Agenda Item	**18**
Report No	**ECI/27/2021**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Economy and Infrastructure**

Date: **5 May 2021**

Report Title: **Bus Service Improvement Partnerships and Bus Partnership Fund**

Report By: **Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1. This report presents the Phase 1 applications which have been made to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund. This fund of £500 million is for investment in infrastructure to support bus services, with the aims of reducing congestion and improving bus journey times and reliability. The deadline for a call for proposals was 16 April.

1.2. This report also outlines proposals for a Bus Service Improvement Partnership Plan and Schemes. To be successful with a Bus Partnership Fund application, it is necessary for the Council to be working towards establishing a Bus Service Improvement Partnership.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Members are asked to:

i. Agree to the Council initiating a Bus Service Improvement Partnership;

ii. Approve the outline Bus Service Improvement Partnership Plan attached, as a basis for consultation and further development;

iii. Delegate powers to the Chair and Vice-Chair to agree the content of a draft BSIP Plan and Schemes as they are developed for consultation;

iv. Homologate the Bus Partnership Fund Phase 1 applications which have been submitted to Transport Scotland;

v. Note that Phase 2 applications to the Bus Partnership Fund will be required by 15 October for schemes which are accepted at Phase 1.

3. Implications

3.1. **Resource** - Officers will require to devote significant time between now and October for the preparation of Phase 2 funding applications. However, as match funding is not required, there are no financial resource implications arising from this report. The opportunity to gain a share of the Scottish Government's £500 million budget for this fund (over several years) is a vital benefit. Any broader financial implications of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership will be considered as BSIP proposals are developed.

3.2. **Legal** - There are no legal implications arising directly from this report but making a Bus Service Improvement Partnership requires a statutory process to be followed.

3.3. **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - There is potential for equality and poverty benefits through improving bus services.

3.4. **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - A prime aim of the Fund is to reduce congestion, which will have significant benefits for carbon reduction by supporting improved bus services as a viable alternative to car use, especially on urban and inter-urban routes. It should also support the financial viability of commercial bus services.

3.5. **Risk** - There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

3.6. **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications.

4. Bus Service Improvement Partnerships

4.1. In December 2019 the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 became law. One of its provisions was the establishment of a framework for Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs), replacing the previous, less flexible, Statutory Quality Partnerships. However, regulations regarding the procedures, form and content of BSIPs have been delayed by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Transport Scotland have published a guidance note which is available at https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/48594/bus-service-improvement-partnerships-note.pdf

4.2. BSIPs comprise two levels: a **Plan** and one or more **Schemes**. The Plan is the high-level policy and strategy element of the Partnership and may cover all or part of a Council's area. Schemes are the implementation of the Plan in specific areas.

4.3. A BSIP Scheme can contain **facilities** and **measures**, but must include at least one facility, and must impose one or more service standards for buses operating in its area. A facility is defined as an infrastructure improvement and a measure as another initiative designed to incentivise bus use. There is a wide range of possible service standards, but vehicle quality, fares/ticketing and frequencies are among likely ones, subject to operators' agreement.

4.4. The BSIP structure is designed to apply to commercial rather than tendered bus services, but the same standards must also apply to tendered services within a Scheme area, unless exemptions specified in the Scheme apply. School buses (if not open to the public) and other non-public buses (such as tours and private hires) are not covered by a BSIP.

4.5. In preparing a BSIP Plan and Scheme, previous work between Highland Council, HiTrans and Stagecoach to develop a Statutory Quality Partnership is being drawn upon and adapted to match the BSIP structure.

4.6. Once the Council have stated their intent to prepare a BSIP, a statutory process of notification and consultation must be followed. This is shown diagrammatically in Appendix 1.

4.7. An outline of possible BSIP Plan and Scheme content is shown in **Appendix 2**.

4.8. To support BSIP initiatives, the Scottish Government has introduced a Bus Partnership Fund (BPF).

5. Bus Partnership Fund

5.1. The Bus Partnership Fund is intended provide infrastructure (capital) funding to enable Councils to invest in "facilities" (in BSIP Scheme terms), and so to make a meaningful contribution to BSIP Schemes. The fund is targeted towards provision of major investment in bus priorities, reducing the effects of congestion and addressing the decline in bus patronage. It makes £500 million available (Scotland-wide) over 5 years. A call for proposals was launched on 13 November 2020, with a deadline for submissions of 16 April 2021. The call for proposals, which describes intended outcomes and details how the fund will work, design principles and the evaluation process, is available at https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/bus-partnership-fund/how-to-apply/

5.2. The BPF does not require match funding from local authorities, but does require a strong linkage with Council policies, including evidence of the Council working towards setting up a BSIP.

5.3. Transport Scotland officials have clarified that the BPF does not provide funding for initiatives on Trunk Roads, but the BPF team do want to see full proposals, including Trunk Road aspects, and are committed to liaising with their Strategic Transport Projects Review and Roads colleagues. As trunk roads are a significant part of Inverness proposals and fundamental to those in Fort William, this liaison is essential for full acceptance of our schemes.

5.4. The key intended outcomes of the Fund are to improve bus journey times and provide greater reliability, by prioritising bus over other types of traffic. The fund supports the four priorities of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2):-

- to reduce inequality;
- take climate action;
- help deliver inclusive growth; and
- improve health and well-being

It also addresses seven of the Government's seventeen Sustainable Development Goals:-

- affordable and clean energy;
- sustainable cities and communities;
- decent work and economic growth;
- industry, innovation and infrastructure;
- climate action;
- good health and well-being; and
- partnerships for the goals

5.5. Transport Scotland have stated that the initial tranche of funding is expected to be used to resource the development of appraisals and business cases. Various conditions apply:-

- Applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status, as defined by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019;
- There must be a lead local authority, as Accountable Officer for the funding;
- The infrastructure projects will be owned by local roads authorities, in recognition of their statutory role in maintaining the local road infrastructure. Transport Scotland will therefore not mandate design requirements but will expect local authorities to follow good practice guidance, such as the National Roads Development Guide; and
- In accordance with the Place Principle, which was adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, bidding partnerships are asked to take a collaborative, place-based approach to the proposed developments.

5.6. The Government have stated that they wish to receive ambitious proposals, although quick wins for smaller projects which are aligned to the longer-term vision may be considered for the initial tranche. It is expected that funding will be awarded for development and delivery after June 2021.

5.7. Partnership with bus operators is essential. Stagecoach and Shiel Buses are partners, and all other bus companies providing public services in the area will be invited. Other partners who have been involved in preparing the bids include:-

- HiTrans;
- NHS Highland;
- HIE;
- Cromarty Firth Port Authority;
- Cairngorms National Park Authority;
- Skye Connect; and
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division

All of these would also be likely to become BSIP partners once a BSIP Plan is launched.

5.8. Integration with other modes is expected as part of the proposals, including ways in which bus and active travel can complement each other.

5.9. A bulletin item in February outlined the scope and preliminary intentions for a BPF bid. Proposed bids were discussed in a Members' seminar on 7 April. Members present supported the draft proposals and made a number of comments which have been incorporated into the BPF application or noted for inclusion in the BSIP Plan.

5.10. Three bids have been submitted, for Inverness and Inner Moray Firth, Fort William, and a tourism-related bid covering both Skye and the Aviemore/Cairngorm area. Copies of the bids are attached in **Appendix 3**. Bids in this phase are for "quick wins" (for completion in the current financial year) and for resources to develop appraisal of larger projects.

5.11. The Fund does not cover trunk road infrastructure, but implications for trunk roads are described in the bids, and Transport Scotland have given an assurance that the Bus Partnership Fund and Strategic Transport Projects Review teams will liaise with each other where relevant.

5.12. The largest bid is for Inverness and Inner Moray Firth. It proposes significant provisions for bus priority in the city centre and on two east-west cross-city routes. It builds on facilities which are already in place or designed, such as the North Bridge between the UHI Campus and the Seafield Retail Park, and the Raigmore bus gate. It includes applications to fund bus lanes and bus priorities on congested roads and junctions, including the B9006 (Culloden Road / Old Perth Road), Inshes roundabout and Millburn Road. Park and Ride sites at North Kessock, Smithton and Torvean are also included. Outwith Inverness, the bid includes mini Park & Ride sites at strategic locations, provision to simplify bus routes and/or provide a dedicated bus stance in Dingwall, and initiatives in Invergordon to alleviate congestion around the port, as well as mini park & ride / park & share sites at key junctions along main routes.

5.13. The bid for Fort William is based on enabling buses to avoid the congestion experienced, particularly in summer, on the A82 through the town. Options including bus lanes and alternative routing are to be appraised. A park & ride site on the north edge of the town is proposed. Option appraisal for a redesign of the area between the Parade and the railway station is also proposed, in order to simplify bus routes and promote environmental improvements, and quick win proposals for new links for buses in other parts of the town are included.

5.14. The bid for Skye and Cairngorm focusses on alleviating parking congestion at popular scenic points in these areas and is intended to enable development of park & ride bus services, developing further the bus services which are being supported this year through the Visitor Management programme. The bid includes quick win proposals to enhance the planned car parks at Kilt Rock and Coral Beach to accommodate buses and bus turning areas, and to add bus stances to the existing car parks at Fairy Pools, Fairy Glen, Storr and Quiraing, and a bus turning facility at Glenmore (near Loch Morlich). Funding is also sought to appraise options for park & ride sites in Portree and Aviemore.

6. Next steps

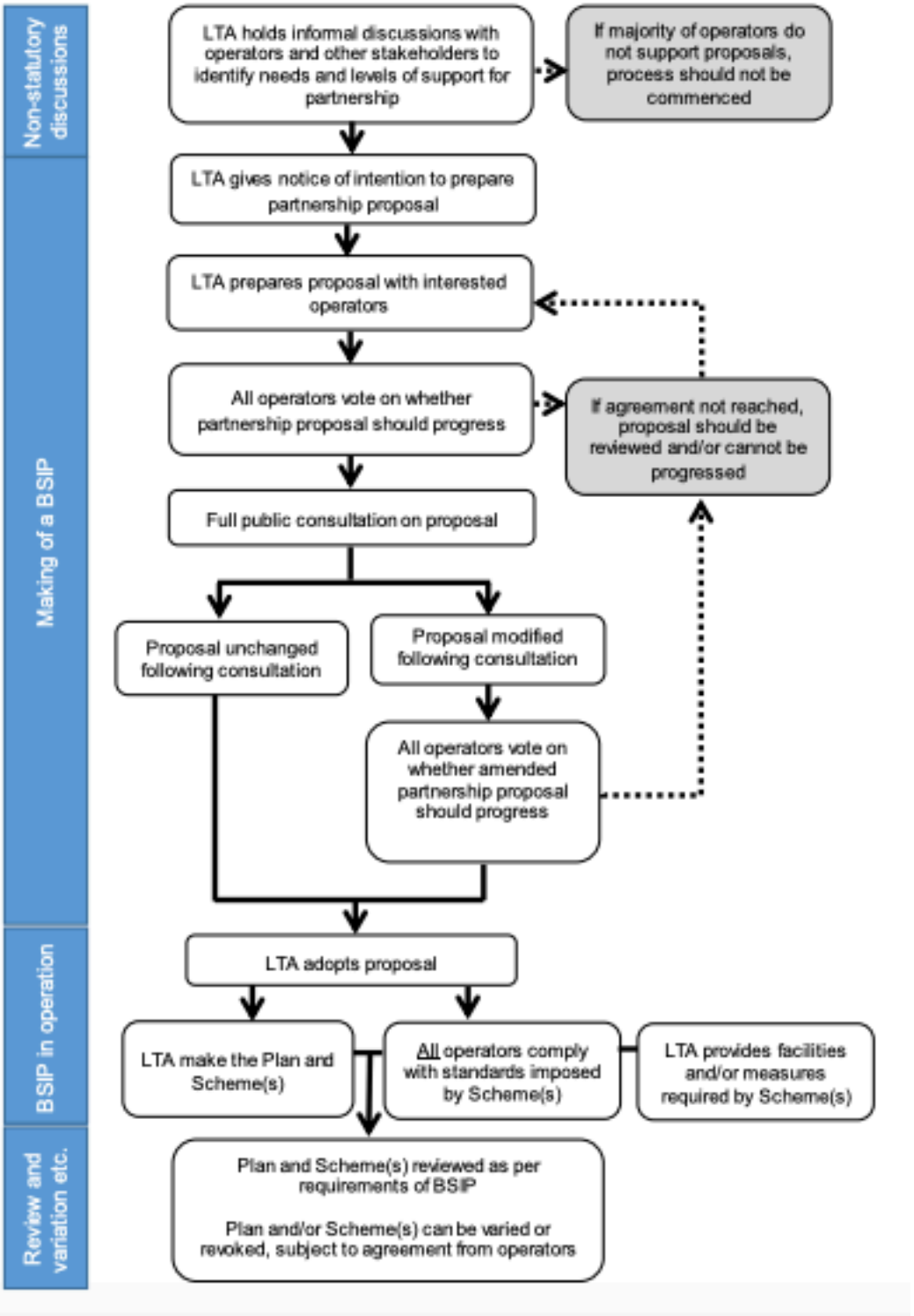
6.1. If the Committee approve, the formal process of establishing a BSIP can begin. It is hoped that the steps under "Making of a BSIP" can be completed in time to report to the Committee in September.

6.2. If the BPF Phase 1 submissions are successful, further design work will be required to prepare the Phase 2 submissions.

Designation:	Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure and Environment
Date:	19 April 2021
Author:	David Summers, Principal Transport Officer

APPENDIX 1

5. BSIP – Outline Process



APPENDIX 2

OUTINE OF PROPOSED BSIP PLAN AND SCHEMES

BSIP Plan Requirements (a Plan must….)	**Proposal**
Specify the area covered and time period to which it relates	Whole Highland Council area, likely to for 5 years or duration of next round of bus service contracts
Provide an analysis of local services	Description of service levels and frequencies, including commercial and tendered services, and integration with school transport
Specify policies relating to local services	Incorporate relevant policies from Council Programme and Corporate Plan, and relate to National and Regional Transport Strategies and Local Development Plans *Procurement Strategy?*
Set out objectives on quality and effectiveness of local services	Subject to operators' agreement, this would be likely to cover such features as: • Minimum frequency of services; • Use of low-emission vehicles and alternative fuels; • Improvements in vehicle accessibility; • Transport publicity and public awareness of the network; Multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing.
Specify how the views of users are to be obtained on the effectiveness of plan and scheme	Involvement Community Planning Partnerships of local transport forums

BSIP Scheme Requirements	**Proposal**
Will specify the area covered by the scheme and period of time	Initially Inverness & Inner Moray Firth, Fort William, Skye and Cairngorm. Other areas may be added later. Time period likely to be 5 years or aligned with period of bus contracts.
Will impose one or more service standards for services having one or more stopping places in the area	This would apply the objectives on quality and effectiveness as appropriate to each scheme area.
Will specify one or more facilities to be provided or measures to be taken by the LTA. A facility can be classed as infrastructure and a measure as another improvement, such as parking policy to incentivise bus use. Any specified facility must be provided at specific locations along routes (proposed to be) served by local services	Facilities would be as funded by the Bus Partnership Fund. Measures would be discussed as schemes are progressed.
May provide for exemption of services and conditions in which such exemptions are to apply	Long distance coach services, school buses and infrequent (less than daily) buses are likely to have some exemptions.

APPENDIX 3

Bus Partnership Fund Application Form

Phase 1 – Capacity Funding

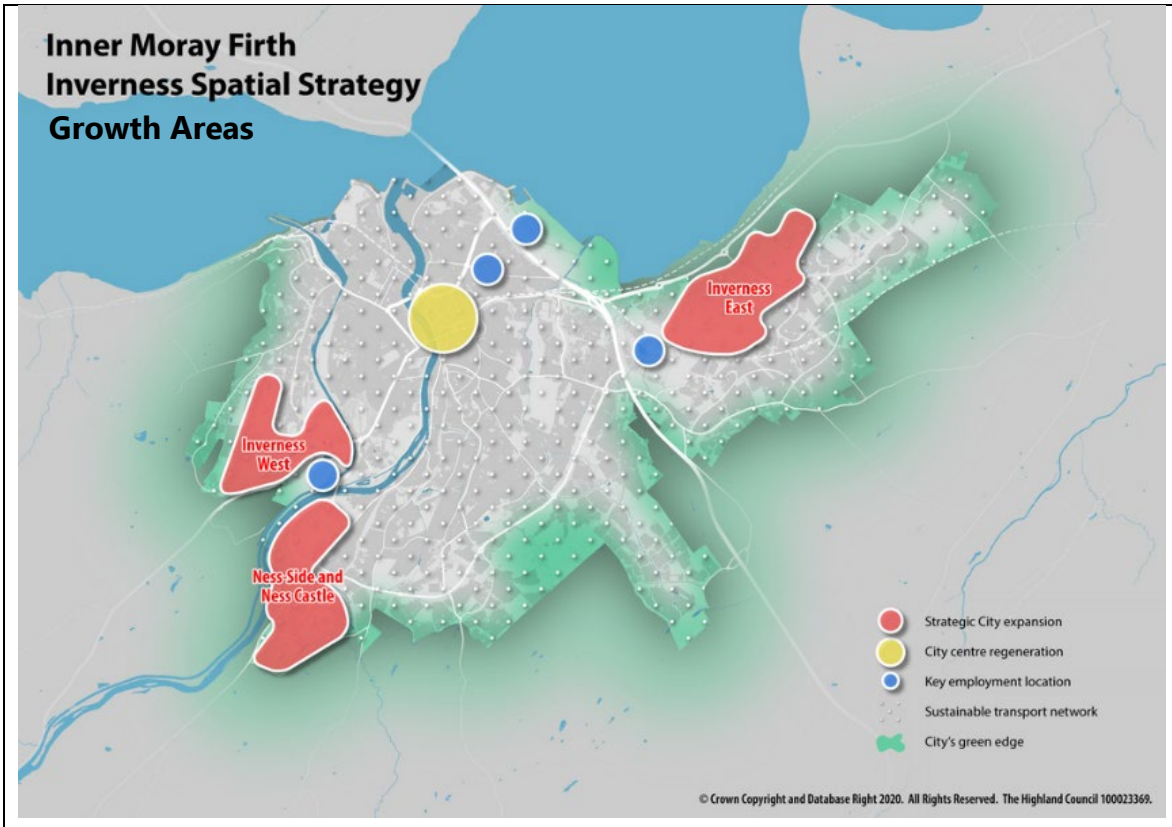
1. Applicant Details

Lead local authority	Highland Council
Partners to the proposal	Stagecoach Highlands, NHS Highland, HiTrans, Cromarty Firth Port Authority, Bannerman Company
Contact name and job title	Tracey Urry, Head of Roads & Transport
Contact email	Tracey.urry@highland.gov.uk
Contact telephone number	01463 702922

2. Geography and Demographics

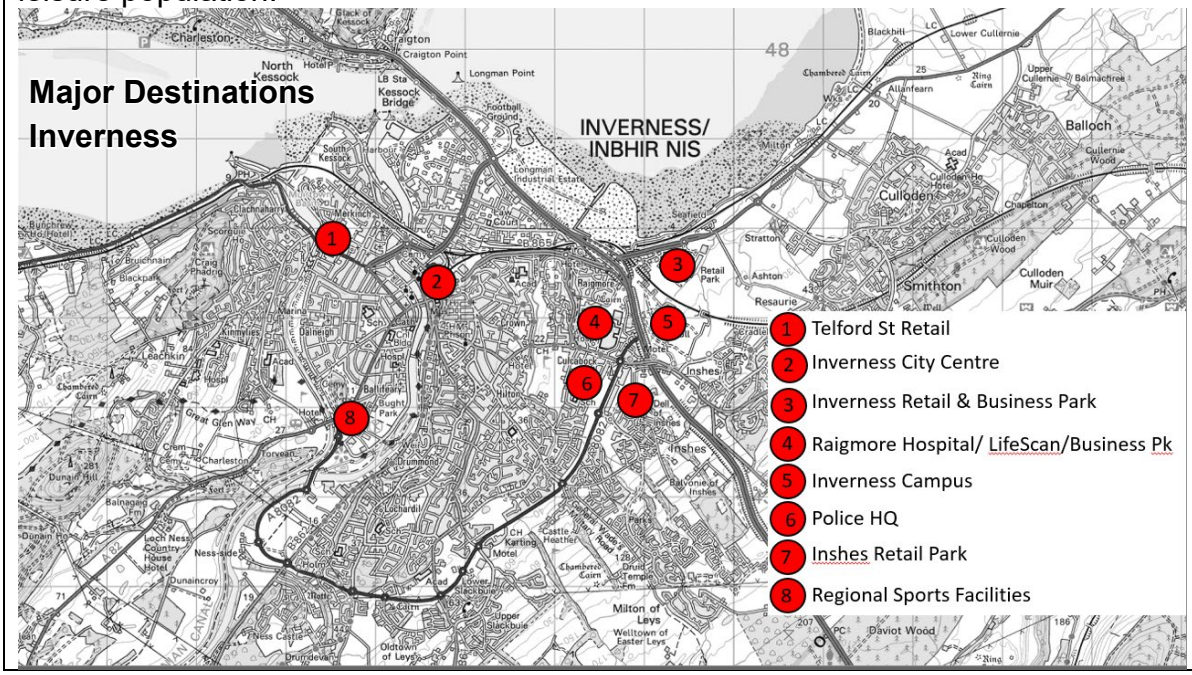
Max 1000 words, excluding maps

Describe the geography of the partnership and specifically that which will be impacted by the proposal, using maps to specify the area. Provide basic population information, to indicate the likely travel habits and therefore how people will be affected by the proposed development.
Highland Council's BSIP Plan is intended to cover the whole Council area, ranging from the city and environs of Inverness to the remote regions of the north and west. Within that, various Partnership Schemes are to be developed. This bid relates to **Inverness and the Inner Moray Firth**, which is the most urbanised part of the region. The city of Inverness is the major administrative, employment and service centre for the Highland region, and is commonly referred to as the "Capital of the Highlands". It is the most populated settlement in the region and has seen a continued focus on major urban expansion in recent decades. The emerging Spatial Strategy for the Inner Moray Firth area focuses on consolidation and expansion of established neighbourhoods in the city, as well as sustainable growth of the established surrounding towns and villages.



