

Infrastructure Strategy 2027-2037: consultation

Question 1

Do you agree with the scope and role of the Infrastructure Strategy?

Yes

No

Partly

Please give reasons for your answer.

The Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) broadly supports the Strategy's long-term, outcome-focused and place-based scope, particularly its alignment with the 30-year Needs Assessment. However, the Strategy would benefit from a clearer articulation of how transport networks, as critical enabling infrastructure, are integrated across sectors and how user needs, accessibility and operational performance are embedded alongside high-level outcomes.¹ Greater emphasis on the role of transport in shaping place, supporting modal shift and delivering social value would strengthen the Strategy's overall effectiveness.

Question 2

Do you think the proposed framework, linking the 30-year Needs Assessment, 10-year Infrastructure Strategy, Spending Reviews and annual Budgets will support improved strategic planning and delivery?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Are there any other improvement you want to suggest – please specify?

¹ CIHT (2024) [A transport network fit for all our futures](#)

- Strengthen feedback loops between delivery and future planning by clearly defining ownership of benefits realisation, monitoring outcomes over time, and ensuring lessons learned systematically inform subsequent investment cycles.
- Enhance data integration and monitoring, particularly around transport performance, user experience and carbon outcomes.
- Provide clearer pipeline visibility, especially for transport schemes, to support supply chain confidence and skills development.
- Ensure multi-modal integration is embedded within funding and appraisal processes.
- Improve transparency and consistency in prioritisation by articulating clearer criteria for how programmes are progressed through Spending Reviews. The absence of an indicative pipeline or prioritisation framework risks reducing confidence in why some programmes advance while others stall.

Question 3

Do any elements of the Infrastructure lifecycle need to be strengthened to promote more effective infrastructure planning and delivery?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide further details.

Improved procurement and asset management planning is needed to ensure that the assets being built are maintainable over the long term. There should also be greater emphasis on resilience and adaptation, recognising that it is not possible to plan for all emergencies. As such, reactive resilience should be explicitly accounted for within budgets, alongside planned resilience measures, to ensure infrastructure systems can respond effectively to unforeseen events while remaining sustainable over time. For more information about resilience planning, please see CIHT's 2024 report, 'Delivering a resilient transport network- maintaining and future proofing highway infrastructure from extreme weather events', available at: <https://www.ciht.org.uk/resilience>

Question 4

In what areas could changes to governance or planning processes across the public sector improve the impact of the investment hierarchy?

Strategic Alignment

Collaboration

Business Case Development

Funding and Deliverability

Procurement and Oversight

Evaluation and Learning

Lifecycle Planning

Other

None

Please provide details?

- Collaboration: Breaking down silos between transport, land use planning, housing and environmental sectors to support integrated decision-making.
- Business Case Development: Strengthening appraisal frameworks to better capture social value, accessibility, health and environmental outcomes.
- Funding and Deliverability: Providing longer-term funding certainty to support maintenance and smaller-scale, high-impact interventions.
- Procurement and Oversight: Procurement is critical to ensuring delivery and can drive positive outcomes in decarbonisation and innovation if done well.
- Evaluation and Learning: Establishing consistent evaluation frameworks and sharing lessons across sectors. This should include clearer accountability for post-completion benefits realisation and transparent reporting on whether intended outcomes have been achieved.
- Lifecycle Planning: Embedding whole-life costing and asset management as core requirements.

Question 5

Do you agree that enabling net zero and environmental sustainability, driving economic growth, and building resilient places continue to be the right outcomes to guide infrastructure investment over the next decade?

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither Agree or Disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Question 6

Are the three proposed enablers, public assets, place-making, and private investment, sufficient to deliver the Strategy's outcomes?

Yes

No

Are there other enablers we should consider instead/additionally - please specify

While the three proposed enablers provide a strong foundation for delivering the Strategy's outcomes, they may not be sufficient in isolation. They do not fully account for unexpected events such as natural disasters or other shocks, and there is limited clarity on how the system would respond in such circumstances. A more holistic approach would need to explicitly consider resilience and contingency planning to ensure the Strategy can adapt and respond effectively to unforeseen challenges. In addition, the Strategy underplays the capacity and funding pressures faced by local authorities, particularly smaller and rural councils - who are expected to lead increasingly complex, place-based infrastructure programmes without corresponding support or long-term funding certainty.

Question 7

What mechanisms or approaches should the Infrastructure Strategy adopt to ensure that cross-cutting priorities, such as housing delivery, regional economic development, and natural infrastructure are systematically embedded in investment planning and decision making?

Please specify?

The Infrastructure Strategy should adopt stronger mechanisms to ensure cross-cutting priorities are embedded in investment planning and decision making. In particular, planning condition enforcement should be strengthened alongside the requirement for

upfront infrastructure development to support housing and economic growth. This approach would help ensure that infrastructure is delivered in step with development, rather than lagging behind it, and would provide a more coordinated framework for aligning housing delivery, regional economic development, and supporting infrastructure needs from the outset.

