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Subject: RE: STPR2 - A96 Review - URGENT

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Final copies of the Technical Note attached.

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Technical Note

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1. Background to the A96 Corridor Review

The Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), published in 2008, set out a number of transport priorities for the Inverness to Aberdeen corridor to be met by 2032. These transport priorities included: rail enhancements, new stations at Kintore and Dalcross, strategic park and ride at Dyce, upgrading of the A96 to dual carriageway between Inverness and Nairn, including a bypass of Nairn, a new bridge at Inveramsay, and a targeted programme of measures to reduce accident severity.

Since publication of STPR, progress had been made on these transport priorities including:

- Completion of Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvements Phase 1, which comprises:
 - The redoubling of the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie.
 - Signalling enhancements between Nairn and Elgin.
 - Platform extensions at Inch and Elgin.
 - The relocation of Forres station.
 - Loop extension of the track at Forres.
 - Infrastructure to facilitate the construction of new stations at Kintore and Dalcross.
- New station at Kintore opened in October 2020.
- Construction commenced at new station at Dalcross (due for completion in December 2022).
- Strategic Park and Ride at Dyce opened in January 2017.
- A96 Dualling Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) scheme: draft orders published in November 2016, PLI held in October/November 2018, Scottish Ministers have given the go-ahead for completing of the statutory procedures in February 2021.
- A new bridge at Inveramsay opened in March 2016.

Other schemes of relevance that have completed or are in progress include:

- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) completely opened to traffic in February 2019.
- A92/A96 Haudagain improvement, under construction, due for completion by the end of March 2022.
- A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton scheme: draft orders published in September 2019; Statutory Consultation Period closed in October 2019. Transport Scotland is currently considering the representations received.

In December 2011, The Agenda for Cities, “Scotland’s Cities: Delivering for Scotland”, was published by the Scottish Government. The purpose of this document was to set out the vital contribution that Scotland's major population centres can make in delivering the Government Economic Strategy. The Agenda identified connecting cities with strong, reliable and resilient transport infrastructure as a key characteristic to support growth. Published alongside this was the Scottish Government’s Infrastructure Investment Plan, providing an overview of plans for infrastructure investment over the coming decades. The refreshed Agenda for Cities, published in March 2016, recognises that following completion of the A9 Dualling Programme, all cities will be connected by continuous dual carriageway with the exception of Aberdeen and Inverness. To complement the Agenda for Cities, the investment plan contains a commitment to complete the dual carriageway network between all Scotland’s cities by 2030.

In December 2011, the Scottish Government launched the Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP), which provided an overview of the Scottish Government's plans for infrastructure investment over the coming decades. The 2011 IIP (and update in 2015) included a commitment to complete the dualling of the A96 trunk road between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030, thus completing the dual carriageway network between all Scottish cities. The 2021 IIP also notes ongoing work to dual the A96, including around design and development work.

The plan to upgrade the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen to dual carriageway was reconfirmed in the Third National Planning Framework in 2014. More recently, the consultative draft NPF4 (laid to Parliament on 10 November 2021), references improvements to the A96 to improve safety.

In 2014 a Strategic Business Case (SBC) for the dualling was published. The SBC considered a range of options for improving transport links, recommending that full dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen was the best performing option in terms of the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) and the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria considered.

The objectives identified for the A96 dualling in the SBC are:

- Objective 1 - To improve the operation of the corridor and inter-urban connectivity between the cities of Aberdeen and Inverness and their city regions through:
 - reduced journey times;
 - improved journey time reliability; and
 - reduced conflicts between local and strategic road based journeys.
- Objective 2 - To improve safety for motorised and non-motorised users through:
 - reduced accident rates and severity; and
 - reduced driver stress.
- Objective 3 - To provide opportunities to grow the regional economies on the corridor through:
 - improved access to the wider strategic transport network; and
 - enhanced access to jobs and services.