The combined advantages of Inverness's ideal location for easy access to multiple nearby towns and villages, abundant outdoor opportunities and other highlands and islands destinations, as well as its offer of modern city living make the city and region an attractive place to live, work and do business.

The Inner Moray Firth region is home to over 144,000 people, with most of that population concentrated in the villages, towns and settlements. The city has a population of over 65,000 people, with a greater commuting working, studying and leisure population.

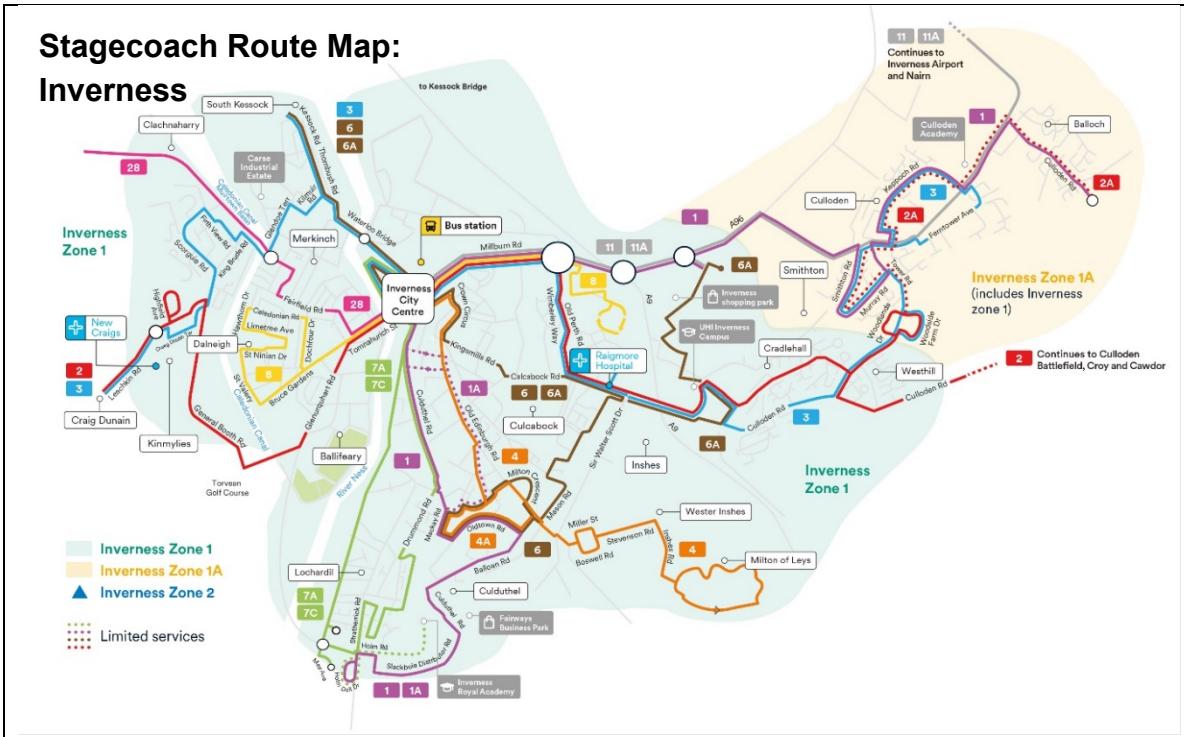


Pressure for growth continues as Inverness expands its offer of attractions as a modern, growing city, with strong transport links for all modes. Around 290 homes are built per year in the city (10-year average), which dominates delivery of housing in Highland, making up 29% of all homes built in the region (based on 2018 HNDA data). Some of the housing delivered, particularly over the last decade, has created communities that are disproportionately dependent on the private car for making everyday journeys, due to designs dominated by road-centred layouts which prioritise driving as the primary mode of travel, over walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport. This approach has occurred in a relatively small urban city and region where active travel and public transport should be the logical travel choices. These factors, coupled with the delivery of out-of-town retail development, have resulted in driving tending to dominate people's travel choices, even for shorter day to day trips, which contributes to increasing vehicles on the network and therefore congestion. This congestion leads to negative impacts on air quality, bus journey time and reliability which is exacerbated by a lack of bus priority infrastructure on the road network.

Although travel patterns within Inverness were traditionally focussed on the city centre, other key destinations have developed, notably the Inverness Retail Park off the A96 and the Inshes/Raigmore area, which includes the region's major hospital, Inshes retail park, office and factory premises and the main campus of the University of the Highlands & Islands. There is another retail centre in the western part of the city, between the River Ness and the Caledonian Canal, and increasing residential development both on the southern fringe of the city and west of the canal.

The urban and inter-urban bus networks remain largely focussed on the city centre, although other major destinations are served. Stagecoach have confirmed that they would be willing to divert buses direct from north of the Kessock Bridge to serve the Retail Park, UHI and the Hospital before going into the City Centre. Unfortunately, issues with traffic congestion at Raigmore Interchange and Inshes have deterred them from implementing this due to timekeeping concerns resulting in additional resource requirements. Stagecoach's route map is shown below.

Stagecoach Route Map: Inverness



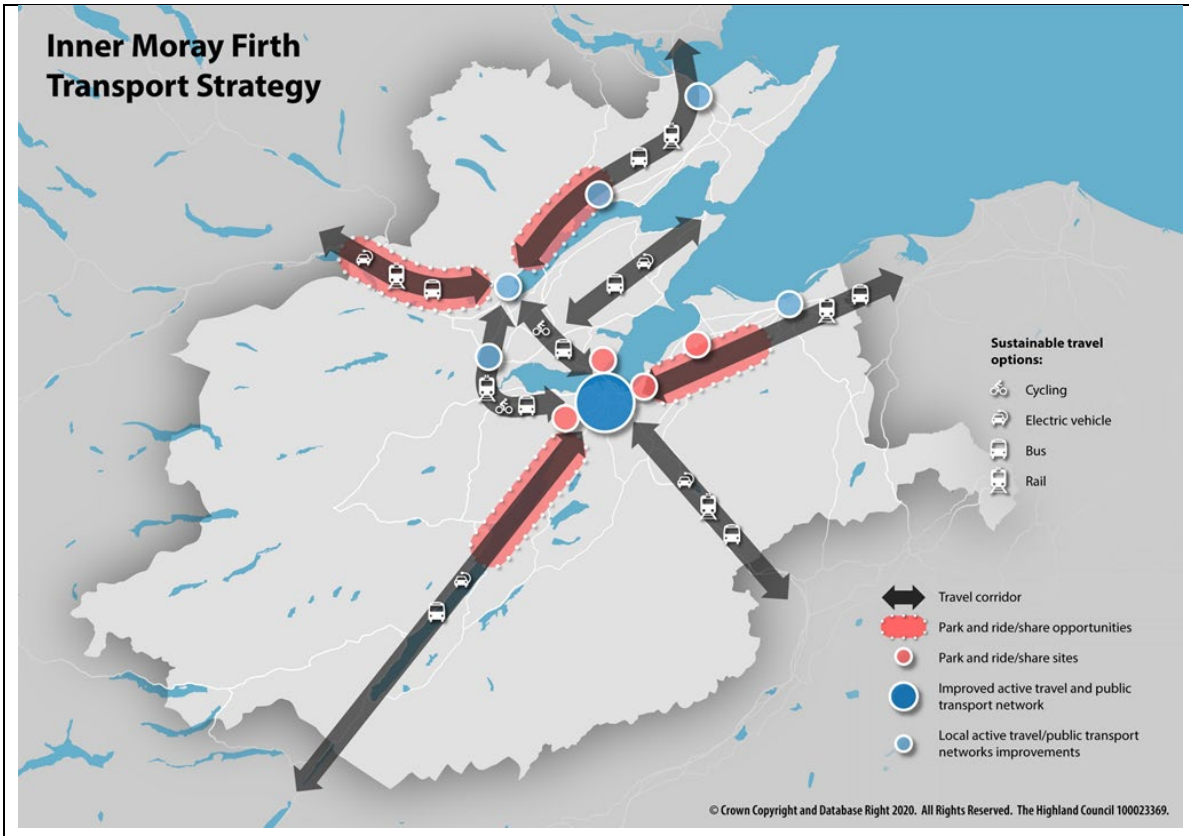
The city centre is compact, and constrained between the river, railway station and residential (to the south) and industrial (to the north) land uses. It has not grown physically in proportion to the increase in population. Efficient transport in and out of the city centre is therefore vital to maintain its attractiveness and functionality.

The shape of the road network, and therefore movement, is constrained by:

- The Caledonian Canal cutting through the western part of the city. There are only two swing bridges over the canal for vehicles. A third bridge will shortly be completed as the final part of the West Link; this will remove delays caused by bridge openings but will not increase route choice as it is adjacent to the existing Tomnahurich Bridge.
- The River Ness flowing through the city centre. There are four road crossings over the river, one of which is subject to a weight limit.
- The A9 dual carriageway running between the greater part of the city and the eastern suburbs. Although a major route for long-distance and some local traffic, there are only two vehicular crossings of it (and one NMU crossing) for east-west movement, and it becomes congested between the Raigmore Interchange and Kessock Bridge roundabout, particularly in the afternoons.

Planned network developments include the East Link road connecting the A96 to the B9006 and the realignment and dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Hardmuir, close to the boundary with Moray. The East Link will enhance the options for new bus routes in the eastern part of the city, whereas the A96 dualling, without bus priority measures, is likely to generate additional car traffic and to transfer congestion problems from the existing A96 to the city centre and other roads beyond the end of the scheme.

Work is underway through the review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan to establish a modern, up to date transport strategy for the region:



A key part of this strategy is prioritising public transport on the city network. A potential **quick win** is the delivery of a bus gate between Raigmore Hospital and Churchill Road, as shown in the Council's successful Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund bid. Construction-level detail designs have been prepared on a route corridor, community and political engagement has been undertaking and a strong working partnership is established between the Council, NHS Highland, Hitrans and Stagecoach Highland.

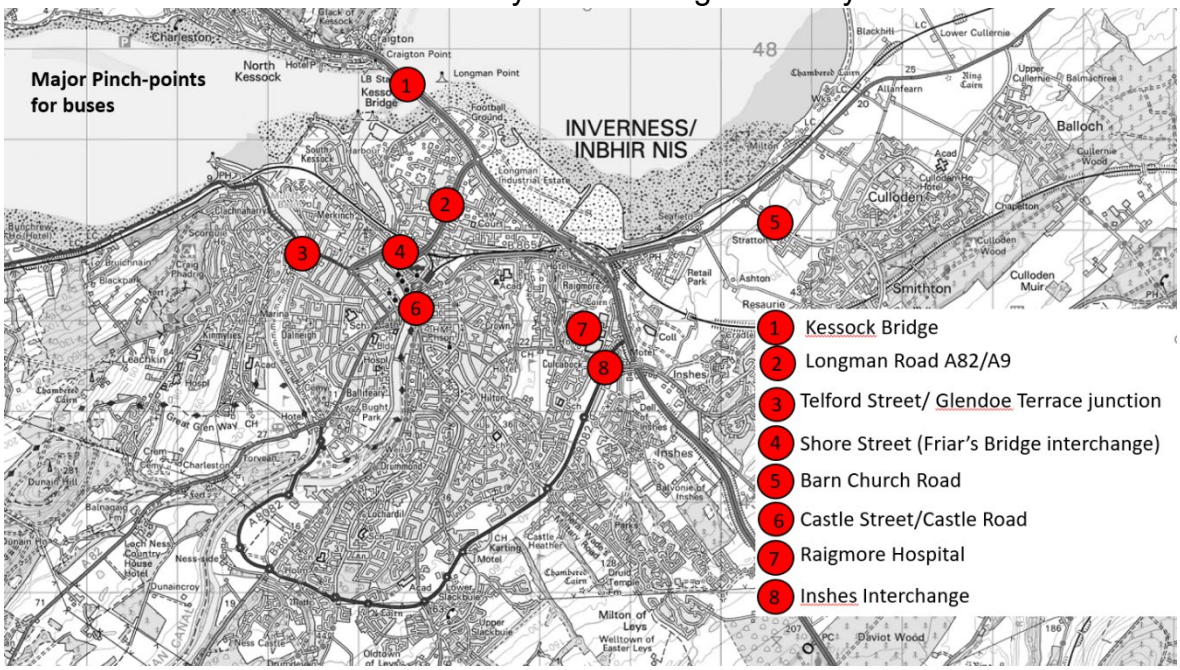
3. Analysis of Problems and Opportunities

Max 3000 words, excluding diagrams and charts[i]

Outline the problems (to the extent you are able at this stage), evidencing areas where road congestion is particularly problematic for bus. The opportunities should relate to bus priority developments, which are the focus of the Bus Partnership Fund[ii], as part of a multi-modal approach to sustainable future mobility provision.

Problems

Expansion of the city of Inverness and its surrounding commuter towns continues, and car travel remains the dominant mode choice for everyday trips. The impact of congestion on key links in the network has long been recognised, and as the city grows, bus running times have slowed, with timetables being adjusted on both urban and inter-urban routes. Congestion is increasing, particularly around the city centre and several other major pinch points which create significant barriers to supporting an efficient and reliable public transport service. Figures for delays at specific locations are described below, but in general, delays to buses result in frequencies being less than desirable, or even less than in the off-peak period, due to the number of vehicles available. Where additional vehicles are scheduled, this can result in the service on less busy routes being adversely affected.



Many of the older streets of Inverness are relatively narrow, having been designed for a smaller town as it was a few decades ago. There is therefore limited space to provide bus lanes. The network is also highly vulnerable to disruption, with a single traffic incident being able to cause major delays throughout the city.

Five of the main commuter routes into Inverness are trunk roads: the A9 from both north and south, the A96 from the east, A82 from the south-west and the A835 (meeting A9 at Tore) from the north-west. The A82 runs close to the centre of the city and through the large Longman Industrial Estate. There is therefore considerable mixing of local and long-distance traffic. No bus priority measures are

in place on any of the trunk roads. Plans to dual the A96 and upgrade the A9/A82 junction (Longman Roundabout) are welcome and will alleviate existing problems on these parts of the network, but there is a significant risk that, without other measures being taken, congestion will transfer from the trunk roads to the city itself, thus aggravating the pressures in the urban area.

The role of the city as a major regional employment and service centre, as well as multi-modal transport hub, means that the problems identified in the city network impact bus journeys for the whole Inner Moray Firth area and the wider Highland region.

Opportunities
Despite the problems described, there are several significant opportunities. The Bus Partnership Fund is itself of course a major opportunity to make a significant difference to travel in the sub-region and presents the possibility of interventions which have long been desired but not affordable, along with responses to more recently developing issues.

Despite the compactness of the city centre, and the width of many older streets, more can be done to increase the efficiency of the bus network by means of traffic light priorities. In suburban locations and in Millburn Road, space does exist to enable remodelling of the infrastructure with better provision for buses as well as active travel.

The Inverness & Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan is currently open for consultation. This is timely as it enables the Bus Partnership Fund proposals and Bus Service Improvement Partnership Scheme to be developed in a broader planning context.

The recently opened bridge, for buses and active travel, between the Seafield Retail Park and the University of the Highlands and Islands campus creates new opportunities for bus routes to be revised to serve more destinations. Other planned road schemes, including the East Link in the Inverness suburbs, and the A96 dualling, will increase the range of bus service options.

Stagecoach are keen to develop a southern orbital route, but to enable it to operate frequently enough to be sustainable it can only be resourced by freeing up vehicles which are currently used in the peaks to compensate for delays and maintain reliability on existing routes.

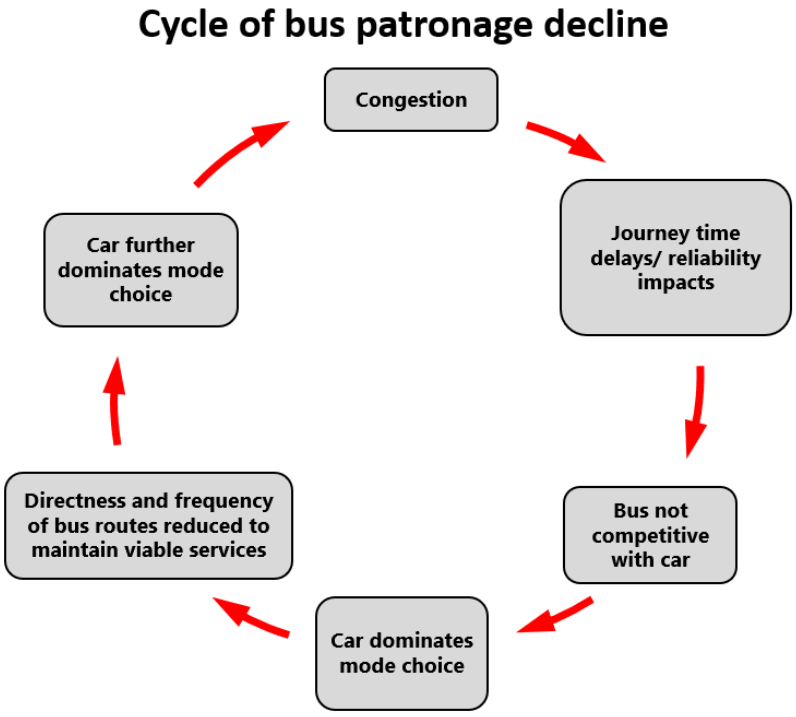
Network Rail have acquired a site adjacent to Inverness Railway Station to develop a multi-modal interchange. This will involve moving the Bus Station from its present site. Although the implementation of this is long-term (beyond the 5-year period of the Bus Partnership Fund), projects outlined here are planned to benefit the access to this interchange as well as the present Bus Station.

By realising interventions to take advantage of the opportunities described, the city and region can deliver a transformation towards a much fairer, healthier and sustainable transport network. Opportunities for each location are outlined below, and further details of potential options, including where pre-appraisal and option selection are required, are given in section 5.

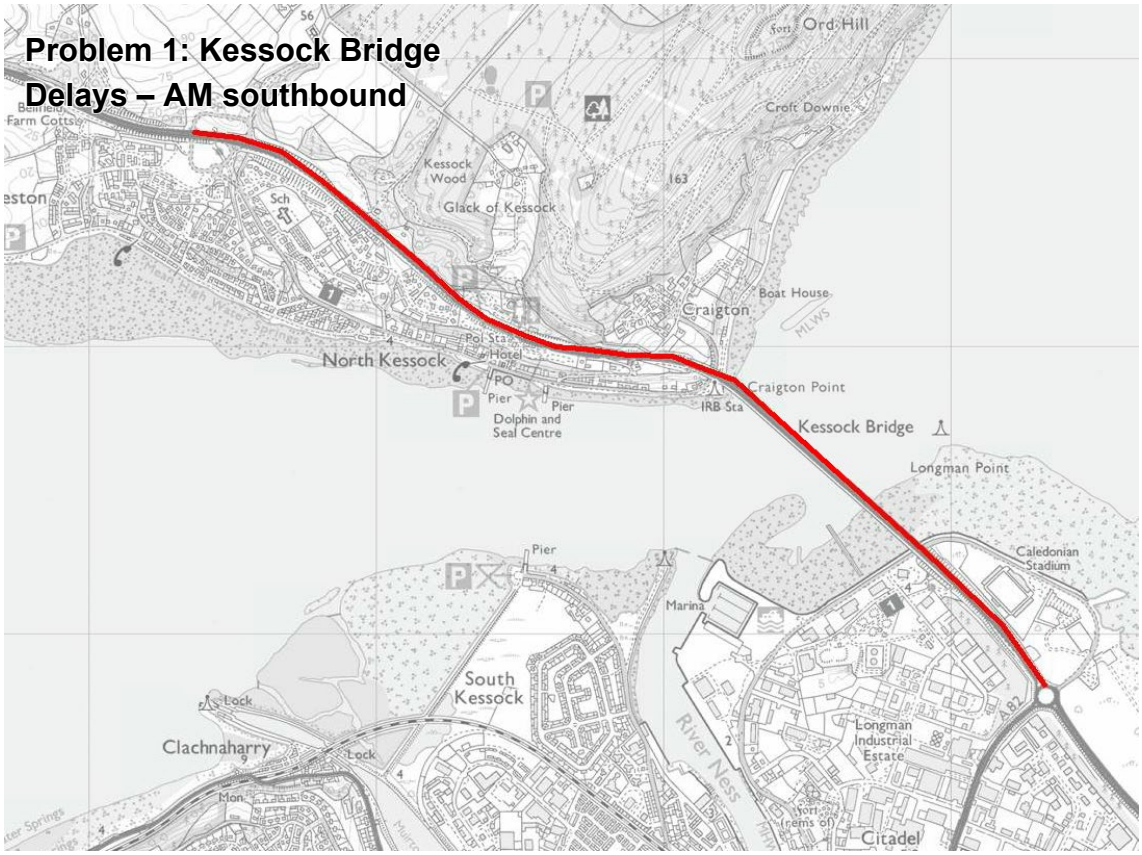
Problem Location 1: Kessock Bridge delays - AM Southbound
Car-based commuters congest both lanes of the southbound A9 carriageway, with tailbacks stretching up to 2 miles from the pinch point of the Longman Roundabout to North Kessock. Buses from surrounding towns, and those on the long-distance route from Caithness, face interruption, delay and therefore reliability issues. The route is integral to national and regional travel, as well as regular commuting trips from north of the Beauly Firth, with North Kessock in such proximity to Inverness that, in transport terms, it functions as an integral part of the city.

