north from Tarbet (through Glencoe) to Fort William and on to Inverness. The A82 is the principal link to the west of Scotland and the main commercial corridor for goods and services being transported into and out of the Western Highlands, Skye and the Western Isles.
- B1.54 The journey time on the route is long and unreliable as a result of the narrow and circuitous route with bottlenecks and limited overtaking opportunities. There are also a number of pinch points on the route. The route has a poor accident record, particularly on the section between Invergarry and Inverness.
- B1.55 The A82 Tarbet to Fort William Economic Appraisal describes that the current standards on the A82 fall well short of the transport expectations of both businesses and residents in the West Highlands and Islands which are set out in *A Smart Successful Highlands and Islands*, and this is also borne out by the business survey that was carried out for the economic appraisal.⁵⁷
- B1.56 Journey time on the Fort William and Oban Rail Lines is long, and frequency is limited (three and four departures per day respectively). There is poor integration between coach and rail timetabling, with departures often competing rather than complementing.

⁵⁷ A82 Tarbet to Fort William: Economic Appraisal, Main Report, September 2005.
<http://www.hitrans.org.uk/downloads/A82%20Final%20Report.pdf>

A9 and Highland Main Line

- B1.57 The A9 was upgraded in the 1970s and exhibits a variety of standards including dual and single carriageways and a variety of junctions and minor accesses which intersect with the road along the entire route.
- B1.58 The connectivity of this corridor to the central belt is essential to the attractiveness and function of the region. The road and rail corridor is the principal route between Inverness and the central belt. The corridor is the main route for the movement of people and goods from Orkney and Caithness and is the principal connection from Moray and north-west Highland to the National Gateways.
- B1.59 A recent study of the perceptions of the A9 (and A96) in the business community found that the upgrading of the A9 is a priority. The main issues for the A9 were viewed as overtaking opportunities and efficiently dispersing platoons, rather than greatly reducing journey times. Improvements were seen as having the potential benefit of reducing stress and thus making driving the A9 less “hard work”.⁵⁸
- B1.60 On the Highland Main Line the journey time is long (3hrs 20mins to 4hrs 10min) and the service pattern irregular (6 direct services per day to Edinburgh and 3 direct to Glasgow). On the road the journey time is also long as a result of limited overtaking opportunities. This results in convoying. The route has a significant record of fatalities.
- B1.61 Journey time on the A9/A99 north is long and unreliable. There is a prevalence of slow moving vehicles on the route and limited opportunities for safe overtaking. To the immediate north of Inverness congestion is significant on the Kessock Bridge and at the Longman roundabout. The Far North Line is a single track line and there are 24 stations along the route. Journey times are very long and frequency is very limited.
- B1.62 An increase in demand on the route is expected through continued growth of the inner Moray Firth and growth in visitors to the areas, especially at Aviemore associated with the Aviemore Highland Resort initiative⁵⁹. Unreliability of journey times south of Inverness will increase.

Inverness airport

- B1.63 Inverness has direct connections to Edinburgh and a number of other UK destinations. There are opportunities for interlining at Edinburgh, Manchester and London airports for international travel. There is constrained capacity at the airport and a high dependence on the car to access the airport. Passenger transport schedules are not adequate to meet the hours of operation of the airport, and the bus service experiences delay, making passenger transport an unattractive option.

⁵⁸ Perceptions of the A9 and A96 among business organisation and businesses, final report to Highlands and Islands Enterprise, March 2006.

⁵⁹ <http://www.hie.co.uk/Default.aspx?LocID=0fineud73.RefLocID=0fihiesv500b00d.Lang=EN.htm>

- B1.64 Inverness airport is an important link to the Western Isles and Orkney. The terminal building and air-side facilities at the airport are inadequate to deal with current and future demands.

A96 and Inverness – Aberdeen rail line

- B1.65 The Aberdeen-Inverness route is a multi-modal corridor that provides local and long-distance connections along its route. Road and rail both have long journey times. On the road, congestion is a problem as well as limited opportunities for safe overtaking resulting in convoys. There are significant capacity constraints between Inverness and Inverness Airport access and worsening conflict between long-distance and local traffic at Fochabers, Elgin, Keith and Nairn, all of which is constraining development.
- B1.66 The rail journey on the corridor is slow, of variable frequency, and offers poor onward connections. Rail has therefore limited attraction as an alternative to road, despite road transport also being slow and unreliable. The rail line has significant capacity constraints as it is predominantly single track.
- B1.67 There is significant growth in housing and employment development along the corridor, especially to the east of Inverness and at Elgin.