In 2015 a Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 Assessment for the initial development and assessment of broadly defined improvement strategies for the upgrade of the A96 to a Category 7A all-purpose dual carriageway was published. A Strategic Environmental Assessment was also carried out at this time, with reports published in 2014 and 2015, and the Post Adoption Statement published in 2016.

Based on the outcome of the preliminary work, it was announced in 2015 that the next stage of design (i.e., Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Assessment) would be taken forward as three geographic sections, in addition to the Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) section, which was at a more advanced stage of development. Development of the dualling proposals has been progressed to varying stages, as follows:

- Inverness to Nairn (including Nairn Bypass) – draft Orders were published in 2016 with a Public Local Inquiry held in 2018 and following consideration of the objections and Reporter’s recommendations, the Scottish Ministers decided in 2021 that the Orders should be made with modifications as proposed by Transport Scotland. The Orders have not yet been made.
- Hardmuir to Fochabers – route options have been considered and a preferred option was selected in 2018. Work has been progressing on the design and assessment of the preferred option.
- East of Huntly to Aberdeen – route options have been considered and a preferred option was selected in 2020. Work has been progressing on the design and assessment of the preferred option.
- East of Fochabers to East of Huntly – to date no development work beyond DMRB Stage 1 has progressed on this section of the dualling programme.

In August 2021 the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group agreed a Cooperation Agreement¹ and shared policy programme². In the shared policy programme, various agreed principles regarding investment in the transport network were

¹ Scottish Government, Cooperation Agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group, 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cooperation-agreement-between-scottish-government-scottish-green-party-parliamentary-group/pages/1/>

² Scottish Government, Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party - Shared Policy Programme, 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-scottish-green-party-shared-policy-programme/>

set out. In relation to the A96, the Scottish Government committed to:

- Taking forward a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues. This will include:
 - dualling from Inverness to Nairn
 - bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the by-passed town centres
 - targeted road safety improvements where needed, for example between Fochabers and Huntly and Inverurie to Aberdeen
 - the development of an A96 “Electric Highway”
- Conducting a transparent, evidence-based review of the plan to fully dual the A96 route between Inverness and Aberdeen, to include a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate and the environment.

Other commitments given in relation to the North East of Scotland included developing a programme of enhanced public transport improvements, which will include:

- Work to improve the resilience, reliability and efficiency of the Aberdeen to Inverness rail corridor, alongside our commitment to decarbonise the rail network, to make it more competitive to road and encourage modal shift for both passengers and freight
- Working with Nestrans, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils on the feasibility of a mass rapid transit system for the region, and also a rail link between Dyce and Ellon and further north to Peterhead and Fraserburgh
- reviewing the A96 corridor with a view to implementing appropriate bus priority measures.

Work has progressed since 2014 on developing proposals for the dualling of the A96. The Cooperation Agreement reaffirms that the current plan is to fully dual the A96 route between Inverness and Aberdeen but acknowledges that a review of the plan to fully dual the A96 will be undertaken, referred to in this technical note as the A96 Corridor Review. This technical note sets out the policy context informing the A96 Corridor Review and an overview of the approach proposed.

2. Policy Context Informing the A96 Corridor Review

At the Scottish Government level, at the heart of the policy agenda is confronting climate change, reducing child poverty and supporting a Just Transition and National Economic Transformation. These areas are reflected in Government policy since the publication of the A96 Strategic Business Case³, including publication of NTS2 and Delivery Plan, Climate Change Plan update and NPF 4. A policy context refresh will therefore be required, as well as drawing on updated information from STPR2 and other current policies and strategies. This section provides a summary of the policy context that will inform the A96 Corridor Review. Given the strategic importance of the A96 Dualling Programme, it is particularly important that national policies are taken into consideration alongside regional and local policies.

