

Draft Infrastructure Strategy

Scottish Government Consultation

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland. For information only England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

1. Executive Summary

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation to inform the development of a new Infrastructure Strategy covering the period 2027-2037. The strategy will set out a long-term framework for infrastructure investment and delivery across Scotland, building on previous Infrastructure Investment Plans and the work of the 2020 Infrastructure Commission for Scotland.

The consultation focuses on the role of the Infrastructure Strategy, governance principles, infrastructure priorities, and delivery approaches, including the role of place-based planning and private sector investment.

Infrastructure supports the services and systems we all depend on, such as transport, health, housing and digital connectivity. Furthermore, local authorities are key partners in infrastructure planning, delivery and maintenance. The Infrastructure Strategy therefore has significant implications for capital investment, service delivery and local infrastructure priorities.

APSE encourages member authorities to engage with the consultation to ensure that the strategy reflects local needs, funding pressures and delivery capacity.

Responses are due by **Tuesday 5th May 2026**.

[Click here](#) for further information and to submit your response.

[Click here](#) to read the full report.

2. Overview

The Infrastructure Strategy 2027-2037 will provide a strategic framework to guide infrastructure investment and decision-making over the next decade. It aims to ensure that

infrastructure supports Scotland's wider objectives, including economic development, the transition to net zero emissions, and the delivery of sustainable and resilient communities.

To meet these goals, the Infrastructure Strategy focuses on three key enablers that can help turn strategic ambitions into practical outcomes, ensuring investment choices deliver long-term value:

- **Public Assets:** Making the best use of Scotland's infrastructure estate, aligning assets with modern service delivery models, and embedding robust asset strategies to optimise what we have.
- **Place-Making:** Ensuring infrastructure decisions reflect local priorities and spatial planning, creating thriving communities and supporting regional equity.
- **Private Investment:** Unlocking private capital to complement public funding, accelerate delivery, and support sectors such as housing, renewables, and digital connectivity.

The consultation seeks views on how infrastructure should be planned, prioritised, financed and governed. It also considers how to strengthen coordination across national, regional and local levels, and how to ensure that infrastructure investment delivers long-term value and positive outcomes for communities.

Policy context and rationale

The development of a new infrastructure strategy reflects the need for a more coordinated, long-term approach to investment in Scotland's infrastructure. This comes at a time of increasing pressure on public finances, alongside growing demand for resilient, high quality infrastructure that can support communities, public services and economic activity.

A central driver of the strategy is [Scotland's commitment](#) to addressing climate change and achieving net zero emissions, which will require significant transformation of the infrastructure systems over the coming decade. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that infrastructure investment supports inclusive economic growth and helps reduce inequalities between places and communities.

The strategy builds on previous Scottish Government policy work, including [earlier Infrastructure Investment Plans](#) and the recommendations of the [2020 Infrastructure Commission for Scotland](#), which emphasised the importance of long-term planning, prioritisation based on outcomes, and a greater focus on the condition and maintenance of existing assets. It also aligns with wider reforms to public service delivery and capital investment planning, including the [National Performance Framework](#), [National Planning Framework 4](#), and the UK Government's [Capital Spending Review](#).

There is increasing recognition that infrastructure policy must move beyond a focus on new capital projects to consider the full lifecycle of assets, including maintenance, adaptation and integration across systems. The strategy therefore seeks to support a more outcomes-focused

and place-based approach, ensuring that investment decisions deliver long-term value and respond effectively to local needs.

Why local authorities should engage

Local authorities are central to Scotland’s infrastructure system and will play a key role in delivering the outcomes of the strategy.

Engagement is important because:

- Councils are responsible for significant elements of local infrastructure, including roads, schools, housing and environmental services.
- They play a leading role in place-based planning and community development.
- They have direct knowledge of infrastructure condition, investment needs and service pressures.
- They are key partners in delivering net zero and climate resilience at a local level.

