

Consultation on Strategic Transport Projects Review 2

Introduction

Colleges Scotland as an organisation welcomes the publication of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 and the key role it will play in guiding the Scottish Government's transport investment programme in Scotland for the next 20 years and help to deliver the vision, priorities and outcomes that are set out in the new National Transport Strategy.

On behalf of the college sector in Scotland we wish to express our support in principle for the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, and the intention to conduct a Scotland wide, evidence-based review of the performance of the strategic transport system, against multiple criteria including environment, economy and social inclusion whilst fundamentally supporting Scottish Government's aims, including sustainable inclusive growth and the move to a low and zero carbon transport system.

Key Points

The college sector has an important role to play in supporting inclusive growth and a low carbon economy, and colleges are currently lynchpins in both areas, through actively developing projects in partnership with relevant stakeholders. Therefore, it is important that colleges are a key component of conversations as the Strategic Transport Projects Review develops its work going forward. This will especially be the case as Scotland enters the recovery phase following Covid-19, and we look to rebuild, and potentially redesign, the economy at this key time; an appropriately skilled workforce to support the transport ecosystem will be vital.

We say this because as the national organisation for colleges in Scotland we believe that the sector has a vital role to play in both the development and delivery of transport projects in Scotland. Colleges are a key delivery partner for the workforce who construct and maintain the transport network and supporting infrastructure across Scotland, delivering high-quality technical education courses to provide workers with the skills that are required for them to hold successful careers in transport and infrastructure related roles.

Subsequently we feel that colleges need to be adequately involved in discussions moving forward, especially with regards to the possible creation of a Scottish National Infrastructure Company. If further projects are developed as a result of the work of the Review, then we believe it would be highly beneficial for both the transport sector for there to be college representation, given the proximity of colleges to transport and infrastructure-related activity, and to ensure that college representatives could bring their skills and experience to direct the work of any potential national activity.

In relation to representation, in line with our comments below, we believe that the commission could be strengthened by incorporating greater digital and energy representation, which could make the wider conversation more inclusive of connectivity and the need for greater energy efficiency in doing so.

We welcome the development of a national approach with regards to transport projects, but we would recommend that any national approach should not be overly restrictive. Any future approach should

allow for adaption to local and regional needs, and to enable the development of partnership working to meet such need.

Whilst it may not be a strategic problem as such, we would make the point that it is important to ensure that there is a skilled workforce in place to support and maintain the development of improved infrastructure and transport, as well as to support the required changes in travel behaviours. Colleges across Scotland are a key delivery partner for the workforce who construct and maintain the transport network and support infrastructure across Scotland, delivering high-quality technical education courses to provide workers with the skills that are required for them to hold successful careers in transport and infrastructure related roles.

Conclusion

Subsequently we would advise that colleges need to be fundamentally involved in discussions moving forward, especially with regards to the possible creation of a Scottish National Infrastructure Company and in the post Covid-19 recovery period. If further projects are developed as a result of the work of the Review, then we believe it would be highly beneficial for the transport sector for there to be college representation, given the proximity of colleges to transport and infrastructure-related activity, and to ensure that college representatives could bring their skills and experience to direct the work of any potential national activity and address any possible strategic issues around staff recruitment and retention, as well as around upskilling and reskilling the infrastructure and transport workforce.

Colleges Scotland
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