³ Transport Scotland, Strategic Business Case - A96 Inverness to Aberdeen, 2014, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/strategic-business-case-september-2014-a96-inverness-to-aberdeen/>

2.1. National Policy Context

The **National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)**⁴ sets the vision for the country's transport system over the next 20 years to achieve a more sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system which helps to deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. It sets out key priorities to support that vision: reduces inequalities; takes climate action; helps deliver inclusive economic growth; and improves our health and wellbeing. Each priority is underpinned by three outcomes. At the heart of the Strategy is the recognition that we need to deliver a step-change in behaviour and provision of attractive, affordable, accessible, and sustainable travel options. Embedded within the Strategy is the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making to address the challenges and achieve the priorities and the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy to inform future investment decisions and ensure transport options that focus on reducing inequalities and the need to travel unsustainably are prioritised.

The actions to take forward NTS2 are outlined in the **Delivery Plan**⁵, published in December 2020. The Delivery Plan sets out a range of actions being taken forward by the Scottish Government, to deliver on its vision and priorities to the end of March 2022. This first Delivery Plan takes cognisance of the impact of COVID-19 on travel demand and behaviour, and its impact in terms of exacerbating existing inequalities, including around access to and affordability of transport, particularly for those already experiencing disadvantage.

In April 2019 the Scottish Government declared a **Climate Emergency** and set out targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040. The targets are underpinned by The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act published by the Scottish Government in 2019 which amended the Climate Change Act 2009. In December 2020, the Scottish Government produced its **Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 update**⁶, which sets out the approach to delivering a green recovery, with a focus on the period up to 2032. The transport-related components of the Plan build upon NTS2, with a specific commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030. **Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland**⁷ which was published in January 2022, is the route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030. It sets out the actions we will take between now and 2030 to support each of the four sustainable travel behaviours: reducing the need to travel, living well locally, switching modes and combining trips or sharing journeys.

In July 2021, the Scottish Government published **Cleaner Air For Scotland 2: Towards A Better Place For Everyone**⁸ and an associated **Delivery Plan**, setting out how the Scottish Government will deliver further air quality improvements over the next five years to secure the vision of Scotland having the best air quality in Europe – a quality of air that aims to protect and enhance health, wellbeing and the environment. It recognises the need for a reduction in the need to travel unsustainably, making the most of existing transport

⁴ Transport Scotland, National Transport Strategy (NTS2), 2020, www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf

⁵ Transport Scotland, National Transport Strategy (NTS2) – Delivery Plan – 2020 to 2022, 2020, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/national-transport-strategy-nts2-delivery-plan-2020-to-2022/>

⁶ Scottish Government, Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero: Climate Change Plan 2018–2032 - update, 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

⁷ Transport Scotland, Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland, 2022, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/a-route-map-to-achieve-a-20-per-cent-reduction-in-car-kilometres-by-2030/>

⁸ Scottish Government, Cleaner Air For Scotland 2: Towards A Better Place For Everyone, July 2021

strategic systems and supporting strategic investments in sustainable, smart and cleaner transport options.

The **Programme for Government (PfG) 2021-22**⁹ sets out the actions that the Scottish Government will take over the next year and beyond, across six long-term priorities, including a priority to end Scotland's contribution to climate change, restoring nature and enhancing climate resilience, in a just and fair way. Within this priority, there is an action to ensure that at least £320 million or 10% of the total transport budget goes on active travel by 2024-25, ensuring greener, cleaner and better connected communities. The PfG confirms the shared policy programme commitment to undertake a transport enhancements programme on the A96 corridor that improves connectivity between surrounding towns, tackles congestion and addresses safety and environmental issues, including dualling from Inverness to Nairn; bypassing of Nairn, Keith, Elgin and Inverurie accompanied by measures to remove through traffic from the bypassed town centres; targeted road safety improvements where needed, for example between Fochabers and Huntly and from Inverurie to Aberdeen; and, the development of an A96 "Electric Highway". It reaffirms that current plans are to fully dual the A96 from Inverness to Aberdeen; however, a transparent, evidence-based review will be undertaken, to include a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate and the environment, reporting by the end of 2022.