Argyll & Bute Sea crossings and A83 to A82

- B1.68 Coll, Tiree and Colonsay do not have a daily connection throughout the year - in the winter timetable, the connection is reduced to just three sailings per week. Islay is one of the most populous islands in Argyll and Bute, yet on most days during the winter the last sailing from the mainland is at 12:50. Between Mull and Oban there are many variations to the ferry timetable over the week and year, for this short crossing.
- B1.69 On the A83 between Campbeltown and Lochgilphead single track sections remain, which constrain capacity and lead to slow journey times and limited opportunities for safe overtaking. There are also a number of pinch points that restrict movement of commercial traffic to and from the area.

Western Isles sea crossings to Uig and the A87 to the A82

- B1.70 Harris & North Uist connections to mainland via Uig to the A82 corridor for onward travel to all gateways and beyond. There is no breakwater at Uig, which constrains connectivity. The Harris and North Uist services share the same vessel, restricting the maximum number of return sailings to either island to two per day in summer, with a lower frequency actually provided on most days. The sailing frequency is reduced in winter, with Harris having less than one return sailing per day. Return sailings are in the early afternoon in the winter, so a day trip is not possible in either direction. Furthermore, the Sound of Harris ferry cannot operate during hours of darkness during winter, which severely limits services.
- B1.71 The A87 through Skye is poorly aligned on the stretch between Portree and Broadford. The stretch at Glen Garry on the mainland is below standard and on the A887 Torgoyle Bridge is a pinch point.

- B1.72 Road (including coach travel) is the only journey option from Skye to national gateways. This comprises very long journey times (6½-7½ hours by coach and 5½ hours by car) between Skye and Glasgow / Edinburgh.

Stornoway to Ullapool sea crossing and the A835 to Inverness

- B1.73 The crossing from Ullapool is a key trade route for the Western Isles. There is concern from hauliers as to the reliability of the current services. There is no Sunday service to Lewis. The five mile section of the A835 between Garve and Contin is particularly sub standard with poor alignment, severely restricting flows and affording limited if any real opportunities for overtaking.

A85

- B1.74 The A85 connects Oban to the A82 for onward routes to the national gateways. Oban is a gateway to the ferry services to the Inner Hebrides, Mull and the Western Isles. There is increasing congestion through Oban itself, particularly at peak times and in line with ferry arrival / departure times.

A941 and A95 Moray connection to A9

- B1.75 The A941 is the section between Elgin and Craigellachie, and thereafter merging with the A95 and continuing to the A9 just north of Aviemore.
- B1.76 This is the main artery for Moray south to the central belt, and is vital for the transportation of manufactured products from the Spey valley area. HGV traffic is proportionally high, and the route is inadequate for the volume and type of traffic that uses it. There is limited overtaking opportunities on the routes which results in convoys and slow journey times. The A95 also has alignment constraints and a number of pinch points.

Kyle Rail Line

- B1.77 Three trains operate each way daily on the route with a fourth service operating in the summer peak. For the east end of the line, the arrival time into Inverness is too late, and the afternoon departure time poorly timed, for a working day.

Barra air service

- B1.78 The air service between Barra and Glasgow uses a beach landing at Barra, and so the schedule depends upon timings of the tides. This changeable timetable means that undertaking a days' business on or away from the island is not a possibility. It also has an impact on the costs of the service – the service provider must use a Twin Otter aircraft, and the lack of efficiency from a uniform fleet and limited schedule contribute to a costly service. A hard runway would enable the operation of a standard aircraft at regular times leading to a more efficient and effective service for the island. The Barra air service operates under a Public Service Obligation, and passenger numbers grew by 13% in 2005 following the introduction of the reduced fares in 2004.
- B1.79 Air services are a vital link to Barra, particularly as in the winter ferry services are reduced to three a week.