The strategy is likely to influence future capital investment priorities, approaches to asset management and maintenance, and the balance between national direction and local flexibility. It may also shape how infrastructure is planned and delivered through partnership working across sectors.

Local authorities also play a critical role in ensuring that infrastructure investment delivers tangible outcomes for communities, including improved services, economic opportunities, and environmental benefits. Their input will be essential in shaping a strategy that is both strategically aligned and deliverable across diverse local contexts.

Engagement will help ensure that the strategy is practical, deliverable, and responsive to local circumstances.

3. Consultation Questions

The consultation questions are categorised as follows:

Topic	Questions
Role of the Infrastructure Strategy	2
Infrastructure Governance Principles	2
Infrastructure Themes and Enablers	4
Place Based Approach	4
Enabling Private Infrastructure	2

The consultation questions are available in full below:

Role of the Infrastructure Strategy

- 1) Do you agree with the scope and role of the Infrastructure Strategy?
- 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? Are there any further improvements you want to suggest?

Infrastructure Governance Principles

- 3) Do any elements of the infrastructure lifecycle need to be strengthened to promote more effective infrastructure planning and delivery?
- 4) In what areas could changes to governance or planning processes across the public sector improve the impact of the investment hierarchy?

Infrastructure Themes and Enablers

- 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?
- 6) Are the three proposed enablers, public assets, place-making and private investment, sufficient to deliver the Strategy's outcomes? Are there other enablers we should consider instead/additionally?
- 7) What mechanisms or approaches should the Infrastructure Strategy adopt to ensure that critical cross-cutting priorities, such as housing delivery, regional economic development, and natural infrastructure are systematically embedded in investment planning and decision making?
- 8) What mechanisms or approaches should the Infrastructure Strategy adopt to ensure that critical cross-cutting priorities, such as housing delivery, regional economic development, and natural infrastructure are systematically embedded in investment planning and decision making?

Place Based Approach

- 9) Do you support the proposal that infrastructure investment is more directly driven by the priorities of places across Scotland?
- 10) Are the proposed principles, national spatial priorities and place partnerships, the right ones to guide a place-based approach? Are there other principles we should consider?
- 11) Do you agree with the Scottish Government's proposal to empower communities to play a more active role in infrastructure decision making? What mechanisms would best support meaningful community involvement and help to maximise local social benefits?

12) Do you believe the current landscape of local and regional partnerships (e.g. Community Planning Partnerships, Regional Economic Partnerships, HubCos, Regional Adaptation Partnerships) provides an effective framework for delivering place-based infrastructure investment? Please explain your answer, including any suggestions for improvement of existing structures.

Enabling Private Infrastructure

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?

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?

4. APSE Comment

APSE encourages all Scottish member authorities to engage with this consultation and provide evidence based on their experience of infrastructure planning, delivery and asset management.

Infrastructure investment is fundamental to local government. Local authorities are responsible for maintaining and delivering a wide range of essential infrastructure assets and services, often within the context of significant financial pressures and increasing demand. This is reflected in [figures](#) obtained by Freedom of Information requests in 2024 which estimated a £2.6 billion backlog in road repairs across Scottish local authorities, highlighting the scale of infrastructure pressures facing councils.

The development of a new long-term strategy, building on earlier investment plans and the work of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland, represents an important opportunity to address these challenges.

Discussions on the way forward with infrastructure and sharing of best practice takes place in APSE Scotland's Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance Network and our Highways and Street Lighting Network and also our Climate Change and Renewables Network. Network meetings are free to attend for APSE members. Previous presentations are available online [here](#) and upcoming meetings are listed [here](#).

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Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE network meetings and would like to be added to our list of our contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk

Our national networks include:

- FM and Building cleaning
- Catering (School Meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authority Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation
- Parks, Horticulture and Ground Maintenance
- Recovery and Renewal
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, highways and street lighting
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- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
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