The **Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP)**¹⁰ for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26 was published on 04 February 2021, following consultation on the Draft Plan in September 2020 and building on the previous IIP published. It also draws in inputs from the work of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland. The vision of the IIP is that "our infrastructure supports Scotland's resilience and enables inclusive, net zero, and sustainable growth." It provides additional detail to support the commitments made within the Programme for Government and sets the context of future investment in transport to deliver an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and also to the key longer-term trends of climate change, technological developments and demographic change. The IIP identifies delivery under three themes: 1) enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability; 2) driving inclusive economic growth; and 3) building resilient and sustainable places. These themes directly link to Scotland's National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Under Theme 1, the IIP aims to deliver decarbonisation of transport and support active travel by reducing the need to travel unsustainably, investing in bus and rail decarbonisation and encouraging a shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Under Theme 2, the IIP notes that through enhancing our transport infrastructure, focusing on a safe and resilient strategic transport network which also contributes to net zero and inclusive economic growth, we can boost Scotland's productivity and competitiveness, increase trade and inward investment. The plan also includes a commitment to develop an 'investment hierarchy' which prioritises enhancing and maintaining existing assets over new build, the details of which form part of the consultation.

By aligning strategy, project and programme funding, the **Capital Spending Review (CSR)**¹¹ sends a strong signal on the future need to adjust the balance of investment in

⁹ A Fairer, Greener Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2021-2022, Scottish Government, September 2021

¹⁰ Scottish Government, Infrastructure Investment, <https://www.gov.scot/policies/government-finance/infrastructure-investment/>

¹¹ Scottish Government, Investing for jobs: capital spending review framework 2021-2022 to 2025-2026, 2020, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/investing-jobs-capital-spending-review-framework-2021-22-2025-26/>

favour of renewing and extending the life of existing infrastructure, both on environmental and value-for-money grounds.

The **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)**¹² is being developed alongside the IIP and a consultative draft of the Framework was laid to Parliament on 10 November 2021. NPF4 sets out a need to “embrace and deliver radical change to tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, improve health and wellbeing, build a wellbeing economy and create great places.” In this context NPF4 recognises the need to plan our places in a way that reduces the need to travel. To support the spatial strategy a number of policy changes are set out within NPF4, such as embedding the NTS2 Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and Sustainable Investment Hierarchy into the appraisal and assessment of development proposals. The new spatial strategy also sets out an approach whereby future places, homes and neighbourhoods will be better, healthier and more vibrant places to live, by reducing the overall volume of travel by building quality places that work for everyone through the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods. NPF4 advocates the infrastructure-first approach in planning for future development to provide communities with the opportunity to travel in a sustainable manner from the outset. NPF4 recognises there will be a need to adapt key routes due to the impacts of climate change alongside creating a strong network of charging points, including improvements to the A96 to improve safety.

In 2018, the Scottish Government published an updated **National Performance Framework**¹³ which sets out the Scottish Government’s Purpose, the Values guiding the approach, the National Outcomes that will help achieve the Purpose and the National Indicators that will be used to measure Scotland’s progress against the National Outcomes.

Scotland’s Agenda for Cities¹⁴, published in 2016, is a refresh of Scotland’s Cities: Delivering for Scotland that coincides with the refresh of Scotland’s Economic Strategy and acts as a mid-point review. The Agenda looks to make Scotland’s cities and their regions exemplars in digital and transport connectivity, low carbon approaches and affordable housing. The Agenda recognises that, following completion of the A9 Dualling Programme, all cities will be connected by continuous dual carriageway with the exception of Aberdeen and Inverness.

Just Transition - A Fairer, Greener Scotland¹⁵: The 2021 response of the Scottish Government to the Just Transition Commission’s Interim Report, sets out the framework for how Scotland, by 2045, will deliver a fair and green transition for everyone as the Country seeks to reach its Net Zero targets and legal obligations. From a transport infrastructure perspective, the framework highlights the ongoing development of 20-Minute Neighbourhoods and the aspiration to deliver sustainable communities through targeted improvements to Active Travel and Public Transport modes. Additionally, the framework details emerging technological solutions to facilitate this fair and green transition such as those relating to Connective and Autonomous Vehicles and Transport Scotland’s planned roadmap.

