**Living without a car in the Highlands /**

**Highland Council Consultation on Local Transport Case for Change May 2023**

Could you manage without a car on the Black Isle? Or if a car is not an option for you, what could make getting around easier? It must be true that the non-car user could be much better served in the Black Isle and beyond. Have you a strong view on how well public transport caters for those of us on the Black Isle who wish to travel, but would like to do so at a low environmental and financial cost? If so, now is the time to get your voice heard.

Highland Council is asking for feedback on a new consultation document entitled *Local Transport Strategy Case for Change.* Comments on the Plan have to be submitted before May 29. The document covers a wide range of issues from potholes to raised kerbs, commuting times by bus, train and private car, the withdrawal of evening bus services, the health benefits of cycling, the need for safer cycling, the reliability of the buses and their timetables, parking issues, and so on. If you can think of a topic that has a broad transport connection, there will be sections in the report for study and for commenting on. In my mind there are also glaring omissions, such as ensuring bus and rail timetables complement each other.

The Local Transport Strategy document is a mine of information that will give insights into how the planners are now thinking about the future. So there has never been a better time to help shape Highland Council Policy on transport issues.

The report can be downloaded from the Highland Council link here

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/26887/local\_transport\_strategy\_case\_for\_change\_-\_full\_report

The full report is too long at 109 pages, and demands an unrealistic amount of time to read. The summaries are good and can alert you to the sections in the full report that interest you most. There is an on-line form for responding to the consultation.

The energy cost of transport and its carbon footprint are major issues in the Government Policy to meet Net Zero. This underlines why this topic is important for Transition Black Isle. I hope TBI can respond to the Consultation in a way that reflects the views of a good number of our supporters. To this end I ask interested people to inform me of their interest and download the document, Then I propose to run a Zoom Meeting in mid-May to which you will be invited to share your views, which after discussion between us, will be used to write a composite response from Transition Black Isle. That said, any individual can respond to the consultation in their own right, so please “go it alone” if that is what you wish to do.

So please let me know if you download the Consultation Document and wish to participate in a discussion on it, and then help frame Transition Black Isle’s response.

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May 2023