B2. NATURE OF THE PRIORITY LINKS – REGIONAL NETWORK**Introduction**

- B2.1 The Regional Network connects Local Centres to Regional Centres. These links therefore ensure that communities centred around Local Centres and their hinterlands are able to access the services and functions that are provided in the 12 Regional Centres around the region. Each of these Regional Network routes tend to be the main and only connection between the Local Centre and Regional Centre, and so the availability and efficiency of the link is directly related to the social and economic outcomes of each Local Centre. Research⁶⁰ has shown that accessible rural areas have performed better than remote rural areas in the past. Hence, there is potential for enhancing links in the Regional Network delivering benefits such as improving accessibility and reversing population decline.

Orkney inter-isle connections

- B2.2 Orkney Ferries operate nine ferries to 13 islands. Most islands currently receive at least a daily service throughout the year. The exceptions are, first, North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray, which receive very limited lift-on lift-off services and are served by the internal air service. The second group receiving less than a daily service are some of the smaller South Isles, although a daily service is maintained during the summer months.
- B2.3 Across the network there is however considerable variation in service frequency and crossing times. The inter-isles connectivity is threatened – capacity is inadequate and the vessels are at end of their life and have poor physical accessibility.

Easdale, Luing, Islay-Jura and Lismore ferry connections

- B2.4 Sailing frequencies are greatly reduced on Sundays. Replacement vessels and infrastructure are required in the medium term.

Raasay ferry connection

- B2.5 The island of Raasay, which lies off the east coast of Skye, is accessed by ferry from Sconser on Skye. The existing ferry terminal, which is at the end of its lifespan, requires a significant upgrade to provide improved pier facilities in order to safeguard the ferry link to Skye. A new terminal is proposed at Churchton Bay.

Western Isles Spinal Route

- B2.6 The Spinal Route is the principal connection of the Western Isles arc of islands. The route includes the crossings of the Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra. The Sound of Harris ferry service has operated since 1996 on a very restricted timetable as a result of the shallow waters and reefs/rock outcrops making the crossing route extremely

⁶⁰

Factors Affecting the Competitiveness of Businesses in Rural Areas, DTZ Pieda.

circuitous. The difficult nature of the crossing has resulted in a restriction to daytime sailings only which severely curtails the service throughout the winter months. Recent improvements to the route markings has resulted in some small improvements but further works are required if the significant route limitations are to be overcome and an appropriate level of service introduced at all times.

- B2.7 The last remaining single track sections on the road between the ferry ports at Stornoway and Tarbert and from the ferry port at Lochmaddy to Clachan were funded by the Executive in 2004 (with remaining funding coming from CNES and European money). Fifty miles (80km) of the Spinal Route remain single track or poorly aligned in Harris, Ness, the Uists and Barra.

A816

- B2.8 The A816 formed part of the trunk road network until 1996 linking A83 and A85 trunk roads. It provides the main transport artery south from Oban to Lochgilphead. The A816 links key settlements in Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and Islay to Oban, the regional centre for the area.
- B2.9 The A816 is also of industrial importance as it is the only route north from Kintyre suitable for timber extraction and vehicles serving the fishing industry.
- B2.10 There is poor alignment, in terms of width and geometry, on 28 miles of 38 mile route between Lochgilphead and Oban.

A848 and A849

- B2.11 These roads are the principal connections between the main town of Tobermory on Mull and the ferry terminal for the mainland ferry at Craignure. The route provides the opportunity for future development of island ferry services through Tobermory.
- B2.12 The final five mile section of this route to Tobermory is substandard.

A941

- B2.13 The A941 is the section between Craigellachie and Dufftown. This section links parts of the Speyside whisky manufacturing area to the A9 and routes south. There are limited overtaking opportunities on the routes which result in convoying and slow journey times.

A838

- B2.14 The A838 is the principal route between Kinlochbervie and Inverness via Loch Shin. The majority of the route is single track and passing places, although visibility and alignment is reasonable. However some small sections in the vicinity of Laxford Bridge have poor visibility and sub-standard alignment. These single-track sections are of very poor standard and relate to a high accident record.

A890

- B2.15 The A890 (and A832) is the link between Lochcarron and Achnasheen, this is the principal Wester Ross connection for travel to Inverness. There are difficulties with single-track sections on the route, which also have very poor visibility in the vicinity Achnashellach.

A939

- B2.16 Sections of the A939, which links Nairn and Tomintoul to the A95, are poorly aligned and below standard. The route has a poor accident record. The route presents difficult winter conditions, and there are poor structural elements.

