



## Infrastructure Commission: Call for Evidence – SPT response

**Committee** Strategy and Programmes

**Date of meeting** 10 May 2019

**Date of report** 25 April 2019

### Report by Senior Director

#### 1. Object of report

The object of this report is to recommend approval of SPT's draft response to the Call for Evidence by the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland. The draft response is attached at Appendix 1. The closing date for submissions was 3 May 2019 and SPT's response was submitted as draft subject to Committee approval.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 In February 2019, the Scottish Government announced the establishment of an independent Infrastructure Commission for Scotland to advise on a 30-year strategy for infrastructure investment. The Commission is chaired by Ian Russell CBE, a former Chief Executive of Scottish Power plc, and its members include representatives from academia, professional organisations, property development, transport planning and trade unions.
- 2.2 In March 2019, the Commission announced a Call for Evidence<sup>1</sup>, seeking early views from interested parties on a broad range of topics in relation to the future of infrastructure in Scotland. The Call for Evidence also details the role and remit of the Commission, and its guiding principles.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government have stated that the Infrastructure Commission's work will inform the development of the next Infrastructure Investment Plan<sup>2</sup>. On completion of their initial phase, anticipated to be by the end of 2019, the Commission will look at delivery models for infrastructure.

#### 3. Outline of proposals

3.1 Key points from the response are as follows:

- There should be greater recognition of the **importance of transport services and infrastructure in inclusive growth, social cohesion and environmental impacts.**

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<sup>1</sup> Call for Evidence document: <https://infrastructurecommission.scot/storage/15/InitialCallforEvidence.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Further information on the Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/government-finance/infrastructure-investment/>

- **Making the best use of our existing assets** – and fixing and maintaining them – should on the whole be given greater priority than new infrastructure.
  - Prioritisation of investment must pay heed to **national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans**.
  - There must be clarity on the role and status of the outcomes of the Infrastructure Commission and the second **Strategic Transport Projects Review**, which is currently underway.
  - **Revenue funding is just as important as capital** and a more balanced and fair approach to this is essential in future e.g. supporting socially-necessary bus services.
- 3.2 The response also emphasises the important role of SPT, our constituent councils and the other Regional Transport Partnerships in the development and delivery of infrastructure in Scotland.
- 3.3 Officers liaised with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including councils, Glasgow City Region, Clydeplan, SOLACE, SCOTS, the Scottish Cities Alliance and COSLA in developing SPT's response, and contributed to the development of a joint Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland response. Throughout that process, there was found to be much common agreement on key points among the organisations, and it is hoped that this approach could form the basis for future dialogue in relation to the Commission.

#### 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The outcomes of the Infrastructure Commission's work could inform the Scottish Government's investment decisions on infrastructure for many years to come, although clarity is required around its relationship to Transport Scotland's new Strategic Transport Projects Review process, which is currently underway. Notwithstanding this, however, the implications for the west of Scotland of the Commission's work could be significant, and the importance of ensuring SPT and partners have a strong influence on this should therefore not be underestimated. The collegiate approach adopted in developing the response to the Call for Evidence should ensure that SPT's views are taken account as the Infrastructure Commission continue their work.
- 4.2 Furthermore, as members are aware, SPT is in the process of developing the new Regional Transport Strategy, and therefore will utilise work undertaken in that regard to help inform our input to the Commission and also other infrastructure-related workstreams such as the National Transport Strategy, Strategic Transport Projects Review, City/Growth Deals and others. Officers will continue to liaise with relevant parties in relation to the above and will keep the Committee apprised of developments.

#### 5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to approve the draft response at Appendix 1.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Response is in line with the current and developing RTSS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>There is the potential risk of a lack of future infrastructure investment in the west of Scotland arising from the conclusions of the Commission. SPT and partners will continue to seek to mitigate that risk through close involvement with the Commission's work.</i>

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**Title** Senior Director

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## Appendix 1

### Infrastructure Commission for Scotland: Call for Evidence – Response by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

#### *About SPT*

SPT is the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) for the west of Scotland, established in April 2006 following the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. SPT has a range of planning and operational duties including the statutory Regional Transport Strategy (with a new RTS currently in development), project development and delivery, supporting socially necessary bus services, operating the Subway and bus stations across the west of Scotland, school transport, and others. Further information on SPT is available at: [www.spt.co.uk](http://www.spt.co.uk).

#### *Key Points*

SPT welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Commission.

In developing our response, we have had mutually supportive dialogue with a range of our partners and stakeholders, including our constituent councils, city region/growth deals, the RTPs, SOLACE, SCOTS, the Scottish Cities Alliance and COSLA.

The key points we wish to raise with the Commission at this stage are as follows:

- **Safety** - and the safe operation of any services it enables – must always take precedence in prioritising infrastructure investment.
- There should be greater recognition of the **importance of transport services and infrastructure in inclusive growth, social cohesion and environmental impacts**.
- **People and communities must be at the heart** of any significant decisions on infrastructure.
- **Making the best use of our existing assets** – and fixing and maintaining them – should on the whole be given greater priority than new infrastructure.
- A much wider, **more integrated and co-ordinated view of infrastructure** and its cross-sectoral impact needs to be taken – health, transport, economy etc.
- Investment should be prioritised in line with the Scottish Government's **National Infrastructure Mission** i.e. where it delivers a mix of economic, social and environmental impacts.
- Infrastructure projects in **rural, island, or small population areas must not be overlooked** in an assessment and prioritisation process.
- The **'whole life' costs of infrastructure** must be taken into consideration in decision-making.
- Prioritisation of investment must pay heed to **national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans** e.g. NTS, RTSs, SDPs, LTSs.
- There must be clarity on the role, status and interplay between the outcomes of the Infrastructure Commission and the second **Strategic Transport Projects Review**, which is currently underway.
- **A 'scenario planning' approach must be taken** when looking at future impacts of infrastructure and changing demand patterns.

- The **current process of assessing and evaluating infrastructure projects must be updated** to reflect future requirements. In the current version of STAG, the emphasis on generating significant economic growth takes priority over social inclusion and environmental impacts.
- **Infrastructure's role in 'place' and 'place-making'** needs to be given greater recognition.
- **Revenue funding is just as important as capital** and a more balanced and fair approach to this is essential in future e.g. supporting socially-necessary bus services.
- The **timelines used in the Commission's document are too short to be truly meaningful**. We suggest a long term horizon of 60 years, with interim review points every 15-20 years.
- The **resilience of new and existing infrastructure** – for example, in relation to climate change adaptation – is a significant consideration in future decision-making on investment.
- The **pace of change in modern society** – digital connectivity, new technology, different demands and supply, changing demographics – must be catered for in future infrastructure.

Finally, we would emphasise the important role played by SPT and our constituent councils - and the other Regional Transport Partnerships of Scotland – in many of the above points, and in the delivery of transport infrastructure project development and delivery. For example, SPT is currently delivering the £288m Subway Modernisation programme - see <http://www.spt.co.uk/subway/modernisation/> . Further information on our full capital programme for 2019/20 is available at: [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP080219\\_Agenda5.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP080219_Agenda5.pdf)

SPT looks forward to supporting and assisting the Commission as it takes its work forward, and would be happy to meet with the Commission in this regard.