Uniting Scotland

Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party

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Scottish
Conservative
& Unionist

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Foreword

Boosting Scotland's infrastructure must be a key part of our national recovery from COVID-19. Major infrastructure projects can connect us, improve productivity and sustainability, and create jobs. Jobs will be created not only while projects are being built, but also once they are completed as the improved infrastructure will attract businesses and visitors which are key to growing Scotland's economy.

The SNP's Infrastructure Investment Plan lacks the ambition required to support Scotland's recovery and they have a record of failure when it comes to delivering major infrastructure projects - from ferries that can't sail to delays to key road projects.

The Scottish Conservatives would put an end to this inefficiency and ensure that planned capital funding increases over the course of the next Parliament are best spent on projects which will improve Scotland's productivity and boost economic growth.

We will ensure that projects deliver for all of Scotland's communities and work closely with the UK Government to improve cross-border infrastructure and implement the recommendations of the Union Connectivity Review and the Williams Rail Review.

Supporting every part of Scotland to recover from the impact of COVID-19 should be the next Scottish Parliament's top priority, but the SNP are distracted by pushing for a second independence referendum.

The only way to stop an SNP majority again - and get the Scottish Parliament 100% focused on rebuilding Scotland - is to vote Scottish Conservative & Unionist with your party list ballot in May.

Douglas Ross
Leader of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

Prioritising infrastructure

- **We would put the Infrastructure Commission on a statutory footing.** This would guarantee its independence and set its functions out in primary legislation. Such a step would make the Commission's work accountable to the Scottish Parliament rather than the Government, allowing it to consider Scotland's long-term infrastructure needs, bypassing the short-termism of the Parliamentary cycle.

- **We would strengthen the role of Regional Transport Partnerships.** We would ask Partnerships to develop 30-year infrastructure visions, with support from the Infrastructure Commission. Transport needs to be integrated in order to work for everyone, so we would also strengthen the role of Regional Transport Partnerships.

Upgrading Scotland's roads

- **We would develop an ambitious new action plan to meet Scotland's electric vehicle target, including delivering a complete national charge infrastructure by 2025.** Action needs to be stepped up if we are to phase out new petrol and diesel cars by 2032. We would continue to subsidise the installation of charging points in homes and workplaces.

- **We would review barriers and introduce a new scheme to support the installation of charging points outside flats.** The rollout of electric vehicles must not leave lower income families behind. We would also continue to subsidise new and used electric vehicles to make them more accessible.

- **We would take forward work to improve several key routes across Scotland, such as:**

  - the A77 and A75, which are vital for ports in the area

  - the A82 between Glasgow and Inverness

  - the A90 between Dundee and Aberdeen

  - the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness

  - the A9 between Perth and Inverness

  - upgrading the entirety of the A1 to a dual carriageway

  - extending the M8 to three lanes

  - a new road to bypass the A83 Rest and Be Thankful

  - implementing a solution to ice forcing the Queensferry Crossing to close

- **We would also work with Regional Transport Partnerships to take forward more local projects** including the Sheriffhall flyover, the Dundee Northern Relief Road and bridge maintenance work in Aberdeenshire.

- **We would also promote hydrogen-powered transport.** We would carry out a feasibility study on creating a new 'hydrogen network' between Aberdeen and Inverness.

Revitalising our railways

- **We would review closed rail lines and stations and reopen those which would support local growth.** Many iconic railways were shut down during the Beeching cuts of the 1960s – we would review which should be reopened. We would also take forward plans to reopen the line between Perth and Edinburgh.

- **We would also take forward work to improve existing lines, including:**

  o accelerating work to improve rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt

  o dualling the entirety of the Highland main line

  o extending the Borders Railway to Carlisle

  o speeding up plans to decarbonise Scotland's railways

- **We would improve value for money for passengers using our railways.** We would introduce a flexible season ticket for workers commuting less than five days a week, implement the Rail Delivery Group's wider recommendations on fare regulation reform and peg rail fares to the Consumer Price Index. Whatever delivery model is in place, the top priority should be value for money and improving the passenger experience.

- **As part of this work, we would introduce a new Scottish Smart Travel Card for use across Scotland.** This would enable passengers to use all types of domestic transport anywhere in Scotland with one contactless card. This would consolidate concessions, ensure passengers pay the cheapest fare and automatically refund delayed or cancelled journeys.

Supporting the aviation industry

- **We would set out a clear roadmap for the resumption of international travel.** Airports and airlines need clarity on how and when international travel will restart.

- **We would maintain support for airports until they are able to return to pre-COVID capacity.** While there are still restrictions on international travel, the aviation industry must continue to receive government support.

- **We would ensure vital domestic routes are not withdrawn due to the impact of COVID-19.** Many domestic flights, such as those between Aberdeen and London, are vital for Scotland's economy. We would monitor their recovery and intervene if key routes are under threat.

- **We support keeping Air Departure Tax in line with the rest of the UK.** Any variation could damage Scotland's aviation industry.

Promoting Scotland's ports and ferries

- **We would support freeport bids from across Scotland.** The Scottish Conservatives believe that freeports present a unique opportunity to boost Scottish exports and local economies, particularly as oil revenues decline.

- **We would implement a range of measures which will support all ports.** We would:

  o prioritise port communities for the Community Investment Deals we have committed to introduce, worth up to £25 million;

  o carry out a review into what planning regulation changes are required to help ports to expand;

  o work with ports which have successfully diversified to share best practice;

  o provide opportunities for ports to apply to become enterprise areas;

  o commit to treat all ports equally when allocating or applying for future funding;

  o prioritise infrastructure projects around ports which will support the movement of freight;

  o design bespoke support for trust ports, including to prepare joint bids for freeport status or other funding opportunities; and

  o work with the UK Government to ensure Scotland's ports and the communities which surround them benefit from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

- **We would scrap Caledonian Maritime Assets and introduce long-term contracts for ferry operations.** The SNP have repeatedly failed our island communities who rely on ferries every day. We would review island connectivity and work directly with ferry companies to agree long-term contracts which allow them to invest in their fleet.

Connecting Scotland to full-fibre broadband

- **We would connect every home and business to full fibre broadband by 2027.** The SNP's R100 broadband programme has been plagued with delays and failures. We would deliver a future-proof network and start with the rural areas which have been left behind by the SNP.

- **We would also work to enhance Scotland's reputation as a world leader in satellite technology.** Building on Scotland's established centres of excellence in space technology, Scotland should be at the forefront of satellite-delivered internet connectivity. We would work with the private sector and UK regulators to make Scotland the ideal base for this technology before wider application.

Investing in energy infrastructure

- **We would ensure the Scottish Government is a partner in the North Sea Transition Deal.** The North Sea Transition Deal will see the UK Government and the oil and gas sector jointly investing up to £16 billion to reduce emissions in the oil and gas industry and support 40,000 jobs. We would ensure that the Scottish Government is a partner in the Deal to support supply chain businesses in the transition and as part of our proposals to deliver a fair share for the North East.

- **We would work with the UK Government to make Scotland a renewable powerhouse.** We will ensure that Scotland remains at the forefront of our expanding offshore wind sector and support onshore wind development, where it is supported by and benefits local communities. We will work with the UK Government to develop and expand Scotland's pumped hydroelectric energy storage, including by expanding Cruachan, and our carbon capture capacity at Grangemouth and Peterhead.