The impacts on bus services are such that for commuters north of the Beauly Firth, bus does not offer a competitive alternative to driving for trips to Inverness. Congestion increases running times around 16 minutes in the morning peak between Tore and Inverness (immediately prior to the Covid-19 pandemic). At the busiest time, the delay can be more severe: for example, to get into Inverness for around 0815, the bus service currently needs to start in Tain at 0640, which is almost 30 mins slower than the off-peak service. Typical delays have increased by 9 minutes between 2009 and 2019 over this section of route.

The lack of competitive advantage also causes, and is further impacted by, a cycle of bus patronage decline:



The additional running time in the morning peaks also results in frequencies in the opposite direction being correspondingly reduced until about 1000, reducing the attractiveness of travel into the smaller towns.



Replacement of the Longman Roundabout with a grade-separated junction is planned, with draft orders due to be published during 2021. Although this will alleviate congestion for through traffic on the A9, there is a risk that without bus priority measures it will transfer congestion closer into Inverness or even worsen it.

Opportunity 1: Transport mode integration and improvement of sustainable modes on the network, North

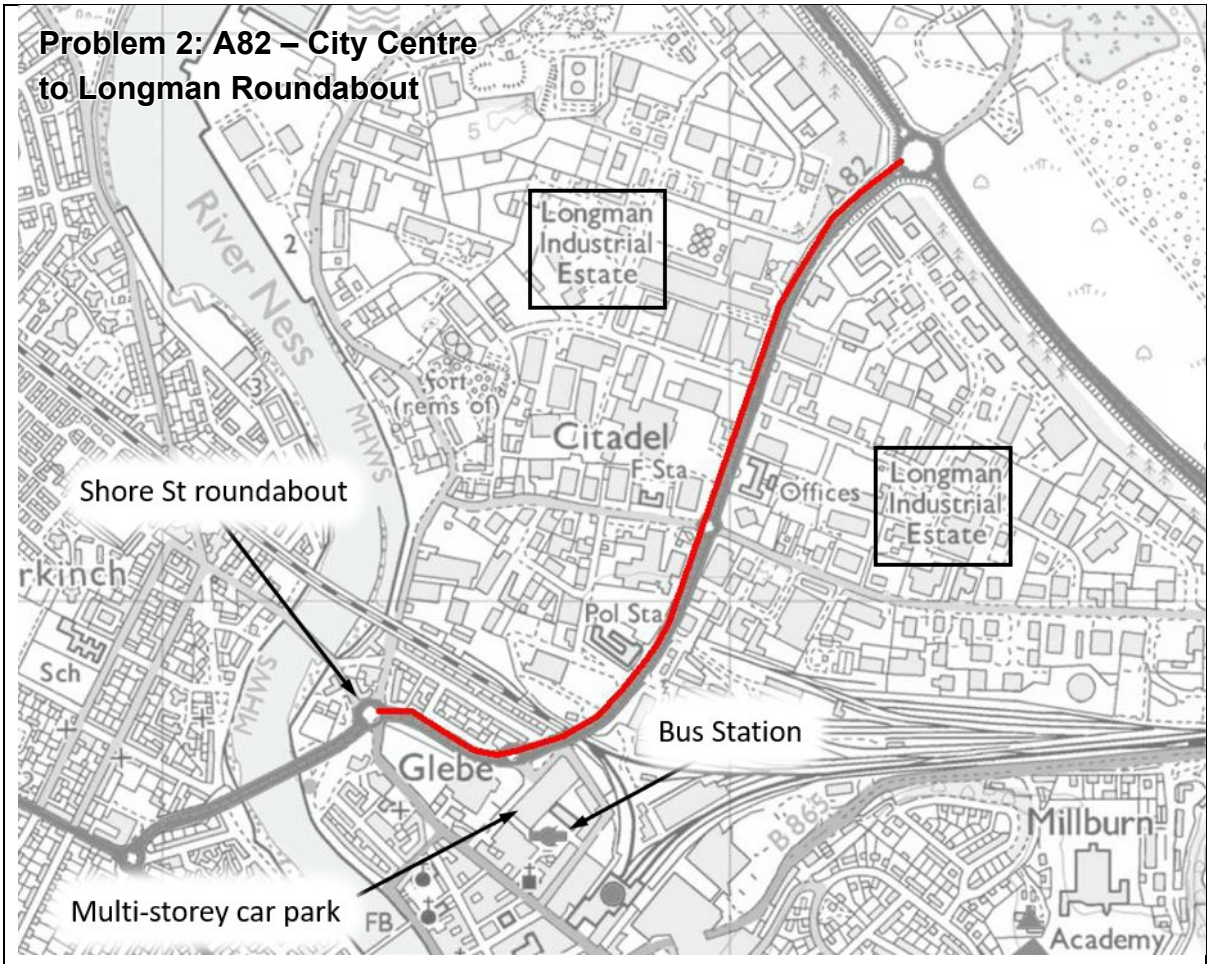
There is a strong opportunity to deliver on NTS2 priorities by making public transport more attractive to commuters and other travellers by creating a multi-modal hub and reallocating space on the dual carriageway to give buses a competitive advantage over the private car.

Potential Park & Ride sites exist in both North Kessock and Tore, with the North Kessock site currently preferred in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Main Issues Report. Both would be easily accessible to the trunk road traffic, and combined with traffic priority measures on the A9, both would contribute to modal shift and encourage bus use for the final stage of the journey. By reducing delays, reallocation of road space would also incentivise bus rather than car use for longer journeys (such as all the way from towns such as Dingwall or Tain) and would

enable bus/bus interchange, with inter-urban services connecting with local shuttles to destinations in various parts of the city, and not only the centre.

Problem Location 2: A82 - City Centre to Longman Roundabout
The A82 trunk road cutting through the heart of Inverness becomes congested in both directions in the PM peak. The Inverness workforce seeking to exit the city utilises the A82 to reach the A9 to both north and south and the A96 to the east, absorbing road capacity to the extent that public transport services cannot function efficiently during the PM peak hours. The Bus Station is adjacent to Rose Street multi-storey car park, and buses exiting the Bus Station have to share road space with traffic exiting both the car park and the Longman Industrial Estate. Traffic heading for the southern and western parts of the city (and beyond) congests the A82 in the opposite direction. While there is traffic light control to ease the exit from Rose Street (for all traffic), there are no bus priority measures anywhere on the A82. The result is that buses do not offer a competitive advantage for local or regional travel that relies on these parts of the road network. This is the PM equivalent of Problem 1. In the PM peaks the delays around the Longman Roundabout typically result in an additional 6 minutes running time.

In the opposite direction, road capacity for buses exiting the Bus Station to travel south or west (on the A82, A862 or more local roads) is limited by peak time queuing from the Shore Street Roundabout, where capacity is impacted by the number of accesses onto/from it.



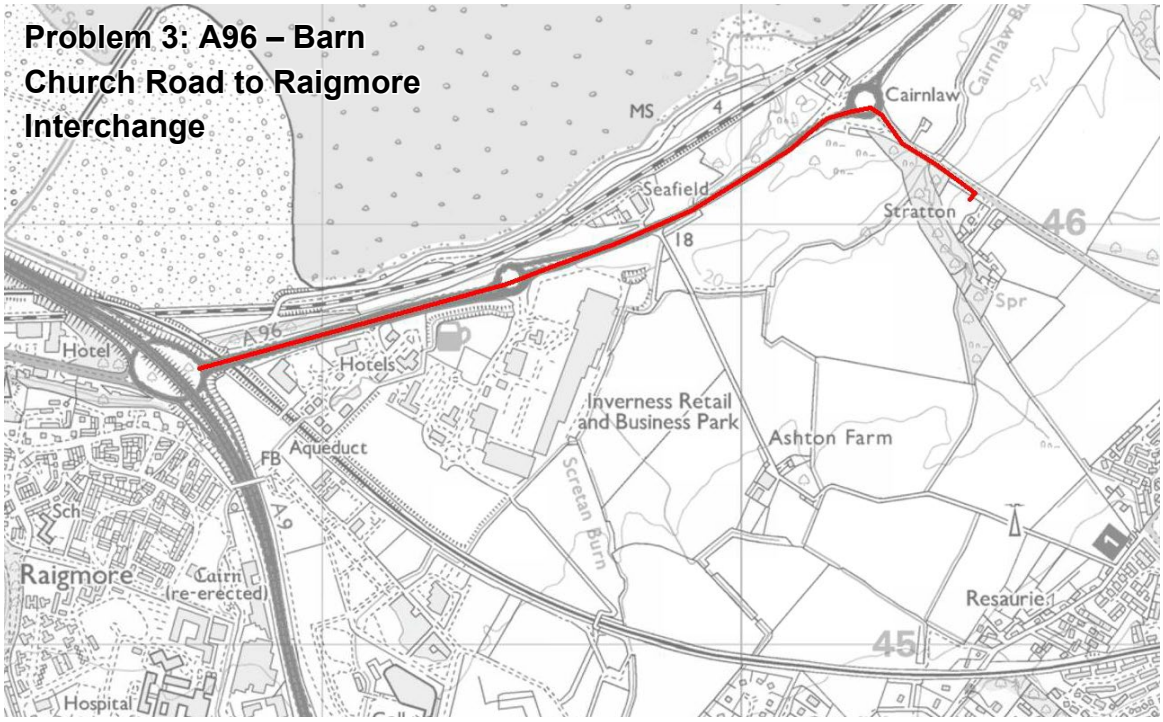
Opportunity 2: Improvement of sustainable modes on the network, central
The Bus Rapid Development Fund has enabled the building of a more direct link from the Bus Station to Rose Street, which when complete will simplify the initial part of the bus routes. The planned grade separated junction replacing the Longman Roundabout will also ease traffic flow out of the city to the A9.

Prior to the completion of the GSJ, route options are available to take full advantage of the new Rose Street link by reallocating space to buses leaving the city; this could be within the A82 itself or also implementing traffic management on other roads. Further detail is given in the Potential Options section below.

Between the Rose Street and Shore Street Roundabouts, space exists to reconfigure the road with the aim of maximising efficiency for buses both entering and leaving the Bus Station. This would have a long-term benefit as the same route on/off the A82 will also serve the new transport interchange when it is completed.

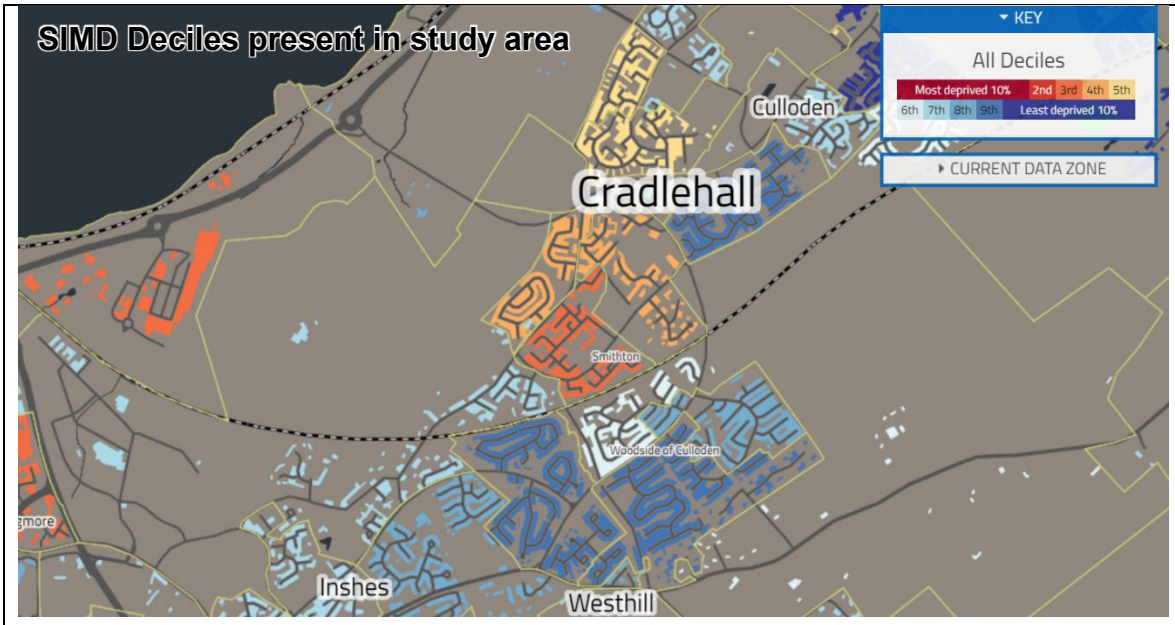
Problem Location 3: A96 - Barn Church Road to Raigmore Interchange
The Smithton Roundabout is the meeting point between commuters from out with Inverness using the A96 and those from the eastern suburbs using Barn Church Road. This roundabout is a major pinch point, creating queues typically up to 1.5

miles on the A96 and 0.7 miles on Barn Church Road. It is also the point where the planned new A96 dual carriageway will merge with the existing road, thus continuing to combine local and trunk road traffic. The nearby Inverness Retail and Business Park is a further pinch point, due to delays exiting on to the A96.



No bus priority measures are in place to support the public transport network in this location. Running times around this area result in an additional 6 to 10 minutes having been added to morning and afternoon peak schedules in both directions of the route. Additional vehicles are added to afternoon workings to maintain a reliable timetable.

Major city expansion has commenced in this area, with more than 3,000 homes expected to be built over the next 10-20 years. Some of the existing neighbourhoods in this location are identified as being in the 5th, 4th and 3rd most deprived deciles in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Improving access to more frequent, reliable bus services is key to supporting these communities' transport needs:



Major development of Tornagrain New Town near Inverness Airport will also increase the east-west travel patterns, putting further pressure on the western end of the A96, and having the potential to significantly exacerbate an existing public transport problem.

Opportunity 3: Transport mode integration and improvement of sustainable modes on the network, East

Land adjacent to the Smithton Roundabout (and future Smithton GSJ) is allocated for a Park & Ride site. This would benefit from the already relatively frequent bus service from Balloch, Culloden and Smithton, and once the A96 is dualled, would form a suitable point for car/bus interchange for commuters travelling from farther afield. It is also conveniently located for bus services using the new North Bridge (linking the Retail Park with the UHI Campus), enabling buses to serve a wider range of destinations. This site presents a useful opportunity to reduce the impact on the city roads of the easier journey along the dualled A96.

Space exists on Barn Church Road to create a bus lane, easing access to the A96 for local buses.

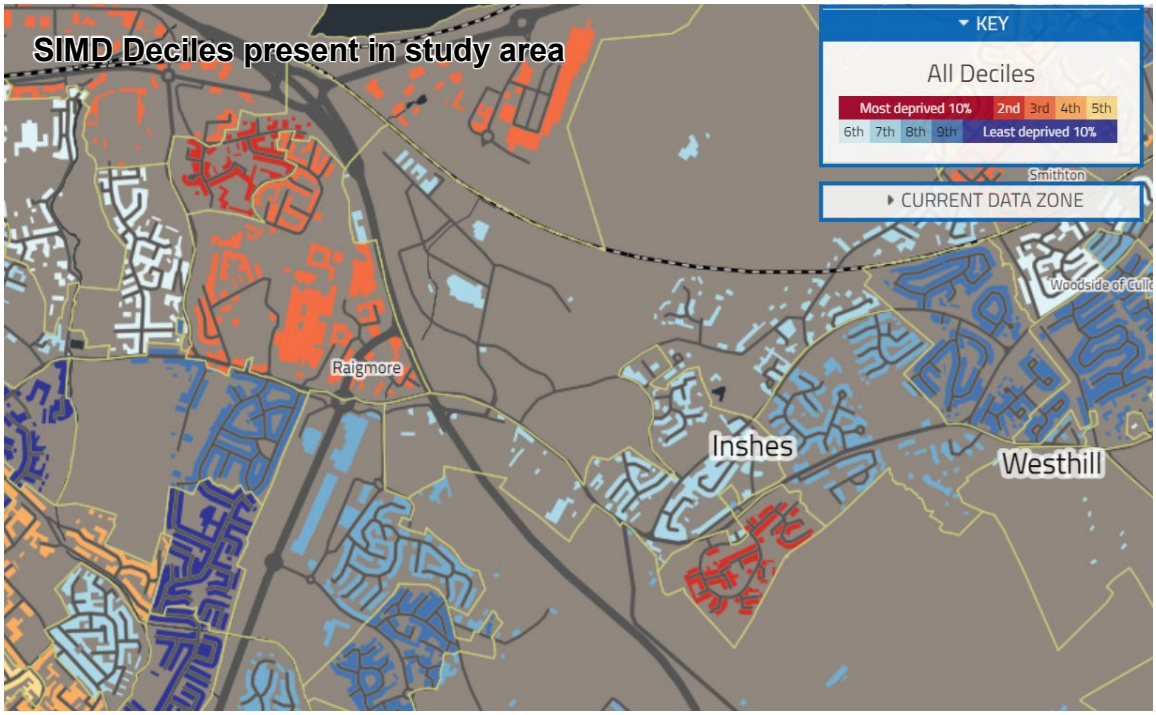
The planned A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton link road will introduce different transport options for the major expansion areas currently under construction but will not offer new A9 crossings and only one additional crossing of the Highland Mainline Railway. Therefore, modal shift from car is necessary for both the new town and neighbourhoods being built, as well as supporting the multiple surrounding established neighbourhoods currently dominated by car-based living.

The Council are working with Sustrans and Transport Scotland to improve the active travel facilities at the Raigmore Interchange. Part of this work will involve the full signalisation of the junction. There is an opportunity to enhance this project to improve the approach from Millburn Road to the interchange, and to add adaptive bus priority technology to the design.

Problem Location 4: Inshes Corridor - B9006 from Birchwood Road to Raigmore Hospital

There are several major employment destinations at Inshes including Raigmore Hospital (5,000 employees); LifeScan (1,000 employees); Beechwood Business Park (estimated 500 employees); Inverness Campus (estimated 1,000 employees and students); Police HQ (estimated 300 employees), and Inshes Retail Park (estimated 250 employees). The B9006 is another route which becomes heavily congested by car-based commuters travelling to and from, these sites as well as the City Centre and Longman Industrial Estate. The route also suffers evening peak congestion. No bus priority measures are in place on the main corridor (B9006) and existing junctions are beyond capacity. This was recognised as a bus priority key route in a previous Local Transport Strategy, but funding was not available to resolve the problems. Recent development has increased the pressure on the area.

As well as the neighbourhoods east of the A9, mentioned in Problem Location 3 above, this location also includes communities identified as being the 3rd and 2nd most deprived in the SIMD. Therefore, supporting these communities' transport needs is essential:



The Inshes Roundabout (B9006/A8082 intersection) is a major congestion point within this corridor.

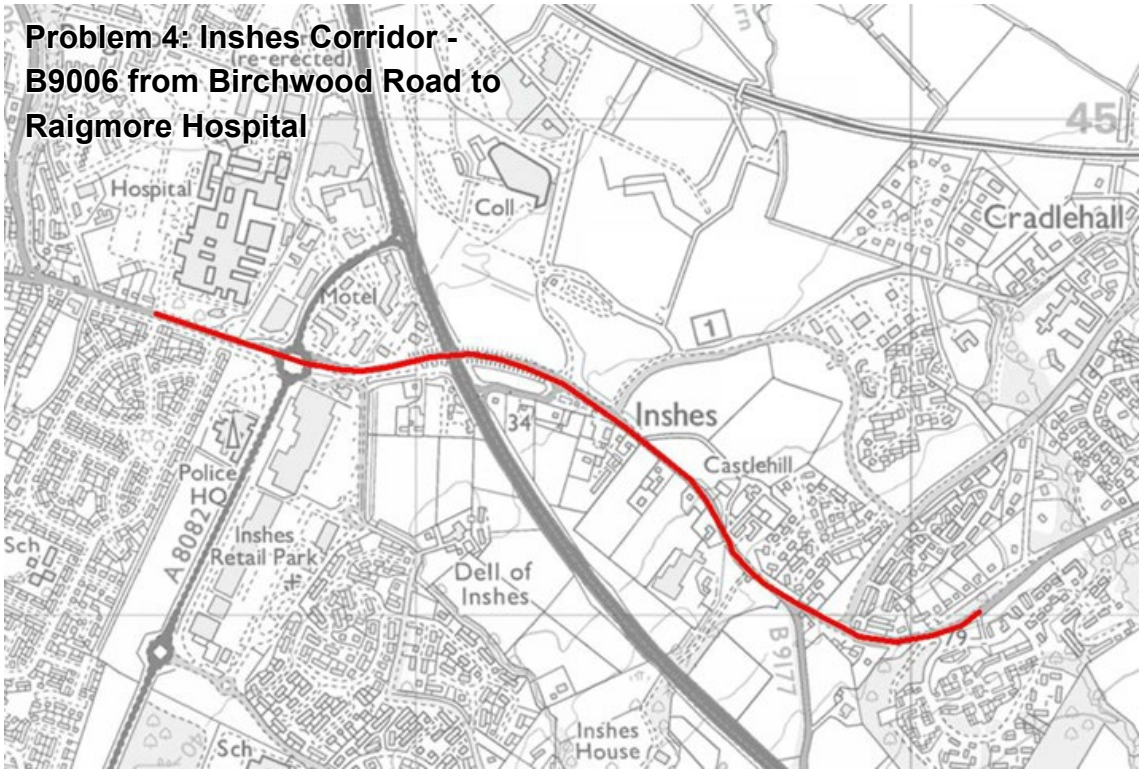
East of the A9, key interventions have been made to support sustainable transport, including Inverness Campus North Bridge (Bus and Active Travel only) connecting the site to Eastfield Way, and the Inverness Campus bus lane onto B9006. However, these measures are only partially effective because buses require to use

the B9006 to cross the A9, where congestion is most pronounced and where there is no bus priority. Current construction of a new hospital at Inverness Campus for Orthopaedic and Ophthalmology elective care means that pressures on this part of the network are likely to increase. Inshes Overbridge is one of only three crossing points of the A9 within the city, limiting alternative route options for buses.