Question 8

Are there any findings from the Scottish Futures Trust Needs Assessment (perhaps from drivers of change, cross-cutting themes, or enablers) that we should more fully integrate into this 10-year Infrastructure Strategy?

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, please provide details

Greater focus on asset management and climate resilience.

Question 9

Do you support the proposal that infrastructure investment is more directly driven by the priorities of places across Scotland?

Yes

No

Question 10

Are the proposed principles, national spatial priorities and place partnerships, the right ones to guide a place-based approach?

Yes

No

Don't know

Are there other principles we should consider - please specify

Yes, but with important caveats. Ultimately, decisions about where population growth is directed are a matter of policy. However, concentrating population and development in the central belt can place a disproportionate burden on a smaller number of people and public bodies to fund and support infrastructure in more rural and remote areas. A place-based approach should therefore carefully balance national spatial priorities with the need to ensure equitable investment across regions, so that rural areas are not structurally disadvantaged and can sustain essential services and infrastructure over the long term, allowing young people to remain.

Question 11

Do you agree with the Scottish Government's proposal to empower communities to play a more active role in infrastructure decision making?

Yes

No

What mechanisms would best support meaningful community involvement and help maximise local social benefits - please specify?

Empowering communities to play a more active role in infrastructure decision making may increase delivery times if opinion is divided on a given project. However, community involvement is vital in ensuring that all sections of the community can use any new infrastructure once a decision has been made, e.g. disabled people and other people with other protected characteristics.

The most effective mechanisms for supporting meaningful community involvement and maximising local social benefits require a shift from one-off consultation to continuous, inclusive collaboration. Central to this is the concept of “co-cultivation,” where communities are engaged throughout the entire project lifecycle- from early design through delivery and ongoing evaluation- ensuring their needs shape outcomes and fostering long-term ownership. CIHT's report 'Creating a public realm for all' (2024) - see: <https://www.ciht.org.uk/news/creating-a-public-realm-for-all/> provides further information.

Inclusive stakeholder representation is key, particularly involving disabled people, older adults, children, and others who are often underrepresented, so that public spaces work equitably for all users. Engagement should be grounded in lived experience, using

participatory approaches such as co-design workshops, stakeholder forums, and iterative feedback processes to ensure decisions reflect real-world needs. These methods should be structured, transparent, and embedded across all project stages, including construction and maintenance, to sustain accessibility and social value over time. Building institutional capacity, through training in equality, diversity, and inclusion, enables practitioners to engage more effectively and design more inclusive environments. Collectively, these mechanisms strengthen social cohesion, improve accessibility and wellbeing, and ensure that the public realm is created with communities rather than simply for them, thereby maximising its long-term social benefits.

Question 12

Do you believe the current landscape of local and regional partnerships (e.g. Community Planning Partnerships, Regional Economic Partnerships, Regional Adaptation Partnerships) provides an effective framework for delivering place-based infrastructure investment?

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer, including any suggestions for improvement of existing structures?

The current landscape is not effective. The fragmentation created by smaller councils, combined with limited skills capacity and constrained revenue budgets, makes it difficult for many authorities, particularly rural and island councils, to plan, procure and deliver complex infrastructure programmes effectively.

Question 13

Are there additional sectors or opportunities that should be considered for strategic investment to support economic growth and maximise opportunities for longer-term growth?

Please specify?

The Strategy should consider the following additional sectors and opportunities for strategic investment to support long-term economic growth and sustainability. These

include sustainable transport systems, such as public transport, active travel and rail decarbonisation, which are essential for reducing emissions and enabling modal shift, alongside digital infrastructure that supports both mobility and remote access to services and opportunities. There is also a critical need to invest in resilient transport networks that are designed for climate adaptation and supported by effective maintenance regimes to ensure long-term reliability. Alongside this, greater emphasis must be placed on maintaining existing assets, with investment prioritised toward the upkeep of current infrastructure. Increasingly, public infrastructure maintenance is being undertaken by communities and volunteers, highlighting both the growing pressure on formal systems and the need for more sustainable, supported approaches to asset management. In addition, strengthening freight and logistics infrastructure will be key to supporting economic productivity while enabling the transition to lower-carbon supply chains.

Question 14

To make the most of the strategic opportunities in renewables, housing, and natural capital, what will the economy need from our infrastructure to grow and thrive up to 2037?

Please specify?

The economy requires infrastructure that is integrated, resilient and future-focused to support sustainable growth to 2037. This includes delivering low-carbon, multi-modal transport systems that enable a shift away from private car use, alongside infrastructure-first approaches that unlock housing development in the right locations. Investing in active travel can also play a significant role in supporting the economy, while delivering substantial public health benefits. Infrastructure must also support the expansion of renewable energy through enhanced grid capacity and port infrastructure, while ensuring that networks are climate-resilient and adaptable to future risks. Improving connectivity between regions and communities will be essential to reducing spatial inequalities, and overall, infrastructure must facilitate the efficient movement of people and goods to boost productivity, support economic competitiveness and enable inclusive growth.

Ends