A98 and A950

- B2.17 The A98 and A950 link Moray to Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The A98 is a major coastal route beginning at Fochabers and proceeding north-east, passing close to Buckie, Findochty and Portknockie before passing through Cullen and Portsoy. After the junction with the A95 it passes through Banff and Macduff. The A950 joins the A98 near New Pitsilgo and passes through Mintlaw and Longside before crossing the A90 on route to Peterhead harbour.
- B2.18 The A98 and the A950 comprise some sections with poor alignment and the route has a poor accident record.

A832

- B2.19 The A832 connects Fortrose to the A9. A good number of people commute from Fortrose to Inverness. There are problems with traffic volumes and speeds in the villages on this route and bus stop and waiting facilities are of poor quality.

APPENDIX C
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

C1. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

C1.1 To include:

- C2: Equality Impact Assessment
- C3: Monitoring information
- Separate supporting documents
 - Consultation report
 - Network option development and assessment (technical paper)
 - Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Statement (post-adoption summer 2007)

C2. OUTLINE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE HITRANS LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

C2.1 HITRANS, the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership, is a statutory body and has a duty to prepare a statutory Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands region. HITRANS covers the local authority areas of Highland, Argyll and Bute, Moray, Orkney and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The objectives of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

The objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy

C2.2 The objectives of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

C2.3 The transport objectives set out the direction for investment in transport in the HITRANS area over the next fifteen years. The objectives are strongly influenced by transport objectives at national and local level and the objectives of various cross-sector plans such as those pertaining to land use planning, health improvement and accessibility, economic development and environmental sustainability.

C2.4 The key themes addressed by these objectives are:

- Environment;
- Safety;
- Economic growth;
- Social inclusion; and
- Integration.

C2.5 The objectives of the strategy can be found in Chapter 4 of the RTS.

Who is intended to benefit from the strategy?

C2.6 The RTS sets HITRANS's priorities and actions for investment in transport in the Highlands and Islands over the next fifteen years and it is intended that the policies and interventions outlined in the strategy will benefit everyone who lives, works and travels within the HITRANS area. Through implementation of the RTS there is the potential to improve transport for the young, elderly and those with disabilities, particularly through improved access to the transport network and improved safety whilst travelling on the transport network.

C2.7 Due to the nature of the RTS, that is, a strategic transport policy document, it has been judged as unlikely to have any specific impacts on nature of transport policy and initiatives, it was not believed that the strategy will have any specific negative impacts

on the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgender community, or those with specific Religion and Belief interests.

Information collation and consultation

- C2.8 The first stage in developing the RTS involved detailed research into the socio-demographic profile of the area. Accessibility, in terms of geographic accessibility (the availability of public transport, access to hospitals/GPs) was examined, and information on levels of car ownership was gathered, together with information on Deprivation across the region. Furthermore, in the Review of the previous voluntary RTS, representatives of each NHS board across the region were surveyed to gather their views on the opportunities and challenges a new RTS should address. This Review work fed directly into the new statutory RTS.
- C2.9 Consultation to ascertain the views of the public and a wide range of stakeholders played a large role in informing the direction and priorities for the strategy. Consultation was carried out in two stages during the development of the RTS and is reported upon in the Consultation Report which accompanies the HITRANS RTS. The first stage involved targeted stakeholder consultation through workshops and meetings. The second stage involved wider consultation with the general public, and the document was actively sent to a range of stakeholders (shown below), as well as being publicly available through various means. Large print versions of the material was available upon request, although no such requests were made.
- C2.10 To ensure that the consultation process was fair and equitable, the draft RTS was sent to the following bodies:
- Age Concern
 - Disability Rights Commission
 - Disability Rights Commission – Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS)
 - Disability Rights Commission - Enable
 - Equality Network - Sexual Orientation
 - Royal National Institute for the Blind Scotland
 - Royal National Institute for Deaf People Scotland
 - Scottish Association of Mental Health - SAMH
 - Scottish Association of Mental Health - Sense Scotland
 - Scottish Women’s Rural Institute (SWRI)
 - Argyll Communities
 - Highlands & Islands Equality Forum
 - Moray Action for Communities
 - Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay
 - Voluntary Action Lewis
 - Voluntary Action Orkney

- C2.11 Responses to the RTS were received from the Orkney Disability Forum, and MACS.