¹² Scotland 2045: Our Fourth National Planning Framework (Draft), Scottish Government, November 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-2045-fourth-national-planning-framework-draft/>

¹³ National Performance Framework, Scottish Government, <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

¹⁴ Scotland’s Agenda for Cities, Scottish Government, 2016, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-agenda-cities/pages/3/>

¹⁵ Scottish Government, Just Transition - A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Scottish Government response, 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-fairer-greener-scotland/>

2.2. Regional and Local Policy Context

City Region and Growth Deals: The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring 100% coverage of Scotland with Growth Deals. The Scottish Government, the UK Government and regional partners have agreed funding for £315 million as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal. £65 million is set to be invested by the Scottish and UK Government with the agreement of the Heads of Terms on the Moray Growth Deal, with further funding from regional partners resulting in a Deal worth over £100 million over ten to 15 years. The Scottish and UK Government are also committed to jointly investing up to £250 million as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, with further funding from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council, the private sector and other local economic partners bringing the total to over £826 million over the next ten years. Both City Region Deals for Aberdeen and Inverness & Highland are seeking to improve accessibility and connectivity to increase the economic performance and address existing transport inequalities and the A96 plays a crucial role for the connectivity between the two cities in the North of Scotland and the wider region.

HITRANS Regional Transport Draft Strategy (RTS)¹⁶: the draft RTS published for consultation in May 2017 sets out the strategic transport vision for the Highlands and Islands region and also highlights that further action is required to support sustainable economic growth and to reduce barriers to participation in employment, learning, social, health and the wealth of cultural activities that the region has to offer. The draft RTS includes the A96 dualling between Inverness and Aberdeen in the list of committed for delivery projects in the region. Moreover, it notes that HITRANS will work with Transport Scotland and other partners to ensure the project delivers a transport corridor and enhanced connectivity between and within the many large communities which will be impacted by the A96 dualling programme.

Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)¹⁷: published in November 2021, the RTS is a long-term strategy for the areas of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, which sets the vision and direction for transport in the region up to the year 2040. The RTS acknowledges the Cooperation Agreement and includes “Improvements to the A96 corridor between Aberdeen and Inverness” in the list of committed projects in the pipeline, highlighting that A96 improvements would support the objectives of the Regional Economic Strategy. It also references the Cumulative Transport Appraisal of the Strategic Development Plan, which identified that dualling the A96 between the east of Huntly and Aberdeen will likely be required to facilitate anticipated levels of development in the future. Furthermore, the RTS underlines Nestrans consideration that the A96 corridor between the AWPR and Inverurie requires to be upgraded to modern standards to address safety and congestion issues.

Local Strategies: this includes local transport strategies as well as non-transport specific plans, such as local development plans and economic strategies, which set out the strategic direction and outcomes to be achieved in The Highland Council, Moray Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council local authority areas over the lifespan of each strategy.

¹⁶ HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy Draft, May 2017, https://hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy

¹⁷ Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy, November 2021, <https://www.nestrans.org.uk/regional-transport-strategy/>

3. A96 Corridor Review Approach

3.1. Overarching Principles

Given the above, STPR2 recommends that the A96 Corridor Review is undertaken in accordance with STAG. The review should consider the transport problems and opportunities on the A96 corridor, changing policy context and other relevant considerations such as development aspirations for the corridor and surrounding area. The review should also include a Climate Compatibility Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 1 Assessment.

It is expected that the review will take account of the work undertaken as part of STPR2, particularly in relation to the policy review and establishment of the TPOs, which align with the NTS2 priorities and outcomes. It is also expected that the review will develop interventions taking cognisance of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and Sustainable Investment Hierarchy set out in NTS2.