The planned Inshes to Smithton link road will also feed traffic into the Inshes Junction.

Bus running time between Inshes and Raigmore is 7 minutes in the off-peak, increasing to 12 minutes in the peak. Morning peak queueing on the B9006 east of Inshes frequently increases these delays.

Problem 4: Inshes Corridor - B9006 from Birchwood Road to Raigmore Hospital

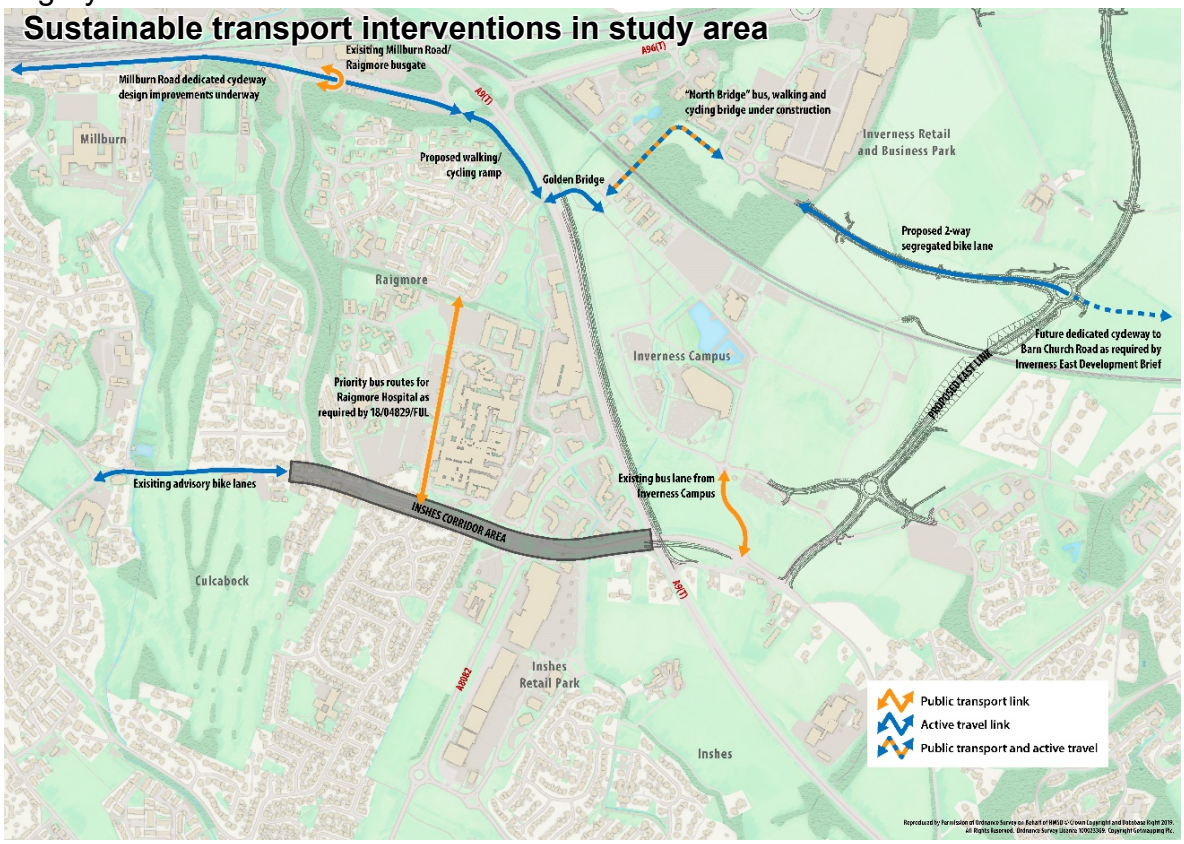


Opportunity 4: Improvement of sustainable modes on the network, Inshes
Two variants of a well-established bus route serve this area, and the recent and planned new links will increase the options for bus services.

A bus lane already exists on one of the roads leading out from the UHI Campus to the B9006. Space exists on or alongside the B9006 for further development of bus lanes, which along with junction priorities, would increase the efficiency of the bus routes.

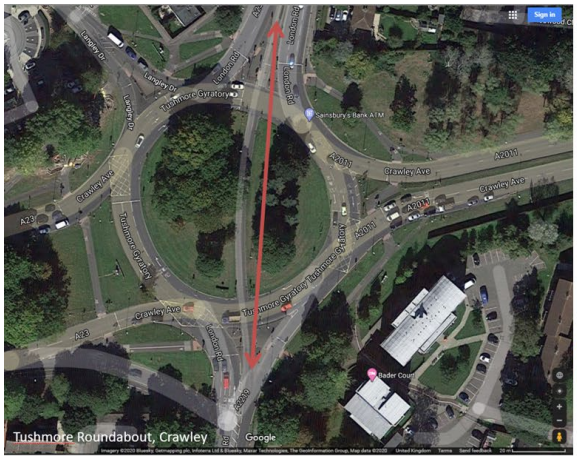
The Inverness Campus North Bridge and the Inshes to Smithton link road, mentioned above, both offer new routes and options for bus travel to the city's major destinations.

Whilst capital funds are in place to address existing capacity pressures, and design studies have been undertaken for Inshes junction and the section of the B9006 immediately to the west, there is a major opportunity to capitalise on the available and additional space (through a planned extra 2-lane bridge parallel to the current Inshes Overbridge) to provide priority measures. The image below shows the current and planned interventions highlighting the main Inshes corridor in grey.



This image clearly illustrates that, by improving space to give buses a competitive advantage over car, public transport could be dramatically improved at one of the city's busiest junctions for all modes, making best use of existing infrastructure and building on the suite of interventions in place.

Bus priority at complex junctions: concepts for consideration at Inshes junction



Marszałkowska, Warszawa, Poland: shorturl.at/dnvHZ

Problem Location 5: Raigmore Hospital and Raigmore Interchange to City Centre

Raigmore Hospital is one of the largest employers in the region, with around 5,000 people employed at the site. It has a large, uncontrolled car park that is typically full during the working week. Recent installation of ANPR cameras and traffic barriers at the entrances and exits of the car parks has confirmed that a significant proportion of vehicles parking are regular visitors, suggesting staff parking is prevalent. Given the strong trend of peak hour congestion on Old Perth Road and Culcabock Road, this suggests that commuting Hospital Staff working regular office hours (8am to 6pm) make up a significant share of the vehicles accessing the site. With commuting traffic, as well as car-based visitors to the hospital throughout the day, there is significant pressure on the network in this locality. The consequences for public transport are journey time delays within the Raigmore Hospital Site, as well as on the congested surrounding road network. There are currently no bus priority measures to mitigate this.

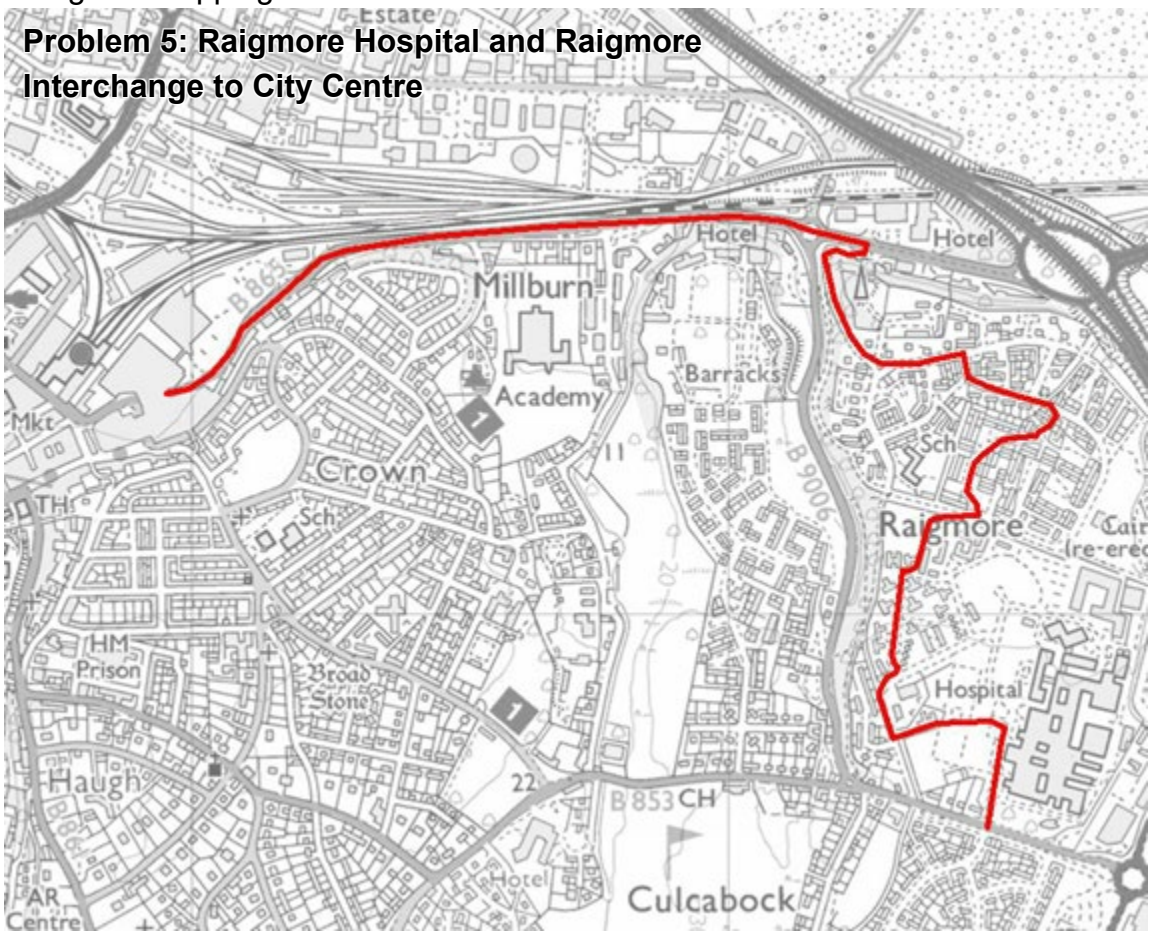
Traffic continuing from Problem Location 4 to the City Centre and Longman Industrial Estate congests the last section of the B9006, between the hospital and the junction with the B865 at Millburn Roundabout, where the nearby level crossing also disrupts road traffic flow. Evening peak traffic has a similar effect.

Between the Hospital and the City Centre, even though peak hour bus journey times have increased from 9 minutes in 2009 to 17 minutes in 2019, typical delays, particularly within the hospital campus, can now be up to a further 12 minutes, in both the peak and off-peak. This suppresses the frequency below what is desirable and has prevented the extension of some suburban and rural bus service to the hospital, due to the resource requirements.

Towards the City Centre, Millburn Road tends to be most congested at peak shopping times, with weekend afternoon car-based shoppers accessing multi-storey car parks. However, there are three sets of traffic lights in close succession in Millburn Road, two of which are at accesses to retail centre car parks, and only the third has any bus priority provision. The previous two junctions, along with car congestion, thus limit buses' ability to advance to the priority signals located at the

Eastgate Shopping Centre.

Problem 5: Raigmore Hospital and Raigmore Interchange to City Centre



Opportunity 5: Improvement of sustainable modes on the network, Millburn
Works have been delivered on the B865 (Millburn Road), east of Millburn Roundabout, to provide bus-only access into Raigmore Housing Estate, but the effectiveness of this is limited by the lack of any onward route, so the benefit is limited to the bus service for that residential area.

Through the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund, a new link from Raigmore Hospital to Raigmore housing estate has been designed, with NHS Highland as a partner. Construction of this is included in this bid as a quick win, which will contribute to the overall plans for this route.

Leading into the city centre, Millburn Road is a dual carriageway with potential for more effective use of the road space. THC are working in partnership with Sustrans to redesign Millburn Road to improve NMU provision, including traffic modelling and stakeholder engagement. There is a clear to integrate bus priority measures into this design work.

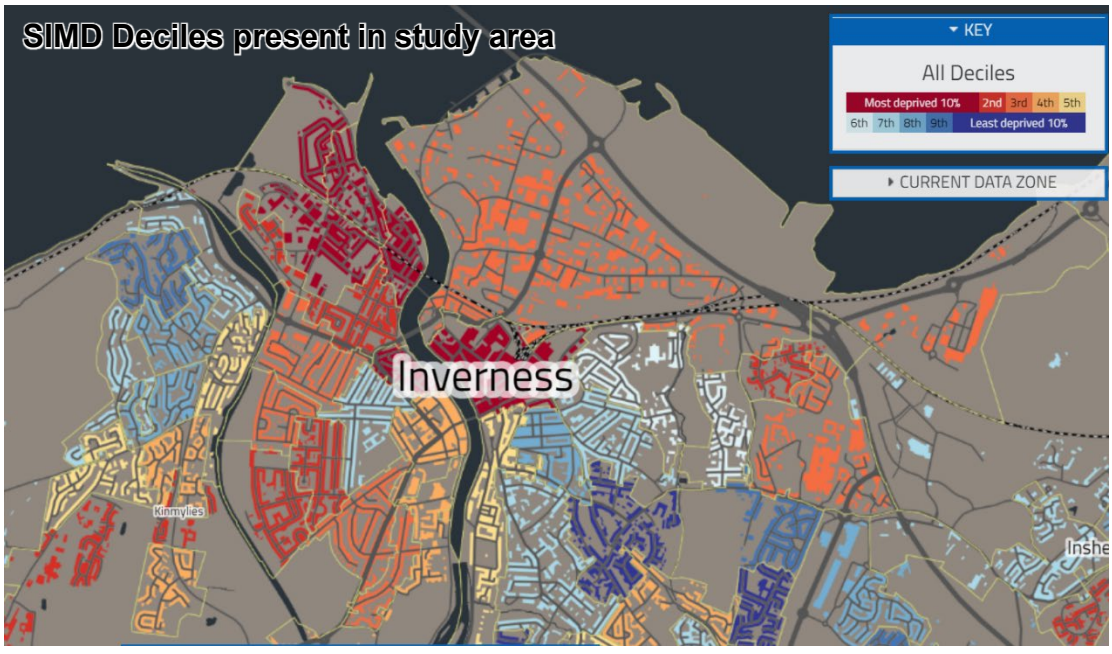
Problem Location 6: City Centre
Inverness City Centre is compact. Unlike larger cities, where bus use tends to be spread over a few stops on a route, each bus route has only one stop, or at most two, in the centre area. Urban routes use on-street stops, and most inter-urban routes start or finish in the Bus Station.

Removal of parking spaces in recent years has reduced the general traffic congestion in Union Street, Church Street and Queensgate, but these remain busy streets for buses, as well as for deliveries to shops and disabled parking, with delays at traffic lights common. High Street has been pedestrianised for many years, which greatly benefits High Street users but leaves Academy Street and Bank Street as the only east-west route across the centre.

Space for taxi ranks as well as bus stops is at a premium in the centre area. Streets are too narrow to allow separation of buses from other traffic.

There are bus priorities at two locations: a bus-activated traffic light priority at Eastgate and a bus filter lane from Bank Street into Fraser Street. However, most junctions have no bus priority measures, and delays in the centre, typically of 5 to 6 minutes on all city routes, impact the planning of the urban bus network.

Inverness City Centre Air Quality Management Area is centred on the junction between Academy Street, Queensgate and Strothers Lane. A narrow street canyon, a high proportion of buses and delivery vehicles, and congestion at the light controlled junction result in elevated concentrations of the UK Air Quality Strategy pollutant Nitrogen dioxide. Actions included in the AQMA action plan include promoting smarter travel choices and low emission vehicles, as well as use of the planning system. The proposals in this bid support traffic management initiatives to reduce emissions.



The map above shows 3rd, 2nd and most deprived deciles in SIMD within city centre and surrounding neighbourhoods

Opportunity 6: Redesign of Academy Street
The Highland Council are working in partnership with funders Sustrans and Inverness Business Improvement District to redesign Academy Street with the aim of improving sustainable travel opportunities whilst creating a destination and sense of place for all users. Various options are being considered which range from reallocating road space from vehicle use to active travel (Walking, Cycling and Wheeling) to restricting vehicular movements at set times. All variations have the objective of reducing the volume of private vehicles using Academy Street as a through route, thereby reducing congestion.

Providing traffic light priorities at junctions in conjunction with this redesign will improve the efficiency of bus services. Current traffic levels limit the potential benefit from traffic light priorities in the Academy Street area as a free-standing initiative.

The soon to be completed link from the Bus Station to Rose Street will remove buses from Academy Street which are only using the street as a means of exiting the Bus Station. This will contribute to the objectives of the street redesign.

Problem Location 7: Dingwall
Currently all bus services in Dingwall must navigate the one-way system which not only adds time and mileage to all journeys but also reduces the accessibility of services with only a cramped on-street bus stop within the heart of the town and no high quality information or waiting facilities. Dingwall is a growing town, with extensive housing developments on its northern side. The town centre layout, combined with congestion closer to Inverness, detracts from the attractiveness of the bus service to these new developments, and has adversely affected both the timing and frequency. In early 2020, the Service 27 route was curtailed at Strathpeffer (omitting Contin from most journeys) in order to maintain the regularity of the service within the existing vehicle requirement.

Opportunity 7: Redesign in Dingwall
There has long been a desire in Dingwall for a dedicated bus stance close to the town centre, replacing the unattractive Hill Street stop. Stagecoach have indicated that route simplification would enable them to restore services to Contin. With some changes to the road infrastructure, useful improvements are considered achievable.

Problem Location 8: Invergordon.
Congestion in Invergordon is caused by coach parking and access management for cruise ships. Scheduled service buses end up in conflict with cruise operations when cruise liners are in port. The impact on service buses is highly variable, but congestion at stops can at the extreme cause delays of 30 minutes.

Opportunity 8: Co-operation with Cromarty Firth Port Authority
An opportunity is described in the “Quick Wins” part of Section 5, which includes separation of tour coaches from scheduled buses.

4. Desired Outcomes

Max 1000 words

Describe the desired outcomes from the proposed bus priority developments. How do you plan to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes?

Outcomes

The key direct outcomes are to increase the number of bus passengers and reduce the car traffic movements. These outcomes are desired not only on the traditional city centre focussed bus routes but also on routes to other growing destinations. While contributions from housing developers are now required towards bus services to new housing areas, it is also intended that the proposals here will improve the sustainability of these routes and reduce the car dependence of suburban and smaller town residents.

A desired outcome is that new bus routes and increased frequencies will become commercially viable.

Broader economic and environmental outcomes are also desired. The Council Programme includes the following relevant priorities:

- encourage and assist the regeneration of our town centres and high streets across the Highlands and review opportunities to maximise the use of the built environment
- trial new methods of community engagement to develop solutions including the use of community transport schemes and with partners and public and private transport providers ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing services, employment or leisure activities.

Supporting this, the Corporate Plan includes Outcome 4.5:

- We will work with partners to ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing opportunities, including working with communities on community transport schemes.

The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Main Issues Report further emphasises the Council's aim to deliver an ambitious, modern sustainable transport network, it explicitly references:

- Prioritising buses on the network, particularly at known congestions points;
- Creating a network of park and ride sites at entrances to the city;
- Maximising use of and connections to existing and planned new rail halts and bus stops, and
- Creating mini park and ride/ park and share sites on strategic routes.

A further outcome desired for the centre of Inverness is reducing pollution so that an Air Quality Management Area is no longer required.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be done by a range of measures within the Council's control and with the involvement of partners. Key measures will include:

1. Reduction in bus journey times: measured both by changes in timetables as interventions take effect, and monitoring by Stagecoach (and other operators if relevant) of vehicle tracking and real time compliance with timetables.
2. Bus service frequencies can be measured by comparing timetables year on year.
3. Under our BSIP, we intend that bus operating mileage and passenger numbers would be reported by operators on a regular basis, in a way which will support evaluation of the interventions.
4. Once the interventions take effect, it is hoped that one measurable outcome will be a reduction in the number of timetable changes required either to maintain reliability or commercial viability.
5. The Council will use traffic counters at key points to evaluate changes in general traffic, and reduction of congestion.
6. The Council will also maintain records of car park use.
7. Air quality is already monitored automatically in the AQMA, and this will continue.
8. Under the proposed BSIP, it is hoped to involve Chambers of Commerce and the Inverness Business Improvement District, and from them to be able to record trends in footfall in city and town centre retail areas.
9. With the support of major employers, it is hoped that periodic surveys can be carried out of how their employees travel to work.

We realise that increasing trends towards on-line shopping and working from home will affect all of these measures. We anticipate that under our BSIP we would discuss how the bus networks respond to changing travel patterns and needs, and so to better understand the data collected. Percentages of travel by each mode will be as important as absolute numbers in evaluating the projects.

5. Potential Options

Max 3000 words

Outline the ideas the partnership has for developing bus priority measures and an outline timescale for their delivery. Describe any quick wins i.e. developments which could be implemented within the financial year 2021/22[iii]. Outline how you plan to work in partnership, if that has been established. Describe what consultation has taken place to arrive at these high-level options[iv].

In February 2020, Highland Council officers attended the Regional Bus Forum, with the majority of bus operators, Transport Scotland and the partners listed in this application all in attendance. Officers presented the Council's ambitions and emerging vision to transform the public transport network to make bus the logical choice for getting around, where active travel was not an option. This emerging vision was rooted in prioritising bus over car, integrating with active travel, rail and other transport modes, and ensuring future growth and land use changes can be served by these sustainable travel modes. The ambition was well-received by the forum and the feedback received has been taken into account in shaping the transport strategy reference above, and has influenced the content of this application.