Actions

- C2.12 All comments received on the Draft RTS during the consultation period were considered, fed back into the development of the strategy and the final strategy amended accordingly where appropriate.
- C2.13 No adverse impacts of the strategy were identified, however some amendments were made in order to maximise the benefits of the strategy for as many people as possible.
- C2.14 Specifically, responses received from Orkney Disability Forum related to reducing rail journey times on the Far North Line, and querying a statement in the draft RTS to provide funding to taxi firms to upgrade to accessible vehicles. In the final RTS, an additional proposal to invest in enhancing journey times on the Far North Line has been included, as this was a major theme throughout the consultation. With regards funding for accessible vehicles for taxi firms, this is an option to be explored throughout the lifetime of the RTS and does not suggest a commitment to this course of action.
- C2.15 A further specific response from MACS stated a desire to work with HITRANS to develop a comprehensive understanding of the transport needs of people with disabilities. HITRANS endorses this potential for partnership working with MACS.
- C2.16 Furthermore, an additional measure to improve the accessibility of the transport network for people with disabilities was introduced to the final RTS as a result of the consultation process – specifically, under H33c in the RTS, a commitment is made to improving the standards of passenger transport infrastructure across the region, including for people with disabilities.

Monitoring

- C2.17 A draft monitoring strategy is contained within Chapter 6 of the LTS. However, HITRANS commits to developing a monitoring strategy for the RTS in its first year of action. Indicators and targets will be developed to measure progress towards achieving each of the RTS objectives. The RTS will be monitored on an annual basis.

Publishing of the strategy

- C2.18 Once published, the RTS will be available on HITRANS's website and copies distributed to all stakeholders involved in the consultation. Hard copies of the document will also be available on request. Large print copies of the RTS will be available upon request, and an audio version may be made available.

C3. REVIEW OF OTHER MONITORING FRAMEWORKS

APPENDIX: TABLE C3.1

LOCAL AND REGIONAL INDICATORS RELEVANT TO HITRANS

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
TRANSPORT		
Orkney Local Transport Strategy (draft for consultation February 2007)	• Active Travel	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable
	• Air services	
	• Bus services and community and voluntary transport	
	• Ferry services, ports and harbours	
	• Freight transport	
	• Land use planning and development control	
	• Local roads and roads maintenance	
	• Smarter choices and information	
	• Taxis and private hire vehicles	
	• Traffic and parking	
	• Travelling safely	
Argyll and Bute Local Transport Strategy (draft for January consultation 2007)	Economy objective:	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable
	• Population (Census)	
	• Employment (Area statistics)_	
	• Gross Value Added (Area statistics)	
	• Commercial traffic on ferries (National Statistics)	
	Integration objective	
	• Public perception / satisfaction (from Citizen's Panel)	
	• Intermodal connections (proportion of services providing connecting opportunities)	
	• Number of interchanges improved or refurbished	

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
	Environment objective • NOx levels • PM10 levels • Modal shift (volume of timber transported by sea) • Number of cycle trips (results of local cycle counters) • Mileage of local cycle network connecting to the National Cycle Network • No. of schools participating in Active Travel (no. of school travel plans implemented) Accessibility objective • Access to public transport (bus passenger numbers) • Accessible transport (passenger numbers on community and demand responsive transport) • Access over water (ferry passenger numbers) • Access over air (air passenger numbers) Safety objective • Road casualties (accident statistics) Safer communities (speed limit review)	
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Local Transport Strategy	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, although as in development at time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS will review individual indicators
Highland Local Transport Strategy	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, although as in development at time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS will review individual indicators
Moray Local Transport Strategy	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, although as in development at

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
		time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS will review individual indicators
Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report – extensive range developed in draft form for Consultative Draft RTS which have been reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Regional Transport Strategy for North East Scotland	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Regional Transport Strategy for Tayside and Central	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Audit Commission for Scotland	The Audit Commission for Scotland holds data and information on Best Value performance monitoring for local authorities in Scotland. However, transport has limited coverage in the Best Value process in Scotland, being limited to three indicators covering carriageway condition, traffic light repairs and street light repairs (http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/).	Indicators more appropriately monitored at a local level, not a regional one.
ECONOMY		
Draft Budget 2007-08 (Scotland) – Enterprise and Lifelong Learning objectives and targets	Of most relevance to HITRANS RTS: Objective 3: Improve the skill base of Scotland to be better prepared to meet the demands of the knowledge economy. - Target 6: Increase the number of people in employment undertaking training. Objective 4: Closing the opportunity gap in employment and learning. - Target 7: Close the gap in unemployment rates between the worst 10% of areas and the Scottish average by 2008.	Most relevant targets are indirectly related to HITRANS RTS area of influence, particularly with regards to accessibility to employment, education and training. Difficult to directly attribute progress in these indicators to transport.