3.2. STAG Appraisal

The STAG appraisal stages are:

- Initial Appraisal: Case for Change;
- Preliminary Options Appraisal;
- Detailed Options Appraisal; and
- Post Appraisal.

Initial Appraisal: Case for Change

The requirements of the Initial Appraisal: Case for Change stage set out in the STAG guidance will be followed. Whilst the below is not an exhaustive list of STAG requirements, particular aspects will include:

- Problems and Opportunities – baseline information to assist informing identification of transport problems and opportunities will be sought from previous studies (including STPR2). The need for any further updated baseline information or modelling will also be considered. Specific A96 Corridor problems and opportunities will be identified, with consultation also inputting to this stage.
- Policy Context – an updated policy context will be produced, building on the policy context for the A96 Corridor Review within this technical note, also noting changes following the A96 Strategic Business Case and further design and development work undertaken since then.
- Objective setting – new TPOs will be developed, informed by the review of the transport problems and opportunities and policy review. The TPOs will also be consulted on.
- Option Generation and Sifting – multi-modal transport options will be considered. The options will set out to address the identified problems and opportunities and meet the TPOs, taking account of the policy context. Options from previous studies and from STPR2 will also be reviewed as part of this stage. Participation and consultation will continue relating to the identification of options for consideration and the development of options or packages of options for appraisal.

Preliminary Options Appraisal and Detailed Options Appraisal

The Preliminary Options Appraisal and Detailed Options Appraisal stages will involve additional technical development and assessment of the options being taken forward from the Initial Appraisal: Case for Change Stage. The level of technical development will be tailored to each stage, with increases in detail in both design and assessment at the Detailed Appraisal Stage. The level of assessment will align to DMRB Stage 1 for any roads based infrastructure options. Participation and consultation will continue and will inform this stage.

The outcome of the A96 Corridor Review will be a recommended improvement strategy informed by the evidence based appraisal undertaken.

The A96 Corridor Review will also form the Strategic Business Case (SBC).

Consideration will be given to the need for other appraisals including Equality Impact Assessment and Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment.

3.3. Environmental Assessment

The need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment and other statutory assessments such as a Habitats Regulations Appraisal and Programme Level Appropriate Assessment will be considered, and the assessments carried out as necessary.

Environmental considerations will be an important part of the Initial Appraisal and Preliminary Options Appraisal stages, with the Initial Appraisal stage also informing Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening and Scoping, if a SEA is deemed to be required.

Whilst SEA would normally consider a desk-based assessment approach, any appropriate more detailed information from other corridor studies carried out previously or underway will also be used.

The SEA Report would inform the STAG Detailed Options Appraisal, if a SEA is deemed to be required following the screening stage.

3.4. Climate Compatibility Assessment

A transparent, evidence-based review to include a climate compatibility assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate and the environment will be undertaken.

Climate Change is a STAG criterion identified in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance - Draft Managers Guide for User Review published in September 2021. This includes a requirement to assess:

- the effects of each option on the Scottish Government's ability to meet net zero targets;
- greenhouse gas emissions; and
- the vulnerability of each option as well as the potential of each option to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Climatic Factors are assessed in the SEA, typically considering emissions on a global level as they contribute to the cumulative atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

DMRB document LA114 sets out the requirements for assessing and reporting the effects of climate on highways (climate change resilience and adaptation), and the effect on climate of greenhouse gas from construction, operation and maintenance projects and so would apply to the DMRB Stage 1 Assessment. LA 114 SNAA Scotland National



Application Annex to LA 114 Climate would apply. The significance criteria for the assessment relate to carbon budget and shall be assessed against the emissions envelopes within the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan SG RPP3, including Scottish Government sector targets.

Consideration will be given to the above and other approaches as necessary to tailor the Climate Compatibility Assessment to assess direct and indirect impacts on the climate and the environment.

The approach to the Climate Compatibility Assessment will be developed during the STAG Initial Appraisal stage, taking account of STAG Criteria, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.