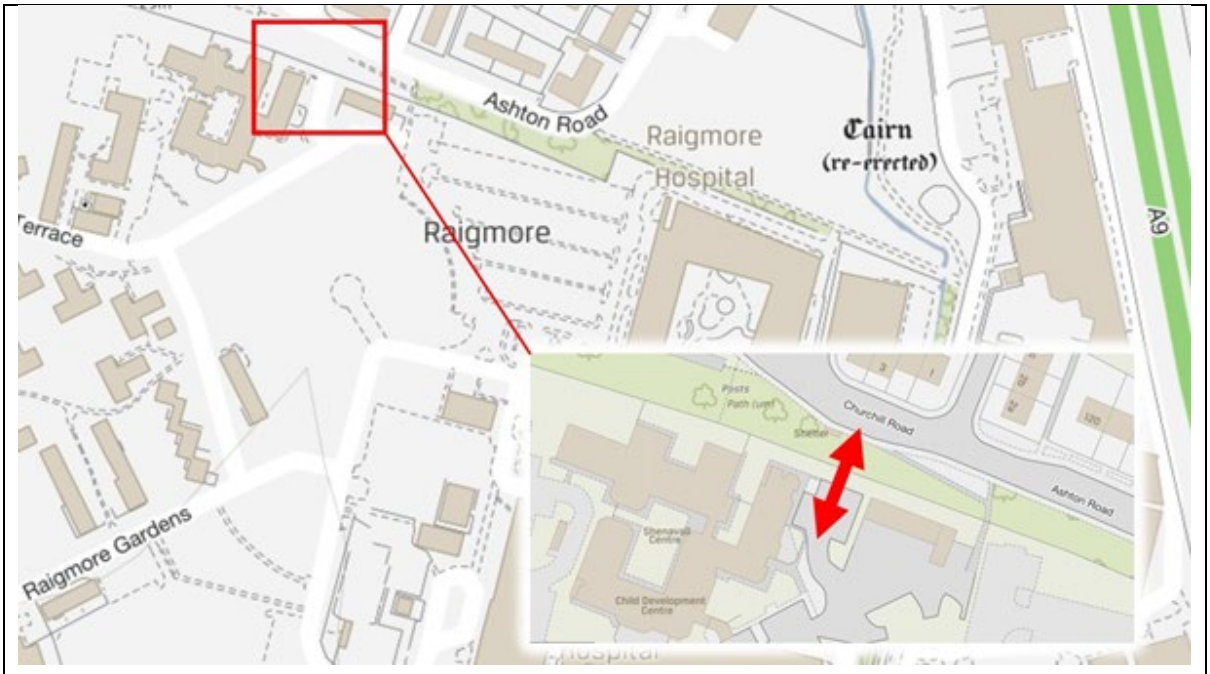
QUICK WINS

Raigmore Bus Gate

Stagecoach in the Highlands serve Raigmore Hospital with a comprehensive network of well-used and essential services that transport key workers, patients and visitors to the hospital and surrounding destinations. These services make a significant contribution to removing car trips from the network. In 2019 Stagecoach bus services 2, 3, and 6, which are the main routes to the Hospital, carried 1,346,000 customers, of whom 320,000 travelled to and from the Hospital.

The Raigmore Hospital site is adjacent to Inshes roundabout and Old Perth Road, which is one of the busiest parts of the transport network. At present there is no public transport priority at Raigmore Hospital, which results in journey time delays for buses within the hospital campus of up to 12 minutes. This is particularly pronounced in the evening peak, but Stagecoach has observed that delays are now causing problems throughout the day. Stagecoach has also previously noted that whilst under 25% of passenger traffic on these services are generated by the Hospital, delays due to congestion can impact on up to 79% of all passengers using these services. There is therefore a risk in future that, with limited options to mitigate impacts of these delays, Stagecoach may implement a range of measures that could include omitting Raigmore Hospital on several services and/or reducing or withdrawing several other services from the city network.

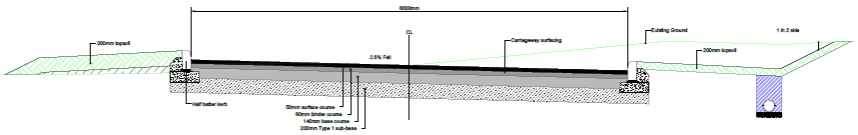
The construction of a bus gate between Raigmore Hospital and the Raigmore housing estate would deliver rapid and transformational change to these key city services. This provides the opportunity to improve reliability and journey times and would reduce bus movements at the main Hospital access on Old Perth Road by almost 50%. It is anticipated that, due to services being rerouted through a significantly less congested part of the network, that journey time savings of up to 12 minutes could be achieved. Moreover, it could provide new public transport connections for adjacent neighbourhoods that have a greater reliance on public transport, being within the 10% most deprived deciles in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

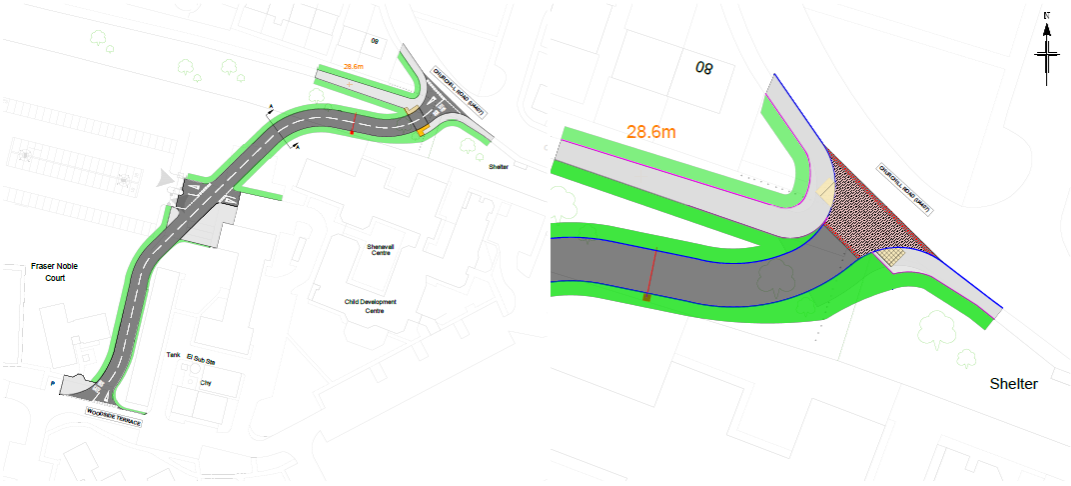


Designs for the bus gate have been developed through the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund.

The bus gate has the support of all the key stakeholders including NHS Highland, Stagecoach and the Raigmore Community Council.

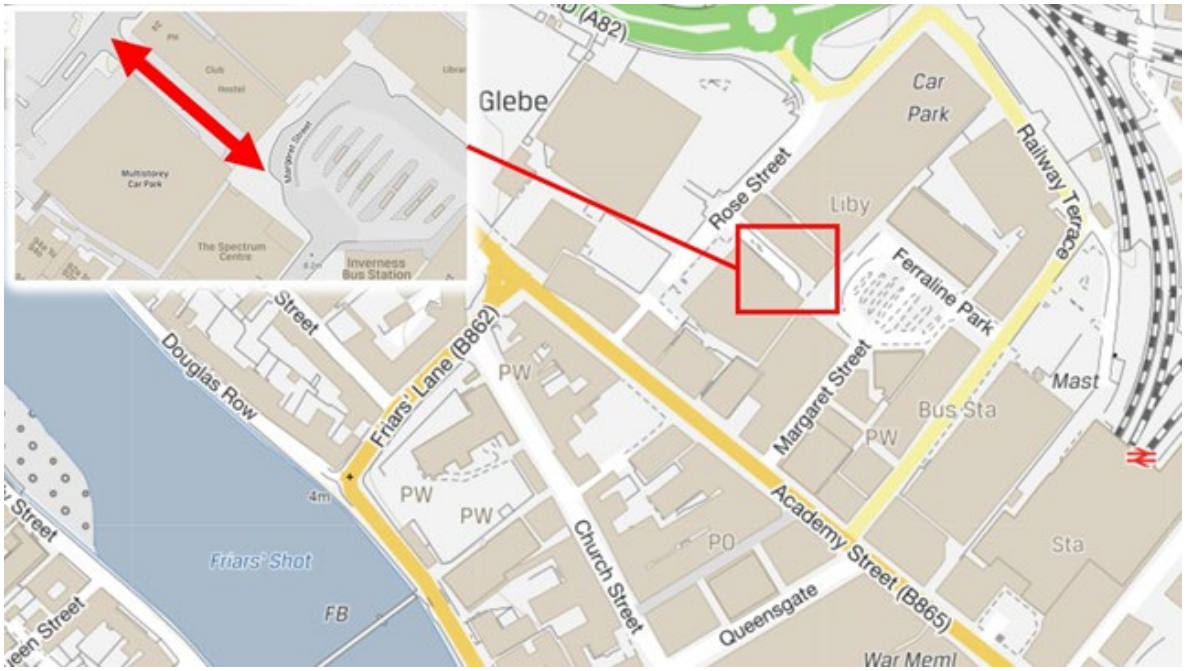
As the bus service in Raigmore Estate will change from a one-way loop to two-way operation, new bus shelters are included in the project where new stops in the estate will be required.





Rose Street – Enforcement Camera

The Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund enabled the construction of the temporary bus link at Rose Street in Inverness. This link has improved the permeability of Farraline Park (Inverness Bus Station) for North and West bound buses as well as long distance coaches, thereby reducing bus movements in the Air Quality Management Area in Academy Street. It is intended to make this link permanent.



To support the Road Traffic Regulation Order, in ensuring that the bus link is kept free from unauthorised vehicles, we are seeking funding to install automatic enforcement technology (camera etc) which will deter illegal use of this link and support the intention to improve bus and coach reliability.

Barn Church Road bus lane

The dual carriageway section of Barn Church Road in the Smithton area is inefficiently used, as it narrows to a single carriageway before reaching the A96. Northbound, traffic queues at peak times in the left lane for up to 500m, leaving the right lane usually empty. Buses tend to use the right lane to overtake queueing traffic, but this carries the risk of missing passengers waiting at the two bus stops on this section.

Conversion of the left lane to a formal bus lane (with gaps to enable traffic to turn left at the two junctions) would enable bus priority, with no reduction to the capacity of the road. The only requirements to implement this would be a Traffic Order, signage and surface markings. This would benefit a busy cross-city route as well as buses from Nairn and Inverness Airport which are routed through Culloden.

Invergordon

Two bus bays on Shore Street are already programmed (funded by the Council), along with a pedestrian crossing (funded by Cromarty Firth Port Authority), to collect and drop off cruise passengers, and to ease congestion caused by tour coaches associated with cruise liners. This will separate the tour coaches from the scheduled buses. Construction is commencing shortly.

The need for wayfinding signage for passengers and for coaches has been identified in discussion with the Port Authority; this could include signage from the port to the High Street bus stops and railway station. This signage, along with upgrading of the scheduled bus stops, is an achievable quick win.

LONGER TERM OPTIONS

Options presented here are focussed on:

- Two major cross-city bus routes (and inter-connection between them);
- Initiatives in the City Centre:
- Park & Ride provision on key radial routes;
- Local initiatives in Dingwall.

1. The cross-city routes merge on the eastern approach to the city centre (I.e. Millburn Road) and diverge again on the west side of the River Ness. These are:-
   (a) (Airport / Balloch) – Culloden – Seafield Retail Park – City Centre – Kinmylies
   (b) (Airport / Croy) – Westhill – UHI – Inshes Retail Park – Raigmore Hospital – City Centre – Scorguie – Craig Dunain

   Options to provide bus priority on these routes include:
   (i) Reallocation of road space on Millburn Road (west) from approx. Chieftain Hotel to Eastgate, to provide an inbound bus lane with new bus stop for Morrisons superstore (where the current infrastructure precludes satisfactory provision), traffic light priorities at all three junctions, and improved NMU infrastructure in collaboration with Sustrans. Temporary changes were made in this area under the Spaces for People project, but they did not provide bus priorities. The case for this has been recognised previously, including in work towards a Statutory Quality Partnership, but design work and integration with developing active travel proposals are needed.
   (ii) Enhancement of the project being planned with Sustrans to reduce the width of Millburn Road (east) central reservation on the approach to Raigmore Interchange, to enable improved active travel infrastructure and to add adaptive bus priority provision at the signals. This would reduce delays to eastbound buses, especially in the afternoon peak, as well as giving safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.
   (iii) Construction of approx. 960m of inbound bus lane on B9006 in the Inshes area, connecting with the second flyover across the A9 which is already committed. This will benefit buses on a key commuter route serving the UHI, Raigmore Hospital and the city centre. This could also include a short section of bus lane on the exit from Raigmore Hospital to the B9006, complementing the “Quick Win” bus gate at the other side of

the hospital campus. Design work is needed for this project. Completion of the second Inshes flyover is not expected before 2026, but design and construction of this project can be progressed in liaison with the East Link and flyover proposals.

(iv) Redesign of Inshes Roundabout to enable bus priority. The Council already has funding in the Capital Programme for the Inshes junction, but the Bus Partnership Fund could enhance this project. A conceptual drawing of an option for this junction is shown above. Initial design options have been the subject of consultation and engagement, including through community council and other stakeholder meetings and at public meetings, including working alongside Transport Scotland at their consultation events for the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton project.

(v) Adapt all traffic signals on targeted routes to accommodate adaptive bus priority to give either in-stream positive bias to PSVs or dedicated priority when a PSV stop line is provided.

(vi) Replace a mini-roundabout in Telford Street with a signalised crossroads, including adaptive bus priority.

(vii) An additional traffic lane exiting the Inverness Retail Park to the A96 has been designed previously; it was hoped that this could be partly funded by developer contributions but no budget has been identified for the balance. It is proposed to assess the scope for adapting this design to provide bus priority.

Taken together, these options are expected to require approx. 2 years to develop and design, and a further 2 to 3 years to construct.

2. <u>City Centre initiatives</u> include:

(viii) Adaptive bus priority at all traffic signals (as described above).

(ix) Reallocation and redesign of bus stances, and reduction of general traffic, as part of the Academy Street regeneration project. A key focus of the work will be on creating a high-quality place that reduced space for vehicles and increases space for people. Coupled with the delivery of a bus lane from Farraline Park to Rose Street, this has the potential to both ease vehicle congestion along this main street, but also support buses, with appropriate intervention as described above, to move more efficiently through the city.

(x) Public transport and active travel mode integration through the redevelopment of the Inverness Rail Station, led by Network Rail. This has the potential to make major changes to the city centre environment and could involve the redesign or relocation of the bus station.

(xi) Review and appraisal of options for bus movement between the Bus Station and Longman Industrial Estate (for routes to/from the north); this would include examination of the feasibility of redesigning the A82 between Rose Street and Shore Street roundabouts to provide extra bus capacity, revised traffic flow on streets accessing Shore Street roundabout, bus lane options on A82 between Rose Street and Longman roundabouts, and implications of alternative bus routes through Longman to enable more efficient movement and avoidance of congestion. It is expected that this study would be complete within 1 year.

3. Park & ride options

(xii) Land is already allocated for a park & ride site close to the A96 Smithton roundabout. While there is doubt as to whether this is an appropriate site in relation to the present road infrastructure, it is agreed that it would be an ideal site once the A96 is dualled, as it is adjacent to where the new A96 will merge with the existing road network. It is accessible both to existing bus routes and to potential new routes using the recently built North Bridge and planned East Link road, so is also relevant for bus to bus transfer. Buses serving the site would benefit from the bus priorities proposed for Inshes and Millburn Road. Design work is needed, including reference to the new A96 (although it is expected that the A96 design would not be directly affected apart from a need for signage). The construction timescale, and the date when benefits are fully realised, may be influenced by the timescale for the A96 dualling.

(xiii) The need for a park & ride site adjacent to A9 on the northern approach to Inverness is recognised, intercepting car-based trips before they reach the Kessock Bridge and thus reducing congestion both on the bridge and onward into the city centre. This could be further developed into a multi-modal hub with provision for cycle parking and storage. Three possible sites are to be evaluated; the table below shows features of each.

Site	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Tore	Easily accessed from A9, A835, A832 and Dingwall – Inverness cycle route; land available; owner of land and adjacent filling station has expressed positive interest in it. On bus routes 22, 25, 25X and 27.	Slightly further from Inverness than other sites so less potential for enhanced frequency bus services.
North Kessock	Easily accessed from same routes as Tore, plus bus route 26. Close to typical start of congestion on A9. Potential to increase bus service to North Kessock and provide dedicated shuttle service.	Limited area of land available – would constrain capacity.
Stadium Road	Land available. Close to Inverness so easy to serve by shuttle buses, and provides convenient site for interchange between buses for different destinations in the city.	On south side of Kessock Bridge so does not address congestion on the bridge.

The success of the Tore and North Kessock sites would be dependent (at least until the A9/A82 GSJ is completed) on bus priority measures such as a peak hour southbound bus lane being provided on the A9, as otherwise the buses serving these sites would have no time advantage over the remaining car traffic.

(xiv) A smaller park & ride site would be appropriate at Torvean, off the A82 on the south-western approach to the city. This would be served by the present bus route 3 and would have the potential to connect to a future route across the southern side of the city to the Inshes, Raigmore and Seafield Retail Park areas. It is close to the new swing bridge which will open shortly, completing the West Link across the river and canal. A car park is already designed, which could be adapted to P&R use.

(xv) Create mini-hubs near main junctions on or near the trunk/strategic road network, which would provide car and bike parking for rural dwellers accessing inter-urban bus routes, as well as more formal facilities for current informal park & share arrangements. Potential locations include Cromarty Bridge, Tomich junction near Invergordon, Novar Toll between Evanton and Alness, and Inverness Airport Station. Local designs would be needed for the proposed locations.

4. Dingwall options

(xvi) It is proposed to assess potential bus stance sites to the north and south of the High Street, along with methods of simplifying the bus routes in the town. Route simplification offers time savings which could also enable restoration of Service 27 to Contin (that route having been curtailed to Strathpeffer in 2020 due to the need for increased running time). It is expected that option appraisal could be complete within a year, with construction following over the next 2 years. One option being considered is to create a contra-flow bus lane on part of High Street, which would shorten northbound journeys by 800m and enable the northbound and southbound services to follow a consistent route.

Summary of status of longer term options

1(i)	Previously discussed concept needs to be updated; full assessment and design required
1(ii)	Sustrans-led project in preparation; will require addition of bus priority
1(iii)	Design required to complement existing plans for East Link road and A9 flyover
1(iv)	Project in Council's Capital Programme (including developer contributions); further assessment and design required to maximise benefit for bus services
1(v)	Technology understood and available; requires implementation along with other interventions
1(vi)	Requires design
1(vii)	Requires assessment and adaptation of previous design
2(vii)	As 1(v) above – shown twice as relevant both to cross-city routes and city centre
2(ix)	Design brief being prepared with Sustrans
2(x)	Appraisal of options required, including trunk and local roads
3(xi)	Land allocated in Local Plan; requires design
3(xii)	Requires comparative appraisal of options and design of favoured one (may be a case for main and mini provisions)

3(xiii)	Car park and access designed, but may need some alteration/expansion for P&R
3(xiv)	Requires local designs. Inverness Airport Station would be add-on to existing design by Network Rail (planning application in preparation).
4(xv)	Requires option appraisal and design

6. Resources Required

What resources is the partnership requesting from Transport Scotland to develop the proposals[v]?	£1,600,000 for option assessments and design. £1,009,000 for Quick Win implementation.
What is the estimated total cost of the proposed infrastructure developments?	£26,500,000 including development costs and quick wins (as shown above) and funding from other sources (as listed below), but excluding any spend on trunk roads
What – if any - is the nature and extent of investment to be made by partners[vi]?	Stagecoach would look to investment in improving the age profile of the fleet on the commercial service network as part of BSIP agreements. Stagecoach would also be keen to develop routes into and within the city, as summarised in this bid, and to use time saved by bus priority initiatives to increase frequencies and service levels. They are also considering on-board announcements of stops, cashless ticket machines at key stops, and further development of passenger information. Cromarty Firth Port Authority are contributing to the developments already agreed at Invergordon. Bannerman Company are willing to make land available for a Tore P&R site.
What – if any – other sources of investment will be available for the proposed developments[vii]?	£0.8M from Sustrans for the redesign of Academy Street. £0.6M from Sustrans for redesign of Millburn Road. £1.15M from Sustrans for detailed design and construction of Raigmore Interchange improvements. £6.0M is in the Council's Capital Programme for work on B9006 including

	Inshes Junction, plus £1.4M from developer contributions.

7. Commitment of Partners

The proposal should be signed by the Chair and CEO of the local authority leading the proposal. Partners (including RTPs and bus operators, as appropriate) may indicate their support to the proposal through appended letters of intent or additional signatures below.

Organisation	Name	Job title	Signature
The Highland Council	Trish Robertson	Chair of Economy & Infrastructure	Trish.robertson.cllr@highland.gov.uk
The Highland Council	Donna Manson	Chief Executive	Donna.manson@highland.gov.uk
Stagecoach Highlands	David Beaton	Managing Director	David.beaton@stagecoachbus.com
HiTrans	Ranald Robertson	Director	ranald.robertson@hitrans.org.uk
NHS Highland	Eric Green	Head of Estates	Eric.green@nhs.scot
Cromarty Firth Port Authority	Allison McGuire	Cruise Manager	a.mcguire@cfpa.co.uk
Bannerman Company	Ross Bannerman	Managing Director	ross.bannerman@gmail.com

8. Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted to buspartnershipfund@transport.gov.scot by 12 noon on Friday 16th April 2021.

9. Guidance Notes

[i] Relevant appendices or links to documents may be added, in addition to the word limits. For example, the partnership may wish to include links to community plans, transport strategies, STAG reports etc.