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
	Target 8: Reduce the proportion of 16-19 year olds not in education, training and employment by 2008.	
Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network Operating Plan 2006-09 ⁶¹	Network targets and measure of progress of relevance to HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy Strengthening Communities: Number of new / enhanced community assets; and Number of community groups with increased capacity Regional GVA Number of business growth projects	Difficult to directly attribute progress in these indicators to transport
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT		
Indicators of Sustainable Development for Scotland: Progress Report 2005 ⁶²	- Indicator 1: Sustainable prosperity, as measured by index of carbon dioxide emissions divided by GDP. According to Friends of the Earth, road transport is currently responsible for around 22 per cent of UK carbon dioxide emissions, and that level is expected to rise . - Indicator 7: Climate Change, as measured by Million tonnes of greenhouse gases carbon equivalent (weighted by Global Warming Potential). - Indicator 8: Air Quality, as measured by the number of Air Quality Management Areas. - Indicator 14: Travel - distance, as measured by total vehicle kilometres. With road traffic forecast to rise by 27% by 2021, this is viewed by the Scottish Executive to be unsustainable, and long distance commuting may be contributing to this indicator.	Several are directly relevant to HITRANS RTS, and direct consistency with transport indicators (14-17) desirable. Indicators 1, 7 and 8 will be monitored through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process

⁶¹ <http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-HIE-corporate-documents-2005-06/HIE-Network-Operating-Plan-2006-09.pdf>

⁶² <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/26122734/27353>

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
	- Indicator 15: Travel - industry, as measured by freight intensity (relationship between tonne kilometres moved and Gross Domestic Product). - Indicator 16: Travel - mode: as measured by the proportion of journeys to work not by car. - Indicator 17: Travel – accessibility, as measured by the percentage of Scottish households within 6 minutes walk of a bus stop.	
HEALTH		
NHS Clinical Outcome Indicators, 2005 ⁶³	Indicators related to child health, cancer, women's health, mental health, knees and hips, surgical procedures and other miscellaneous	Reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy and none assessed to be of direct relevance to HITRANS with the exception of Childhood Obesity, which was last reported on in 2003. It is concluded however that the HITRANS Strategy would be better placed to monitor transport actions that contribute to reducing obesity through increased physical activity (School Travel Plans, Active Travel and so on)
Scottish Health and Community Care targets (Draft Budget 2007-08) ⁶⁴	Targets relating to health improvement, reducing health inequalities, involvement by the public in NHS planning, improvement in quality of NHS services, patients receiving healthcare promptly	Reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy and no objectives or related targets assessed to be directly relevant to HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy
PLANNING AND OUTDOOR ACCESS		
Relevant Development Plan indicators across the region	Cairngorms National Park Plan ⁶⁵ and Local Plan (consultative draft) ⁶⁶ – no indicators presented	No indicators identified for Cairngorms

⁶³ <http://www.indicators.scot.nhs.uk/Reports/Published.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/05131713/10>

⁶⁵ <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=98>

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS
	No overall Local Plan for Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park at time of writing Highland Trends 1999⁶⁷ - monitors information on areas related to the Highland Structure Plan, and of relevance to the HITRANS RTS: Economy – travel to work Infrastructure – transport Environment – air quality	
Relevant Outdoor Access Strategy indicators across the region	Cairngorms National Park Authority Draft Outdoor Access Strategy⁶⁸, August 2006 – no indicators presented No overall Outdoor Access Strategy for Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park at time of writing	No indicators identified

⁶⁶ <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/07112005/CNPA.Paper.182.Local%20Plan%20Draft%20Report%20Oct%202005%20-%20Full%20Report,%20Policies%20and%20Settlement%20Statements.pdf>

⁶⁷ http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E7B23C46-6067-477D-A0F3-3707E2C9BF19/0/highland_trends_99.pdf

⁶⁸ <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=82>

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