

Consultation on Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) Update and Phase 1 Recommendations Report

Introduction

Colleges Scotland is the collective voice for the college sector in Scotland, representing its interests and ensuring that colleges are at the heart of a world class education sector that is recognised, valued and available to all. Colleges Scotland, as the membership body, represents all 26 colleges in Scotland, which deliver both further education and around 24% of the provision of all higher education in Scotland.

As an organisation, Colleges Scotland welcomes the publication of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 Phase 1 Report and the key role it will play in guiding the Scottish Government's transport investment programme and in helping 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 also wish to express our continued support in principle for the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, and we welcome the alignment this has with other activities and strategies in this space, such as the Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland and the National Planning Framework.

Key Points

Do you feel the eight themes within the STPR2 Phase 1 capture what needs to be done in the short term, in relation to the transport investment priorities?

We would agree that the eight themes within the STPR2 Phase 1 capture what needs to be done in the short term, in relation to the transport investment priorities.

Do you feel the themes appropriately address challenges and opportunities described within the report?

Yes

Please use the space below to provide any further comments on the challenges and opportunities described within the report:

We would agree with the challenges and opportunities as established within the report.

As the Scottish economy, and the transport sector, recover from the impact of COVID-19, the college sector will be ready to step up and assist with both the social and economic recovery in many ways from helping individuals who have lost their jobs to upskill and retrain, to assisting business of all sizes to get back on their feet and increase productivity, and across all of this activity, ensuring that the recovery is a fair one.

As an agile, collaborative, and inclusive national asset, colleges will play a vital role in driving Scotland's economic, social and educational recovery by:

- Playing a vital role in building back better
- Supporting the requirements of the changed economy that will emerge
- Improving employability of our citizens
- Supporting businesses, large and small, to rebuild and re-engage their workforce and to increase their economy of scale, as part of a regional approach
- Supporting social cohesion, positive and resilient mental health and wellbeing of our communities
- Seeking an inclusive and green recovery
- Contributing to the Four Capitals: economic, social, human, and natural
- Supporting delivery of the National Performance Framework.

On that basis, and in terms of additional opportunities, we would suggest that across all of the eight themes there will be a need for a highly skilled and qualified workforce across Scotland, to ensure these themes are delivered on in terms of future actions.

As noted in our submission to the Just Transition Commission during its call for evidence, colleges across Scotland will continue to help Scottish workers, and Scottish apprentices, including those in the infrastructure and transport sectors, to keep pace with technological, environmental and labour market changes and to increase workforce and business resilience to future disruption as the economy recovers from the impact of Covid-19.

In doing so the college sector will also support the transition to a net-zero, low-carbon inclusive economy in response to the Climate Emergency and take forward actions in line with the aims of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan. This activity will also support the ambitions covered in the National Planning Framework Position Statement around ensuring that infrastructure will be more energy efficient and designed to be sustainable.

On that basis we would advise Transport Scotland that given the college sector's extensive networks and unique reach to SMEs, colleges have a key role to play in supporting net-zero related infrastructure and transport related development with these businesses, whilst driving regional economic developments and recoveries focused around moving towards a net zero economy and simultaneously maximising the upskilling and reskilling opportunities for workers to develop their skills as part of these changes.

Do you feel that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy?

We would agree that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy.

Please use the space below to provide any further comments that you wish to make on the eight themes.

We would have no further comment to make on the eight themes other than that we would request that the college sector is informed and included in future stakeholder activity around taking the themes forward and, in the design, and development (and not just delivery) of relevant initiatives at local, regional and national level.

How well do the Phase 1 interventions respond to the uncertainty in travel demand and behaviour that we face in the short term due to COVID-19?

The Phase 1 interventions respond well to the uncertainty in travel demand and behaviour that will be faced in the short term due to COVID-19.

How well do the Phase 1 interventions support Scotland's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in the short-term?

We would state that the Phase 1 interventions have the potential to support Scotland's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic to a good extent. (Well).

Please use the space below to highlight the Phase 1 themes and interventions, that you particularly support

In terms of supporting the transition to low-carbon transport we would advise that the college sector has a vital role to play in supporting both the development and delivery of low and zero-carbon infrastructure and transport in Scotland,

Colleges are contributing to tackling the climate emergency and delivering for a green economy and are a key sector to ensure the Scottish Government goals of Net Zero emissions and environmental sustainability are delivered, both in terms of their own estates and by delivering initiatives to address the climate emergency, for example:

- The carbon footprint of the college sector has reduced by 18% in the last two years
- Development of cleaner transport initiatives
- Training of the existing workforce, students and apprentices in renewable energy and energy transition
- Tackling gender imbalance within the transport sector
- Partnership working in relation to hydrogen-based infrastructures. There is a real opportunity for the sector, in contributing to the upscaling of this infrastructure, to play a greater role in helping Scotland achieve its climate change targets.

Of equal importance, colleges are a key delivery partner for the workforce who construct and maintain infrastructure and the wider transport system across Scotland, delivering high-quality technical education courses to provide workers with the skills that are required for them to hold successful careers in low and zero-carbon infrastructure and transport related roles.

There is real opportunity for the college sector here to upskill and reskill this workforce, including those who lose their jobs as a result of COVID-19, to ensure that the wider Scottish infrastructure and transport network is futureproofed to support a low carbon economy in a way which does not negatively affect the current workforce and overall economy. The college sector has an important role to play in supporting inclusive growth and the development of a low carbon economy, and colleges are currently heavily involved in both areas, through actively developing projects in collaboration with the Energy Skills Partnership.

Therefore, it is important that colleges are a key component of conversations as the STPR moves forward in Autumn 2021.

Please use the space below to highlight where you disagree with any the Phase 1 themes or interventions

We would not disagree with any of the themes or interventions as presented.

Please use the space below to provide any other comments you wish to make on the STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report

As has been stated in the [Cumberford-Little Report](#), colleges are 'anchor institutions' at the heart of the communities they serve, and it will be through the continued efforts of staff, students and stakeholders from every college community around Scotland that the necessary support, opportunities and end results will come.

Despite the uncertainty created by COVID-19 there remains a social contract between colleges and the communities they serve, as well as a shared vision of the positive outcomes that can be delivered through community partnership.

The college sector has an important role to play in the months ahead, as the Scottish Government and partner agencies look to implement programmes and initiatives to deal with the ramifications of COVID-19 that require direct delivery and intervention by colleges. This will involve colleges leading on youth education and employment options, employee reskilling and upskilling, and short-term training initiatives for those who are unemployed.

Within this context we would advise that the STPR2 moving forward considers the role of the college sector in developing and delivering activity in line with the themes outlined in Phase 1 and the subsequent recommendations report.

As Transport Scotland receives responses with which to inform and shape the STPR2, we expect that the knowledge and thinking of the college sector - a sector which is increasingly supporting both the development and maintenance of infrastructure and transport systems across Scotland - is taken into consideration in the next stages of the work.

Colleges Scotland
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