[ii] Partnerships should look to the STAG pre-appraisal phase, as a guide on the level of information required. It is recognised that you may not have all of the data at this stage but you should outline how you are going to produce the more detailed data – including forecast data - through the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. If you require resources to carry out even a pre-appraisal level of analysis, please state that here and estimate the requirements in section 6.

[iii] Quick wins should be sustainable and fit with the longer-term, transformational developments proposed.

[iv] Full details of the long-listing process are not required at his stage, as successful partnerships will have the opportunity to develop, evaluate and refine the options through the OBC stage. Where appraisals have already been carried out (for example, through city deals) partnerships should consider how these fit the future and the changes they will need to make to transport.

[v] Support from Transport Scotland will be to fund the specialist resources required to develop an appraisal, as defined by the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide (STAG). This will be required to access further infrastructure funding from the Bus Partnership Fund.

We recognise that some partnerships may have already conducted an appraisal and may be at Outline Business Case stage or even further with proposals. We also uphold the STAG principle that the level of appraisal required should be proportionate. Capacity funding will therefore take into account the stage the partnership is at and will be based on a proportionate view of what further appraisals and business cases are required to justify the infrastructure funding.

We also recognise that some options may have been appraised and are ready to implement as quick wins: if so, that should be stated here and relevant evidence attached.

Partnerships are reminded that staff costs may be capitalised in considering the request for funding. All justifiable bids will be considered, including funding for early quick wins, which may already have been appraised.

[vi] This may include investment in other measures, which will contribute to the holistic transformation of the bus service e.g. ultra-low or zero emission buses.

[vii] Include sources and amounts of investment already secured or expected to be secured before the development projects commence. This may include in-kind investment, as well as finance, and should take account of contributions from bus operators and other partners, as well as local authorities.

APPENDIX 3

Bus Partnership Fund Application Form

Phase 1 – Capacity Funding

1. Applicant Details

Lead local authority	Highland Council
Partners to the proposal	Shiel Buses, HITRANS, HIE
Contact name and job title	Tracey Urry, Head of Roads & Transport
Contact email	Tracey.urry@highland.gov.uk
Contact telephone number	01463 702922

2. Geography and Demographics

Max 1000 words, excluding maps

Describe the geography of the partnership and specifically that which will be impacted by the proposal, using maps to specify the area. Provide basic population information, to indicate the likely travel habits and therefore how people will be affected by the proposed development.
This application relates to the Fort William area. Fort William is the regional transport hub for the West Highlands. Its congestion problems are manifest in the existence of an active Fort William Congestion Group and the town has been subject to a recent comprehensive STAG Pre-appraisal assessment and subsequent more detailed assessment by Transport Scotland which has considered short, medium and long term solutions to the transport issues in the town and surrounding area. The main issue affecting Fort William is that all traffic, both strategic and local, between Fort William and the adjoining settlements of Inverlochy, Claggan, Caol and Corpach are connected by a single route. This route is the A82/A830 trunk road. This lack of separation between local and strategic traffic means that any congestion on this corridor impacts almost all journeys whether they are internal to the Fort William area or long distance. In the summer months, daily traffic volumes at certain points within the town can increase by as much as 50% with regular long delays on the Southbound A82 into Fort William in particular. Fort William's wider urban area is a loose aggregation of settlements bordering Loch Eil, Loch Linnhe, and along the corridors carved by the Great Glen and Glen Nevis. It is the second biggest settlement in Highland. This dispersed and seemingly random settlement pattern has been shaped by physical, employment,

ownership and crofting factors as well as 20th century industrial development. The challenge for the future is to support further growth and to make the urban area, and therefore the community, more cohesive. Consolidation, rather than further scattering of development, and better internal connectivity will help Fort William become a more coherent place. Outside of Fort William there are a number of rural, fragile areas that have more limited connectivity and access to infrastructure.

In mid-2016 Lochaber's population was estimated to be just over 19,800, Fort William is the main urban centre and has a population of around 10,000.

A number of significant developments and service and infrastructure improvements are under active consideration for Fort William over the next few years, including major new employment opportunities, a new hospital and educational facilities. These projects will help to provide new jobs and improve public services for the town and the wider Lochaber area. The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) 2019 reflects the majority of these developments and service improvements to support their future delivery. The WestPlan allocates 895 homes and 220ha of employment land within Fort William while three of the five Economic Development Areas lie adjacent or nearby (Glencoe Ski Centre Base Station, Inverlochy Castle Estate and Nevis Forest and Mountain Resort).

Building upon the WestPlan, Fort William 2040 (FW2040) is an ongoing project to plan, refine and implement a shared vision for the future of Fort William and Lochaber. FW2040 was envisaged as a way to collaborate with local communities, businesses, landowners and potential investors to:

- create a vision for the type of place people wanted Fort William to be, in its wider Lochaber context;
- consider how particular developments or projects – both committed and aspirational - might help to achieve that vision;
- agree actions and responsibilities for delivering these developments or projects, and the overall vision; and
- initiate a programme of ongoing monitoring and engagement to review progress towards delivery and achieving the longer term vision.

Details of the Masterplan and Delivery Programme can be found on the Highland Council website https://bit.ly/3g39Hwp.

Fort William serves as the employment, economic and visitor hub for the entire Lochaber area with commuters travelling into the town from Kinlochleven and Ballachulish to the south, Mallaig and Ardnamurchan to the west and Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge to the north.

Employment and other trip attractors are spread throughout the head of Loch Linnhe between Fort William and Corpach. These include Liberty, Belford Hospital, West Highland College, Corpach Sawmill and MOWI.

Fort William is known as the Outdoor Capital of the UK and is well known for the significant mountain bike events held annually at the Nevis Range and the town will be a key venue as part of the Cycling World Cup 2023. It is therefore critical that the elements set out in this bid act as a means of supporting these large scale

events, whilst delivering year round legacy improvements for the area. Significant to this is the proposal outlined in respect of Carr's Corner as set out in the bid.

Bus services in Fort William include:

- A Scottish Citylink route from Glasgow to Skye, operated commercially;
- A Scottish Citylink route from Fort William to Inverness, largely operated commercially, but enhanced by a Council contract for an additional journey each way;
- A route from Oban to Fort William, operated commercially by West Coast Motors in summer and tendered by Argyll & Bute Council, with a 50% contribution from Highland Council, for the rest of the year;
- Tendered routes between various parts of West Lochaber (Mallaig, Kilchoan and Lochaline) and Fort William;
- Tendered routes from Roy Briage and Kinlochlebven to Fort William;
- A tendered town service covering the greater Fort William urban area on a half-hourly frequency (less frequent in evenings and Sundays).

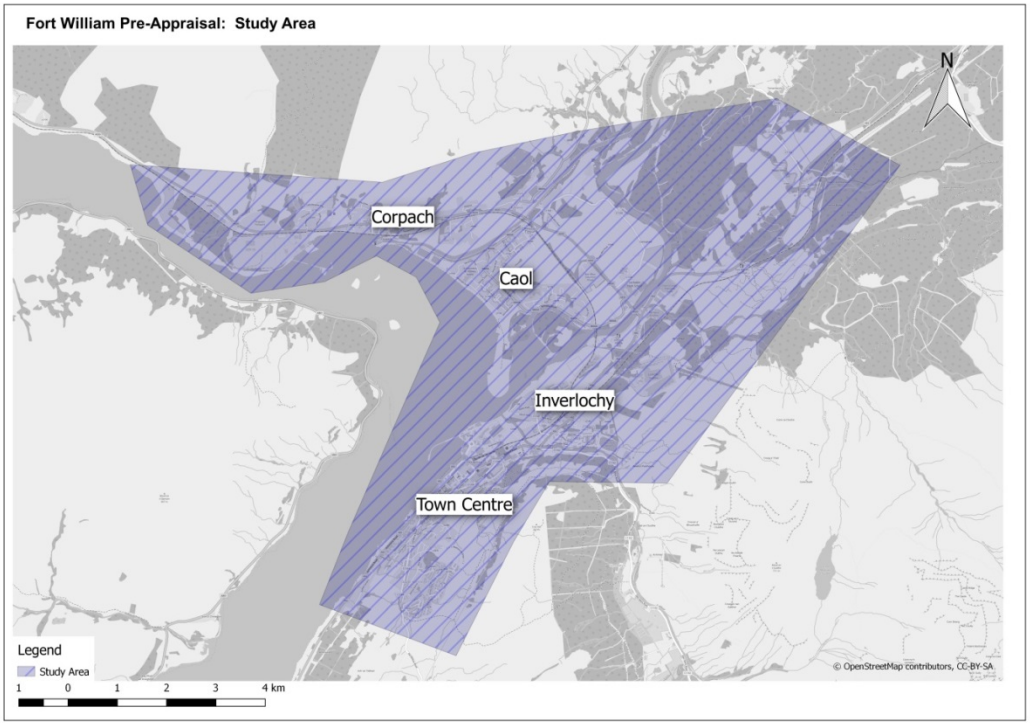
All of the Highland Council contracts are currently held by Shiel Buses except for the Inverness route. Shiel Buses are currently constructing a new depot in Fort William to help consolidate their operations.

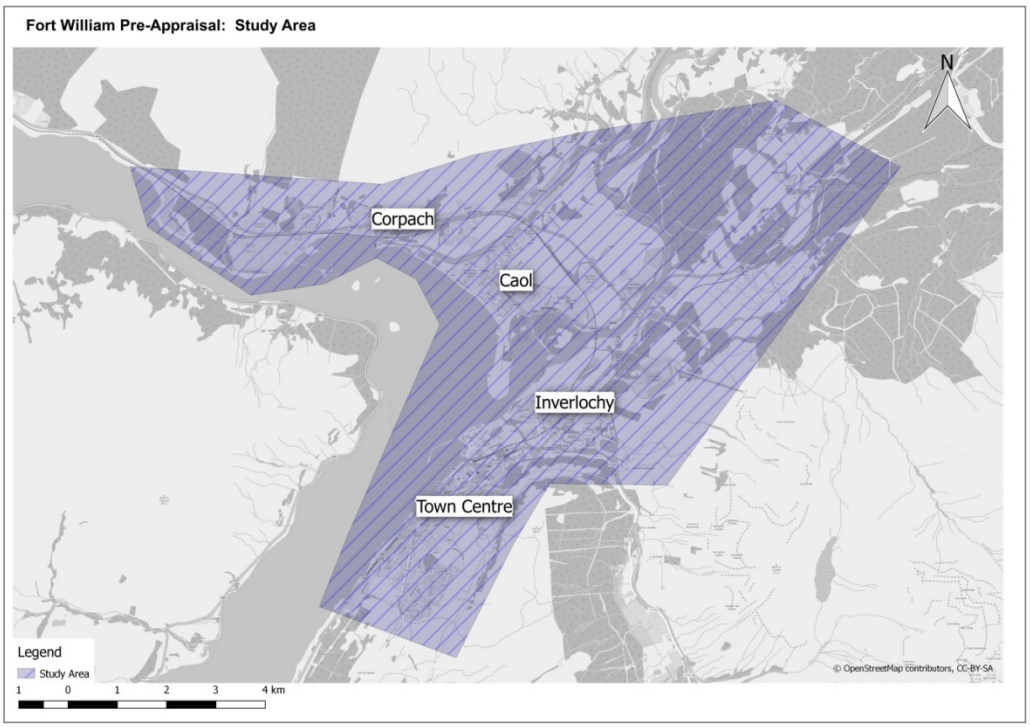
3. Analysis of Problems and Opportunities

Max 3000 words, excluding diagrams and charts[i]

Outline the problems (to the extent you are able at this stage), evidencing areas where road congestion is particularly problematic for bus. The opportunities should relate to bus priority developments, which are the focus of the Bus Partnership Fund[ii], as part of a multi-modal approach to sustainable future mobility provision.

The Fort William Strategic Transport Study (Pre-Appraisal) study was overseen by The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership (HITRANS), Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Transport Scotland (TS). The aim of the Pre-Appraisal stage of transport appraisal was to establish if there is an evidence-based case for change. (See https://hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Research/Transport for a copy of the report.)





It identified the following key transport issues:

- Journey time variability and seasonal congestion
- Road Network resilience
- Poor bus accessibility and declining services
- Limitations of rail network
- Constraints on Active Travel

It should be noted, however, that since Shiel Buses won the contracts for the town bus service in 2017 and the Roy Bridge and Kinlochleven routes in 2018, both the perception of service quality and the bus usage levels have markedly increased. In

2019 the main town service carried 310,214 passengers. (The Covid-19 pandemic has, of course, suppressed bus usage here as everywhere else in the country.)

What is the existing transport provision and what are the key issues?

As with many towns, Fort William has a multi-modal transport network.

Road & Bus
- A82 and A830, providing road connections between Central Belt, West Highlands and Inverness
- Local Buses and Regional Buses serving Glasgow & Inverness

Rail
- Fort William, Corpach and Banavie Stations
- Services on West Highland Line

Active & Low Carbon Travel
- Localised shared use walk/cycle facilities
- NCN78 and Caledonian Canal towpath
- Electric vehicle charging points

Water-based
- Camusnagaul and Corran ferries linking to Ardnamurchan
- Caledonian Canal and Loch Linnhe waterfront including goods shipping and cruise-ships

Parking and place
- On and off street parking around town, standardised charging for Council off-street car parking
- Pedestrianised high street in Fort William

Visitor related
- Shuttle buses
- Temporary Park & Ride
- Temporary parking for events
- Jacobite steam train

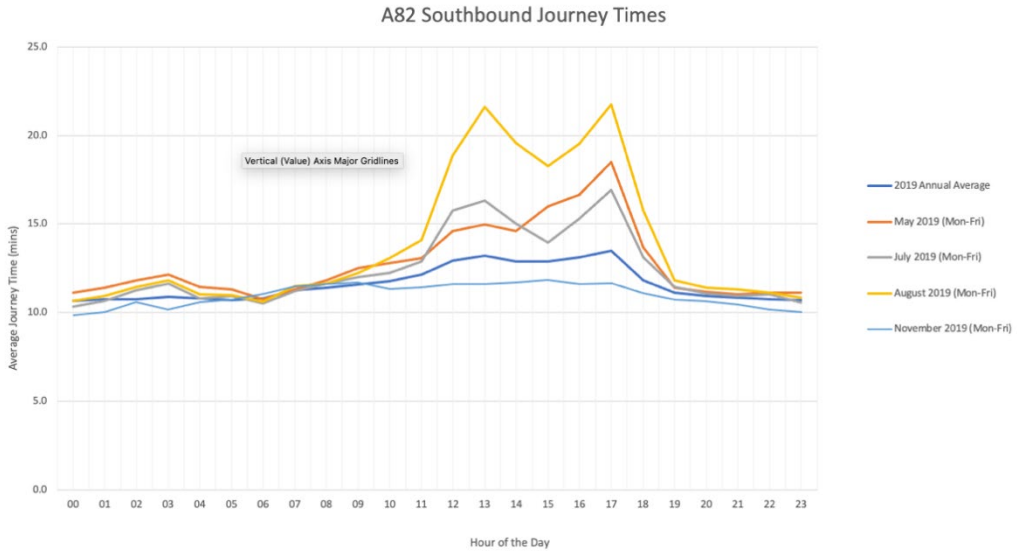
The PlusBus map (below) shows the extent of local bus services in the area east of Loch Linnhe. Infrequent longer distance services also come into the town from west Lochaber.

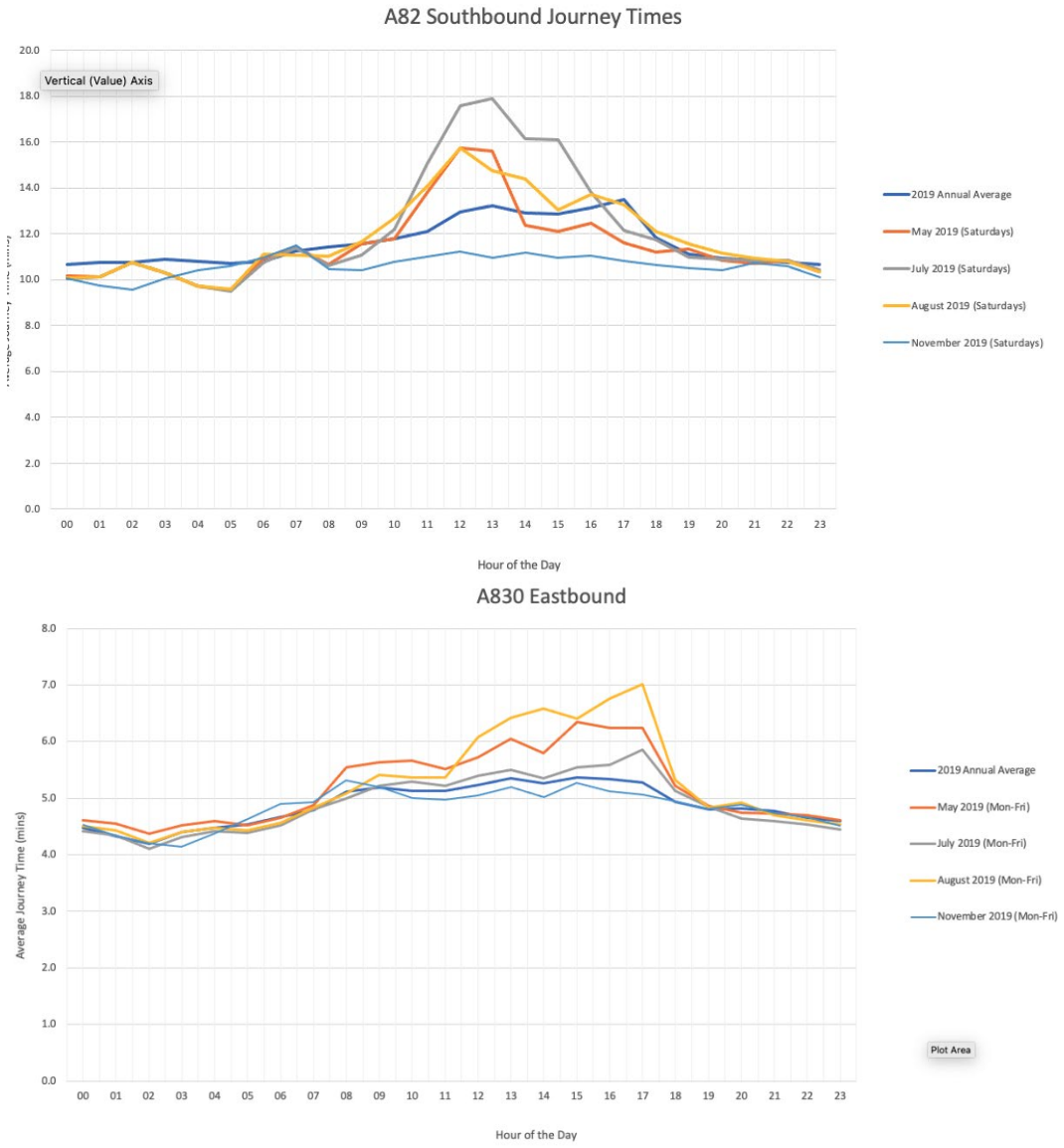
Impacts of Congestion

As the only route through Fort William and between the neighbouring communities of Inverlochy, Corpach and Caol, any delays on the A82 and A830 trunk roads have an immediate impact on all vehicular transport. In the summer months when

traffic on this corridor can increase by over 50% so too can journey times. These delays impact on every bus service. This seasonal variation means that it is difficult for any bus service (local or long distance) to operate punctually to the same timetable all year round. In addition to seasonal variation, Fort William also experiences significant day to day variations of congestion which can be a result of weather conditions whereby the onset of rain can bring an influx of visitors back to Fort William from the surrounding countryside. The tables below highlight the seasonal variation with southbound journey times on the A82 through Fort William in excess of 50% higher in the summer peak. As the graph shows this increase in journey time is not restricted to the morning and evening commute peak period but rather extends from around 1100 -1800. The need for trunk road improvements is noted in the FW2040 masterplan.

This variation in journey time has a severe impact on the reliability and attractiveness of local bus services. To encourage modal shift, solutions which enable local bus services to avoid the congestion need to be found. This application builds on the work of the Pre-STAG appraisal and identifies a number of Bus Priority measures which can improve the local bus network and which if successful can reduce the need for expensive alternative private car based solutions.





A82 southbound journey times (Mon-Fri and Saturday) supplied by Jacobs on behalf of Transport Scotland

Opportunities

There is a great opportunity to build on the extensive community consultation and support for the recent Transport Stag Appraisal and Fort William 2040 masterplanning to realise modal shift and low carbon solutions in Fort William.

As outlined in the previous section, FW2040 is a collaborative process to coordinate and deliver a shared vision for the future of Fort William and Lochaber.

The Delivery Programme Board set up to deliver the masterplan offers an ideal governance structure under which to establish a Bus Service Improvement Partnership Scheme for Fort William and its catchment area that can support the delivery of the Bus Partnership Fund application if successful. Membership of the Board includes The Highland Council, HIE, HITRANS, Transport Scotland, NHS Highland and Lochaber Chamber of Commerce. A sub-group would be established for a BSIP that would include local bus operators, the Lochaber Environment Group and the **Lochaber Transport Forum**.

Fort William has recently established a **Fort William Active Travel Action Group** to deliver the Refreshed Active Travel Masterplan https://bit.ly/3mKn8Tg. A number of projects are currently being delivered by local partners. If supported by ambitious improvements to the local bus network they can help deliver positive place based solutions to current transport congestion in the town which is having a negative economic as well as environmental impact.

Among the projects underway are the following;

- An Electric Bike Hire with 60 bikes at 8 docking stations around Fort William and neighbouring settlements
- Improved Active Travel – car free – corridor connecting Caol to Inverlochy and Fort William via the NCN 78 and Great Glen Way
- An application for a multi-modal EV Charging hub at An Aird
- Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding of £70,000 to reduce bus fares across the Lochaber area to encourage bus patronage following the relaxation of Covid restrictions in summer 2021.

To complement these improvements there are a number of opportunities to provide bus priority at key pinch points in Fort William. Some larger scale options have also been identified which will require full appraisal and option selection. These options are outlined in Section 5.

There is also a good basis for building on strong local bus usage. The table below from the Active Travel Masterplan shows modal split for journeys to work and education in Fort William and neighbouring settlements. This demonstrates that bus usage across the Fort William area is well above the Highland average and in the case of Caol it is above the national average.

Table 3-1 - Census 2011: Method of Travel to Work or Study[1]

Mode of Transport	Banavie and Corpach	Caol	Fort William	Study Area	Highland	Scotland
Work or study mainly at or from home	13.1%	12.2%	13.7%	13.2%	14.9 %	11.3 %
Underground, metro, light rail or tram	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0 %	0.3 %
Train	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	1.2 %	3.5 %
Bus, minibus or coach	11.4%	14.0%	11.3%	12.1%	9.5 %	13.4 %
Taxi or minicab	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4 %	0.7 %
Driving a car or van	45.4%	39.0%	36.3%	38.3%	42.6 %	40.9 %
Passenger in a car or van	13.1%	12.8%	10.9%	11.8%	9.6 %	9.0 %
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2 %	0.2 %
Bicycle	5.3%	4.5%	3.0%	3.8%	2.4 %	1.3 %
On foot	10.1%	15.7%	22.8%	19.0%	17.7 %	18.5 %
Other	0.7%	0.4%	0.8%	0.7%	1.4 %	0.9 %

The Council has an opportunity to purchase land adjacent to Carr's Corner, on the northern edge of Fort William. This was originally considered as a site for a waste transfer station but is large enough to also accommodate a park & ride site. Negotiations towards purchase of the land have begun, although finance has not been identified for it. However, a basis for cost sharing between a Bus Partnership Fund contribution and other uses has been discussed within the Council. Allied with potential bus priority provisions between there and the town centre, this could make a useful contribution to reducing congestion. In addition to providing for trips to the town centre, it could be used by buses going to popular tourist sites such as Glen Nevis and Glenfinnan.

4. Desired Outcomes

Max 1000 words

Describe the desired outcomes from the proposed bus priority developments. How do you plan to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes?

Outcomes

The key direct outcomes desired are to reduce the congestion on the main routes and reduce car movements, especially within the urban area, and so avoid delays to the bus services. It is intended that by doing this, passenger growth will be encouraged, and in addition to the core bus services serving local needs, further seasonal routes will be encouraged to tourist attractions in the neighbourhood such as Glen Nevis and Glenfinnan, and the service to Nevis Range enhanced. It is also hoped that infrastructure improvements will move the core bus services closer towards commercial viability.

While contributions from housing developers are now required towards bus services to new housing areas, the Quick Win proposals here are intended to enable bus routes to operate at an early stage of housing development and so to reduce the need for car dependence in these areas from the outset.

The developments proposed can contribute to all four of the themes highlighted in FW2040, namely:

- Growing Communities: better designed places that are safe, attractive and healthy;
- Connectivity and Transport: Safe, reliable and resilient linkages across the town, between communities and between the town and the wider region;
- Employment: A diverse, growing and sustainable economy with … an enhanced reputation as a year-round tourism destination;
- Environment and Heritage: Carbon efficient local infrastructure.

All this supports the Council Programme which includes the following relevant priorities:

- encourage and assist the regeneration of our town centres and high streets across the Highlands and review opportunities to maximise the use of the built environment
- trial new methods of community engagement to develop solutions including the use of community transport schemes and with partners and public and

private transport providers ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing services, employment or leisure activities
- work with business and partners to continue to promote and develop the Highlands as a world class, year round, tourist destination. We will also work with communities and businesses to secure funding to enable improvements in local tourism infrastructure.

Supporting this, the Corporate Plan includes Outcome 4.5:
- We will work with partners to ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing opportunities, including working with communities on community transport schemes.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be done by a range of measures within the Council's control and with the involvement of partners. Key measures will include:

1. Reduction in bus journey times: measured both by changes in timetables as interventions take effect, and monitoring by Shiel Buses (and other operators if relevant) of vehicle tracking and real time compliance with timetables.
2. Bus service frequencies can be measured by comparing timetables year on year.
3. Under our BSIP, we intend that bus operating mileage and passenger numbers would be reported by operators on a regular basis, in a way which will support evaluation of the interventions. This would apply to commercial services; we already receive passenger data for tendered services.
4. The Council will use traffic counters at key points to evaluate changes in general traffic, and reduction of congestion.
5. The Council will also maintain records of car park occupancy.
6. With the support of major employers, it is hoped that periodic surveys can be carried out of how their employees travel to work.

We realise that increasing trends towards on-line shopping and working from home will affect all of these measures. We anticipate that under our BSIP we would discuss how the bus networks respond to changing travel patterns and needs, and so to better understand the data collected. Percentages of travel by each mode will be as important as absolute numbers in evaluating the projects.

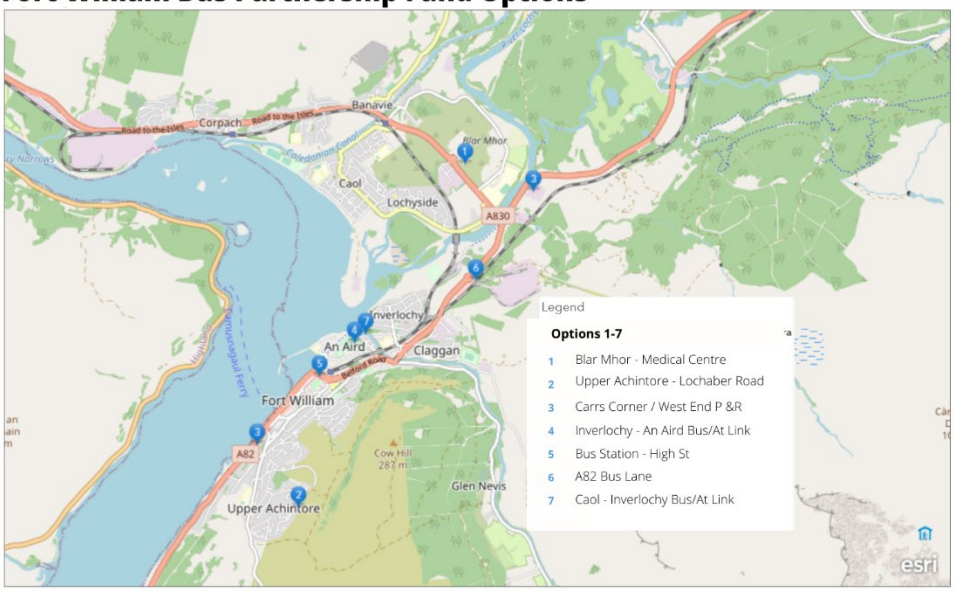
5. Potential Options

Max 3000 words

Outline the ideas the partnership has for developing bus priority measures and an outline timescale for their delivery. Describe any quick wins i.e. developments which could be implemented within the financial year 2021/22[iii]. Outline how you plan to work in partnership, if that has been established. Describe what consultation has taken place to arrive at these high-level options[iv].

The plan below highlights the locations of the 7 different options which have been identified as having the potential to alleviate congestion in Fort William through a combination of bus priority measures and associated improvements to the local bus network.

Fort William Bus Partnership Fund Options



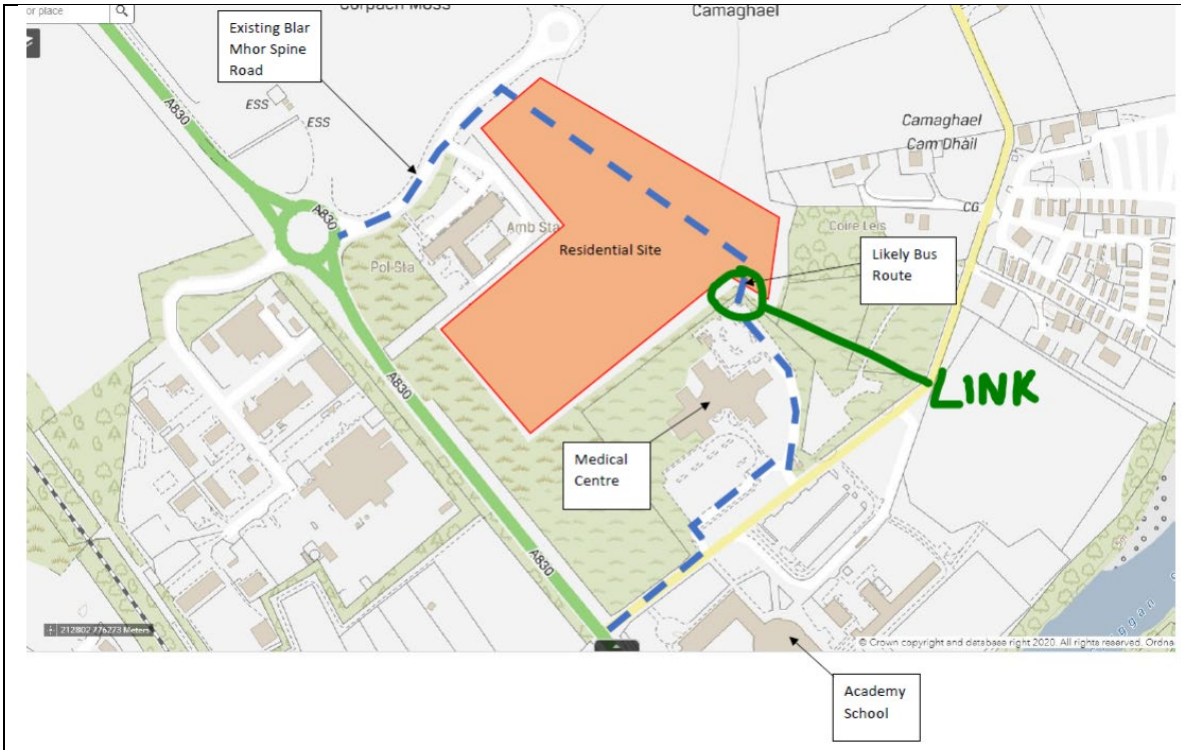
Proposals 1 and 2 below are specific measures which could be introduced in 2021/22 subject to detailed design and funding. Options 3 to 7 would require a more detailed STAG appraisal to identify the most appropriate solution.

Quick Wins

Proposal 1: Blar Mhor (New Bus only Link between Health Centre and New Residential development)

One of the challenges in serving the different residential areas and key trip attractors in Fort William is that several of these key areas can only be served by bus via a single point of access from the spinal Trunk Road network. This means that buses have to divert at various points incurring delay at busy junctions and often having to cover unnecessary mileage by having to return via the same section of road.

One example is North-east of the A830 where there is a large new residential development, medical centre, Lochaber High School and the site for the new Hospital. At present these sites have two separate accesses off the A830. The proposal here would provide a new bus only link between the new Blar Mhor housing development (and proposed hospital site) and the medical centre. As a result of the time savings from this measure, the local bus operator would be able to serve both destinations and maintain the current timetable frequency without the need incur the costs of an additional bus working thus saving over £150K per annum.



Proposal 2: Upper Achintore (New Bus only Link between new residential development and Lochaber Road)

This proposal would realise very similar benefits to Proposal 1. The current road pattern does not enable a bus route to serve the new residential development at Upper Achintore (Heathercroft Drive) and the older housing around Lochaber Road, where there is a well established bus route. Introducing a new bus only link between the new residential development and Lochaber Road would enable both developments to be served by the same service thus removing the need for an additional bus working as well as the added benefit of improve connectivity between the two residential areas and Fort William town centre.

Options requiring more detailed development and STAG Appraisal

Option 3: New Park and Ride sites North and South of Fort William on A82
There is currently no park and ride facility serving Fort William. There is an opportunity to establish a new park and ride facility to the north of the A82/A830 junction at Carr's Corner. As outlined in Section 3, the most severe congestion affecting Fort William is southbound from the A82/A830 junction southbound into the town centre.

Establishing a park and ride facility here together with progressive car parking charges in the town centre together with some form of bus priority into the town centre (see Options 4, 6 and 7) would provide the opportunity to provide an attractive alternative to the private car for both locals and visitors. In particular it would provide a stress free location for visitors to leave their vehicles behind and visit attractions such as Glenfinnan Viaduct, Glen Nevis and Nevis Range by bus instead.

Further measures, such as increased car parking charges, have been mooted, and will be considered as a BSIP Scheme for the area is progressed.

Option 4: New Bus only link between Inverlochy and Fort Wiliam town centre
There is currently a footbridge linking Wades Road in Inverlochy with Camanachd Crescent and on to Fort William town centre. The bridge forms part of the National Cycle network and Great Glen Way. However, this bridge it is not open to vehicles, and too narrow to allow parallel bus and NMU lanes, which means that all services to Inverlochy need to return to the congested A82 to access the town centre which is less than a kilometre away on a non-congested corridor if a direct link was established via the local road network. The creation of a bridge over the River Nevis that would connect into the local road network near Lochaber College would

provide a direct sustainable connection for the residents of Inverlochy into Fort William which would reduce bus journey times. It would also provide an alternative route to allow additional buses to be positioned when buses in service are caught in congestion, thus maintaining timetable reliability.

The following three ambitious options involve solutions which directly impact the Trunk Road and would require input from the Transport Scotland team undertaking the detailed STAG appraisal for interventions identified in STPR2

Option 5: Redesign of the A82 and road network at Fort William Bus /Rail Station and High Street

The A82 currently severs the centre of Fort William in two. Combined with parallel local roads there are an incredible 8 lanes of road between Fort William Bus and Rail stations and Fort William High Street. The local buses use stances on Middle Street, adjacent to High Street, but their onward northbound route is convoluted as they run parallel to the A82, turn left on to the A82 and then turn again at the roundabout, using 3 of the 8 parallel lanes of road.

There are no at grade crossings of the A82 (either for pedestrians or vehicles), so the only way to access one location from the other on foot is a via a pedestrian subway. This less than desirable link also forms the only means of interchanging between the long distance coach network which operates from the bus station and local services on Middle Street.

There is a wonderful opportunity to reimagine this space, and provide a place based solution that transforms not just the bus network and access to it, and connectivity with the train services, but also walking and cycling into the heart of Fort William and improvement of the public realm in this key location.

There are a number of options which could deliver stepped improvements to this space. It is proposed that the first step should be a proportionate STAG based appraisal and community consultation in order to help identify the best outcome for all transport modes recognising the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy.

Option 6: Bus Priority on A82 Southbound
The most severe and regular congestion problems in Fort William occur southbound on the A82 between the A830 and Nevis Bridge Junctions. All southbound bus (local network and long distance coach services) into Fort William are affected by any delays on this section of road as there is no alternative route available. Solutions which require significant investment (A82 bypass) are being considered as part of the STPR2 assessment process. The only online solution which could provide bus priority and a means for bus services to bypass congestion on this corridor would be the construction of sections of bus lanes where space permits.

Detailed appraisal would be required to establish the sections where this could be delivered and the time savings achieved.

Option 7 – Bus and active travel link between Caol and Inverlochy
Associated with a flood alleviation scheme at Caol, a new active travel bridge connecting Caol and Inverlochy has been considered. This would have the potential to transform connectivity between Caol / Corpach / Banavie and Inverlochy / Fort William. At present the only vehicular access from all the areas west of the River Lochy is via the A830 bridge at Lochyside. This is regularly congested and can be impacted by closures of the Caledonian Canal swing bridge at Banavie. There is a pedestrian only link to the south west of this, attached to the railway bridge, which offers a somewhat shorter alternative for active travel, but a new bus and active travel only link from Caol direct to Inverlochy would offer an uncongested link that would make many current journeys become walkable and for the rest of trips it would reduce the bus journey between Caol and the town centre by up to 75% in length and even greater in terms of journey times by offering an uncongested alternative. It would also provide a more coherent network

connecting the different settlement areas of Fort William which would be transformational in terms of placemaking.

6. Resources Required

What resources is the partnership requesting from Transport Scotland to develop the proposals[v]?	£392,000 for completion of Quick Win proposals. £1,498,000 for assessment and design of park & ride site, and purchase of site. £145,000 for other appraisals.
What is the estimated total cost of the proposed infrastructure developments?	£14,101,000 excluding trunk road elements.
What – if any - is the nature and extent of investment to be made by partners[vi]?	Subject to retaining the majority of contracts at retendering, Shiel Buses would continue to maintain a high quality fleet and look to expand services where viable.
What – if any – other sources of investment will be available for the proposed developments[vii]?	£120,000 towards land purchase of P&R site for the part to be occupied by the waste transfer station. Potential sale of surplus part of this land after construction.

7. Commitment of Partners

The proposal should be signed by the Chair and CEO of the local authority leading the proposal. Partners (including RTPs and bus operators, as appropriate) may indicate their support to the proposal through appended letters of intent or additional signatures below.

Organisation	Name	Job title	Signature
The Highland Council	Trish Robertson	Lead Councillor	trish.robertson.cllr@highland.gov.uk
The Highland Council	Donna Manson	Chief Executive	Donna.manson@highland.gov.uk
HITRANS	Ranald Robertson	Director	ranald.robertson@hitrans.org.uk
HIE	Alasdair Nicolson	Interim Area Manager	alastair.nicolson@hient.co.uk
Shiel Buses	David MacGillivray	Director	david@shielbuses.co.uk

8. Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted to buspartnershipfund@transport.gov.scot by 12 noon on Friday 16th April 2021.

9. Guidance Notes

[i] Relevant appendices or links to documents may be added, in addition to the word limits. For example, the partnership may wish to include links to community plans, transport strategies, STAG reports etc.

[ii] Partnerships should look to the STAG pre-appraisal phase, as a guide on the level of information required. It is recognised that you may not have all of the data at this stage but you should outline how you are going to produce the more detailed data – including forecast data - through the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. If you require resources to carry out even a pre-appraisal level of analysis, please state that here and estimate the requirements in section 6.

[iii] Quick wins should be sustainable and fit with the longer-term, transformational developments proposed.

[iv] Full details of the long-listing process are not required at his stage, as successful partnerships will have the opportunity to develop, evaluate and refine the options through the OBC stage. Where appraisals have already been carried out (for example, through city deals) partnerships should consider how these fit the future and the changes they will need to make to transport.

[v] Support from Transport Scotland will be to fund the specialist resources required to develop an appraisal, as defined by the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide (STAG). This will be required to access further infrastructure funding from the Bus Partnership Fund.

We recognise that some partnerships may have already conducted an appraisal and may be at Outline Business Case stage or even further with proposals. We also uphold the STAG principle that the level of appraisal required should be proportionate. Capacity funding will therefore take into account the stage the partnership is at and will be based on a proportionate view of what further appraisals and business cases are required to justify the infrastructure funding.

We also recognise that some options may have been appraised and are ready to implement as quick wins: if so, that should be stated here and relevant evidence attached.

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[vi] This may include investment in other measures, which will contribute to the holistic transformation of the bus service e.g. ultra-low or zero emission buses.

[vii] Include sources and amounts of investment already secured or expected to be secured before the development projects commence. This may include in-kind investment, as well as finance, and should take account of contributions from bus operators and other partners, as well as local authorities.

APPENDIX 3

Bus Partnership Fund Application Form

Phase 1 – Capacity Funding

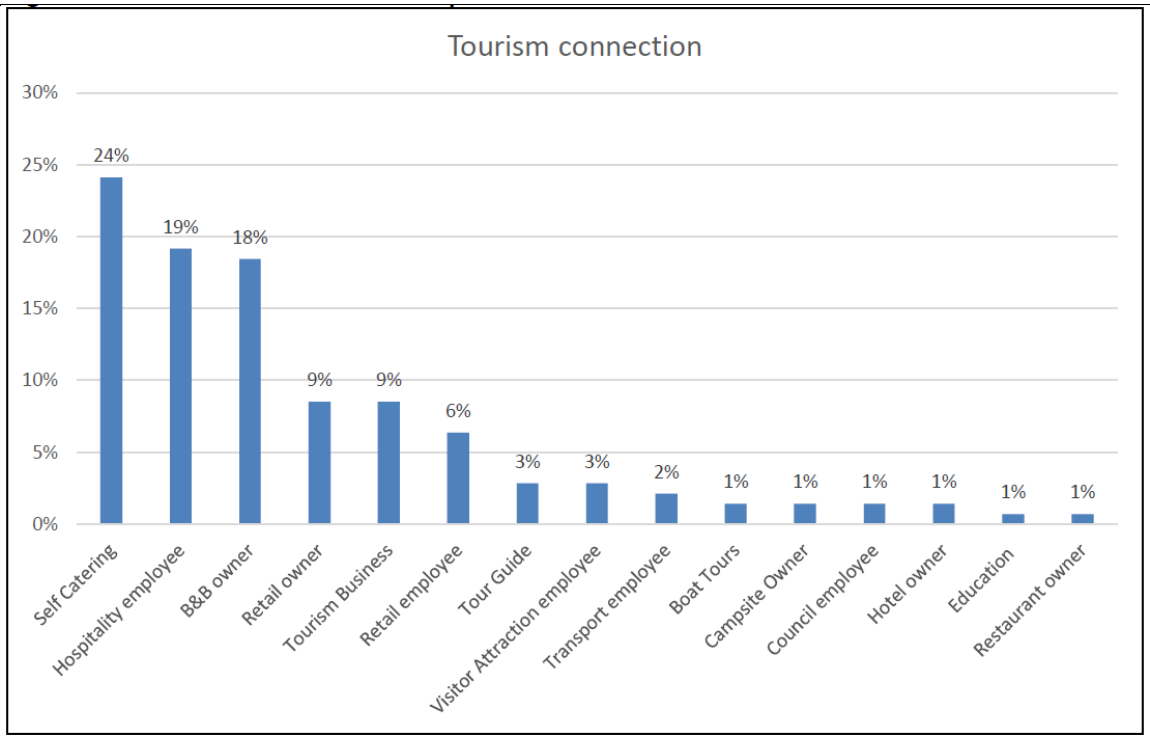
1. Applicant Details

Lead local authority	Highland Council
Partners to the proposal	Stagecoach Highlands, HiTrans, Skye Connect Ltd, SGRPID, Cairngorms National Park Authority
Contact name and job title	Tracey Urry, Head of Roads & Transport
Contact email	Tracey.urry@highland.gov.uk
Contact telephone number	01463 702922

2. Geography and Demographics

Max 1000 words, excluding maps

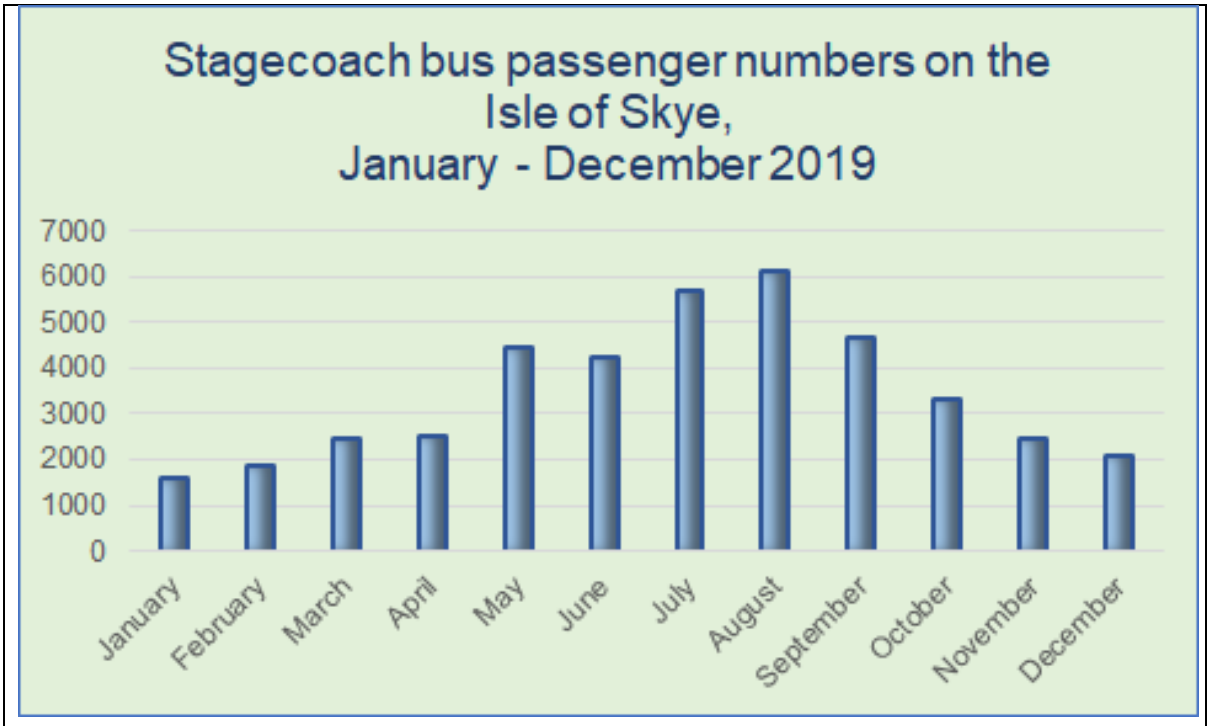
Describe the geography of the partnership and specifically that which will be impacted by the proposal, using maps to specify the area. Provide basic population information, to indicate the likely travel habits and therefore how people will be affected by the proposed development.
Highland Council's BSIP Plan is intended to cover the whole Council area, ranging from the city and environs of Inverness to the remote regions of the north and west. Within that, various Partnership Schemes are to be developed. This bid relates to enhancing provision for public transport at popular tourist destinations, in two areas: the **Isle of Skye** and the Highland part of the **Cairngorms National Park**. The economies of both these areas are heavily dependent on tourism. In Skye, a survey of residents asking about their connection to tourism showed the following results – clearly illustrating a substantial engagement with the tourism industry of the island:



The Isle of Skye has a resident population of 10,536 (mid-year 2018 estimate), which typically increases to 60,000 in the peak tourist season. The resident population has increased very slightly over the past 10 years, but there has been substantial growth in tourism. In 2019 there were approximately 650,000 visitors to Skye, staying an average of 3 days. Portree (population 2755) is the main town, with the remaining population dispersed in villages and rural areas throughout the island. Natural features (shown on map below, along with indoor attractions) have become popular sightseeing locations, particularly in the northern part of the island, in addition to indoor attractions such as Dunvegan Castle and Talisker Distillery.

Bus services on Skye are mostly operated under contract to the Council. The network is built around transport to Portree High School, with four services per day on the Portree / Uig / Staffin circuit, and between Portree and Dunvegan. Another route operates between Portree and Fiscavaig in the west. In the south of the island, there is a service between Elgol, Broadford and Kyle of Lochalsh. Buses operate commercially on long distance routes between Portree (and Uig for ferry connections) and Inverness and Glasgow, and in summer between Portree, Broadford and Armadale.

Usage figures for the Skye bus network show a significant summer peak - see graph below – but the growth in tourism in general has not been reflected in increased use of buses, as statistics show that only 6.5% of visitors utilise public transport.



Within the Highland part of the Cairngorms National Park, the main tourist centre is Aviemore, with a resident population of 3613, and again, a marked increase in the peak tourist seasons (summer, and the ski season). Aviemore, Grantown and Kingussie all function as local service centres for the resident population, with Aviemore having the largest supermarket. The corridor between Aviemore, Glenmore and Cairngorm is a magnet for tourism, including sightseeing and outdoor activities.

As in Skye, the bus network in Badenoch and Strathspey operates under contract to the Council, except for the long-distance routes passing through Aviemore. The seasonal peak in usage is less marked, as the core usage (apart from school transport) is by locals travelling between the towns and villages and to Inverness. However, the Aviemore – Glenmore – Cairngorm route is primarily used by tourists.

3. Analysis of Problems and Opportunities

Max 3000 words, excluding diagrams and charts[i]

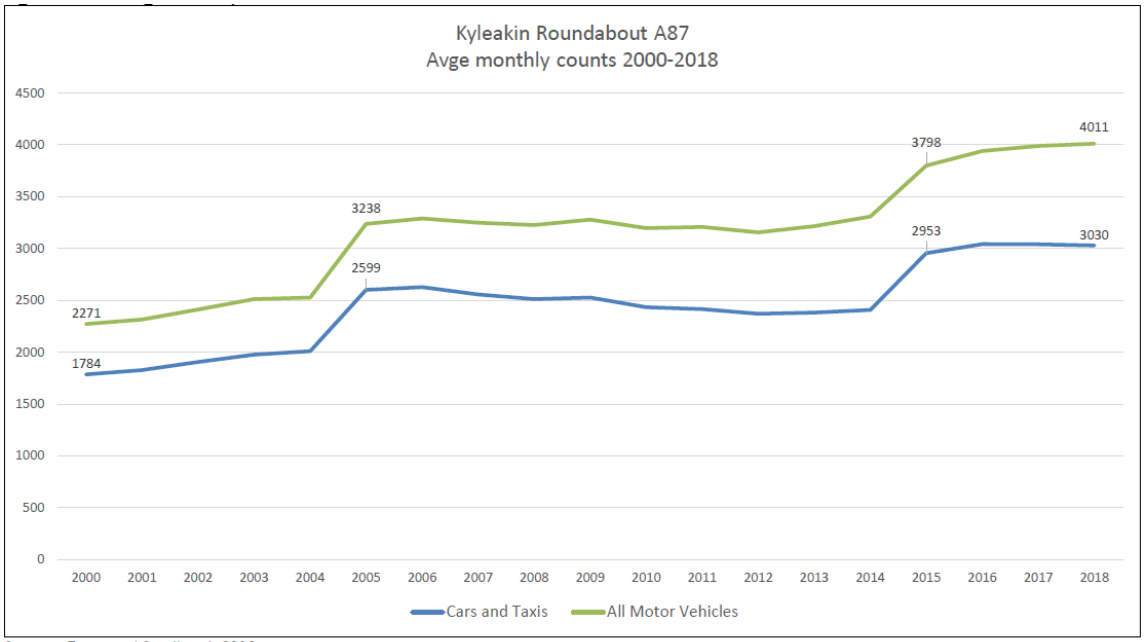
Outline the problems (to the extent you are able at this stage), evidencing areas where road congestion is particularly problematic for bus. The opportunities should relate to bus priority developments, which are the focus of the Bus Partnership Fund[ii], as part of a multi-modal approach to sustainable future mobility provision.

The problem

Tourism has grown in recent years in both Skye and the Cairngorms, with many scenic outdoor locations becoming increasingly popular. This is of course welcome for the local economies. However, this increase in visitor numbers is straining infrastructure developed to support the needs of a relatively small island population, causing pressure on a range of Council functions including roads and

transport. Likewise, visitor numbers are causing pressure in the Aviemore / Glenmore / Cairngorm area.

The unique natural beauty of Skye is its greatest asset, yet the environmental concerns presented by a volume of visitors threaten this attribute. The following statistics illustrate the burden on infrastructure which supports the island population of around 10,000. In 2002, 13,240 tourists were recorded as having visited the Fairy Pools; by 2018, this number had risen – astonishingly – to 186,371. Transport Scotland monthly statistics at Kyleakin Roundabout illustrate the increase in vehicles since 2000:



Source: Transport Scotland, 2019

The Cairngorms National Park includes Britain's second highest mountain and the largest area of sub-arctic plateau. It is popular for a wide range of outdoor activities in summer as well as snow sports in winter.

Highland Council's Visitor Management Plan for 2021 has identified the key challenges for Roads & Transport as:

- Insufficient capacity on some narrow rural and single-track roads to cope with large numbers of vehicles; large motorhomes/campervans causing congestion;
- Insufficient parking provision in tourist hotspots leading to safety issues - parking congestion, obstruction of the carriageway, and inappropriate use of laybys;
- Parking overnight in non-designated areas;
- Parking on soft verges causing damage to verge and road edges;
- Community tolerance of large visitor volumes and behaviour leading to inappropriate responses e.g. erection of signage, barriers across some public roads, introduction of roadside hazards such as placement of boulders/rubble/logs on the verge or in lay-bys.

The photographs illustrate the problems at two sites: Fairy Glen, near Uig (above) and Storr, on the A855 north of Portree (below).

Car parks have recently been built at Fairy Pools, Fairy Glen, Storr and Quiraing to cater for tourist traffic. Car park improvements are planned at Coral Beach and Kilt Rock. Some of these locations are on existing bus routes; others are not. Many of the roads in Skye are single track and not suited to high volumes of traffic. Bus services, if they were to be introduced on new routes, could be seriously delayed by the volume of traffic.

Although parking space in the centre of Portree has recently been increased, space remains limited and can easily fill up in the summer period. Park & ride is an attractive solution to the problems at the scenic destinations, but to be viable will require further parking space in Portree.

A study by Glasgow Caledonian University for Skye Connect Ltd (an organisation which supports local tourist businesses) showed that 43% of visitors to Skye in 2019 used hire cars, 21% used their own cars, and 6.5% used public transport. Increasing public transport use, even for part of their stay, would therefore clearly have an impact on congestion.

Opportunities

The Council's Visitor Management plan for 2021 includes funding of £60,000 for additional bus services in Skye; details of services to be provided are being negotiated, as well as tenders being sought for new routes.

Similarly, Cairngorms National Park are providing support in 2021 for an enhanced bus service in their area, between Aviemore and Glenmore.

Stagecoach, the dominant bus operator on Skye, have agreed to provide extensions in summer 2021 to their existing bus services to key sites that draw a large volume of visitors (and accompanying congestion). Stagecoach have also agreed to provide a shuttle service in summer 2021 between Aviemore and Glenmore.

Outwith these negotiations, tendering options are being invited to provide other shuttle services in Skye, utilising smaller vehicles, to serve locations that attract many visitors though are more vulnerable in terms of road conditions. An identified lack of evening and weekend public transport options has been highlighted in Skye as a deterrent to using public transport, so tenderers will be encouraged to offer flexible journey times.

Key partners will be involved in the selection of tender options and the balance between these and the Stagecoach extensions; the intention is to ensure that the funding's impact is maximised to address traffic congestion and encourage the perception that public transport is a viable mode of movement on the island. Skye Connect Ltd has agreed to help with promotion of bus services.

For future years, this pilot project will inform future provision and serve as a "hook" so that visitors are able to see that public transport options are available. Essential to this will be robust publicity, with active involvement from Highland Council, partners and communities in Skye. It is hoped that this network can be expanded in future years, further enhanced under a BSIP Scheme by multi-modal integrated ticketing which sends the message clearly to visitors from outwith the area that they do not need a car or other personal transport to enjoy the unique beauty of Skye.

Infrastructure is a constraint on the expansion of these services. Before the public transport network in Skye can become more extensive, it will be necessary to focus intently on, and invest in, the infrastructure upon which it can be supported. Constraints on improving bus services include:

- Increasing car traffic on single track roads impacting on (actual or potential) bus timetables;

- Lack of any suitable turning facilities at destinations;
- Lack of provision (e.g. shelters) for passengers at destinations.

There is interest in developing park & ride services to these destinations. Bayhead car park in Portree has recently been expanded, but further car park space would be required, probably on the outskirts of Portree (two locations have been mooted) to make park & ride viable. Use of existing car parks in some Skye villages for park & ride will support shorter bus trips to scenic sites, for tourists whose accommodation is closer to these villages. A park & ride site is also proposed for Aviemore.

As illustrated in the graph included in Section 2 “Geography and Demographics” bus usage in Skye peaks during the summer season, most particularly July and August. Historically, Stagecoach have operated summer enhancements to their timetables on the main roads (but not to the increasingly popular scenic sites).

The statutory provision of school transport is the structure around which the bus network is arranged; this does not lend itself easily to addressing the needs of visitors and tourists, whose travel movements include significant evening and weekend travel. It is envisioned that investment in infrastructure and the nascent success of the rather modest £60,000 mentioned above in Summer 2021 will be critical steps in the development of a more robust and well-used transport network. In turn, the decrease in personal transport vehicles arising from this trend would have a profound benefit on the environmental preservation of the island.

Out of necessity, this will need to be a gradual process – simply adding more buses onto Skye’s road network (which is in many areas unsuitable for larger vehicles), already critically congested, would merely add to the problem. However, improvements to infrastructure – along with well-placed publicity of the further development of public transport on the island – will support an expectation that one can plan a journey to Skye without personal transport.

4. Desired Outcomes

Max 1000 words

Describe the desired outcomes from the proposed bus priority developments. How do you plan to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes?

Outcomes

The key aim is to maintain and improve the attractiveness of both Skye and the Cairngorms to tourists, by reducing the congestion and environmental impact caused by moving and parked cars. Providing improved bus services will result in benefits, not only in reduced emissions from private vehicles but also in reducing the visual impact of parked vehicles at scenic locations, and avoiding the need for further enlargement of car parks.

Broader economic and environmental outcomes are also desired. The Council Programme includes the following relevant priorities:

- trial new methods of community engagement to develop solutions including the use of community transport schemes and with partners and public and private transport providers ensure fewer people experience transport as a barrier to accessing services, employment or leisure activities;
- work with business and partners to continue to promote and develop the Highlands as a world class, year round, tourist destination. We will also work with communities and businesses to secure funding to enable improvements in local tourism infrastructure.

Supporting this, the Corporate Plan includes Outcome 5.2:

- We will, with partners, grow the Highland tourism offer and invest in infrastructure.

Evaluation

Evaluation can be done by a range of measures within the Council's control and with the involvement of partners. Key measures will include:

1. Traffic counts on roads leading to tourist magnets.
2. Passenger numbers on buses serving these locations.
3. Where charges are in place, records of car park use.
4. Reduction in bus journey times on existing routes: measured both by changes in timetables as interventions take effect, and monitoring by Stagecoach (and other operators if relevant) of vehicle tracking and real time compliance with timetables.
5. Under our BSIP, we intend that bus operating mileage and passenger numbers would be reported by operators on a regular basis, in a way which will support evaluation of the interventions.
6. Benchmark against tourism measures e.g. bed night in Skye, to assess fluctuations in tourist market.

5. Potential Options

Max 3000 words

Outline the ideas the partnership has for developing bus priority measures and an outline timescale for their delivery. Describe any quick wins i.e. developments which could be implemented within the financial year 2021/22[iii]. Outline how you plan to work in partnership, if that has been established. Describe what consultation has taken place to arrive at these high-level options[iv].

The need in both areas covered by this proposal is not for bus priorities along the routes but to ease congestion at the destinations. This will enable enhanced bus services. Part of the proposal is therefore to provide bus stances, shelters and (where relevant) turning areas at key locations. On some sections of road, improved passing places will also be necessary to ensure that a bus service can operate reliably. Largely, these will be achievable as quick wins. In the longer term, provision of park & ride sites is a key element of the proposal.

In Skye, the prime means of consultation has been through the Visitor Management Plan, which covers several other functions in addition to transport. The Plan is recommended for final approval by the Council's Tourism Committee on 21 April, available at

https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4424/tourism_committee/attachment/78030. (Not yet uploaded at time of writing but will be soon.)

Proposals for the Cairngorms area have been discussed with Cairngorms National Park.

Highland Council transport officers are working with a variety of partners – bus operators, including Stagecoach as well as smaller companies and community representatives – to identify locations which would particularly benefit from the provision of bus shelters. Provision of high quality shelters in the main towns and villages, with branding, is seen as an element of the project which would increase the awareness and visibility of the bus network. At the scenic destinations, simpler shelters, designed to be in keeping with the environment, would be more appropriate, but the same branding could be used.

Sheep gates are a particularly charming and helpful feature of some Highland bus shelters (especially in Skye), and the addition of these could be a simple way to even further encourage public transport: it could easily become known that identifiably “Skye” bus shelters have sheep gates, a photo opportunity in itself for visitors and a vivid reminder of their stay.

Highland Council transport officers will also be consulting with Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland (OATS) to secure lower car park admission fees for bus/shuttle operators who will frequent car parks at busy attractions – thus minimising congestion, and offering a further incentive for individual visitors to forego personal transport (thus avoiding the car park admission fee, which is paid by the bus/shuttle operator instead).

QUICK WINS

The expansion of planned car park developments in Skye is a straightforward quick win for the current financial year. Works are planned at Kilt Rock (near Staffin) and Coral Beach (north of Dunvegan). Provision of bus stances and shelters, and turning facilities, at these sites will make bus operation feasible. Stagecoach have reported that the existing car park for Coral Beach is too small to turn a midi-bus. They have also expressed concern about space being blocked by other vehicles, which could be resolved (along with increased capacity) by installation of a bus-activated barrier system. Some improvement to passing places on the unclassified road between Dunvegan Castle and Coral Beach will also aid the reliability of bus operation.

At existing car parks, provision of bus stances and shelters will support bus operation. There include Fairy Pools, Fairy Glen, Storr and Quiraing. In conjunction with SGRPID, other sites on the Trotternish loop (A855) may also be agreed.

At Glenmore, provision of a bus turning facility will support provision of a more frequent bus shuttle service from Portree in the peak season.

LONGER TERM OPTIONS

The main longer term option is the provision of Park & Ride sites. Feasibility of peripheral sites in Portree would be assessed, building on a parking study which was carried out in 2018 (which reviewed car parking options in general, including two peripheral sites, but did not consider park & ride for the purposes set out in this bid). In Aviemore, to intercept visitors before they reach the prevalent town centre congestion or turn on to the Cairngorm road, a park & ride site on the southern approach to the town would be beneficial. This will also require appraisal and assessment.

In Skye, while in the short term, existing car parks in Broadford, Dunvegan and Uig are expected to be adequate for local park & ride needs, a future assessment of needs may indicate a need for expansion of these facilities.

6. Resources Required

What resources is the partnership requesting from Transport Scotland to develop the proposals[v]?	£224,000 for Quick Win projects and £57,500 for feasibility studies.
What is the estimated total cost of the proposed infrastructure developments?	£15,100,000
What – if any - is the nature and extent of investment to be made by partners[vi]?	Council funding of £45,000 and SGRPID funding of £100,000 is allocated to Coral Beach car park reconstruction and expansion. SGRPID's Senior Agricultural Officer based at Portree has agreed to ensure land provision for bus shelter placement at all locations within his control. Skye Connect Ltd will support marketing of bus services to tourists and accommodation providers.
What – if any – other sources of investment will be available for the proposed developments[vii]?	None known.

7. Commitment of Partners

The proposal should be signed by the Chair and CEO of the local authority leading the proposal. Partners (including RTPs and bus operators, as appropriate) may indicate their support to the proposal through appended letters of intent or additional signatures below.

Organisation	Name	Job title	Signature

The Highland Council	Trish Robertson	Chair of Economy & Infrastructure	Trish.robertson.cllr@highland.gov.uk
The Highland Council	Donna Manson	Chief Executive	Donna.manson@highland.gov.uk
Stagecoach Highlands	David Beaton	Managing Director	David.beaton@stagecoachbus.com
HiTrans	Ranald Robertson	Director	ranald.robertson@hitrans.org.uk
SGRPID	Ewen MacPherson	Senior Agricultural Officer	Ewen.Macpherson@gov.scot
Skye Connect Ltd	Alistair Danter	Project Manager	alistair@skye-connect.com
Cairngorms National Park Authority	Peter Crane		PeterCrane@cairngorms.co.uk

8. Submission of Proposals

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