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## Urgent change in approach now needed for Scotland's infrastructure

### *Collective responsibility to deliver benefits of an inclusive, net zero carbon economy*

The Infrastructure Commission for Scotland (ICS) has presented Scottish Government with a 30-year infrastructure strategy ([Key Findings Report - A blueprint for Scotland](#)) with an emphasis on delivering an inclusive, net zero carbon economy.

The first publication of its kind in Scotland, the strategy follows a period of extensive engagement with key stakeholders and organisations from across Scotland and beyond. It sets out eight overarching themes and 23 specific recommendations for Scottish Government to consider. The themes are:

1. Future infrastructure decisions to be based on delivery of an inclusive net zero carbon economy
2. Increased emphasis on “place-based” infrastructure
3. Maximise, broaden the use of and better maintain existing assets
4. Accelerate the decarbonisation of heat and transport
5. Develop appropriately devolved regulatory and pricing frameworks
6. Escalate and expand access to digital and technology services
7. Improve and extend public engagement to shape decision making
8. Explore options for long-term and independent infrastructure advice

The global focus on climate change, together with Scottish Government's own ambitious Net Zero Carbon target by 2045, have profoundly influenced the work of the ICS in the development of this 30-year strategy.

Ian Russell, chair of the ICS, said: “While infrastructure investment remains a vital factor in supporting the economy and acting as an enabler to deliver effective public services, future infrastructure decisions should be based on their ability to clearly demonstrate their contribution to an inclusive, net zero carbon economy.

“We do not underestimate the nature and scale of the challenges facing future infrastructure decisions and recognise difficult decisions will need to be made. This will require bold and determined leadership from the Scottish Government.

“However, this is not just a challenge for the public sector. Critically it is a call to everyone who plans, builds, invests in, owns, operates, regulates and, as importantly, uses Scotland's infrastructure.

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“If we can all embrace and build on the recommendations set out in this Report, we can go a long way to turning an infrastructure vision for an inclusive, net zero carbon economy into a reality.”

Cabinet Secretary for infrastructure Michael Matheson said: “I’d like to thank the Commission for submitting its report, following a twelve month process.

“This advice will help shape how we plan to invest in Scotland’s infrastructure, recognising the long-term objectives of this Government to deliver an inclusive and net zero emissions economy.

“The value of investing in infrastructure goes beyond the physical homes, schools and hospitals we see in everyday life. If done well, it has the capacity to unlock economic potential, support jobs, and enable our businesses and communities to strengthen and grow.

“We will now take the time necessary to carefully consider the report before updating Parliament on how we plan to incorporate the recommendations into Scottish Government policy and the next Infrastructure Investment Plan.”

Established less than a year ago to develop Scotland’s infrastructure strategy for the next 30 years, the ICS recognised net zero carbon and an inclusive growth economy as two overarching policies that were priorities on both a national and global scale. Therefore, the ICS placed these priorities at the heart of its objectives, marking a sharp shift from the overall policy convention of the last 50 years, which has broadly been aimed at maximising GDP.

The next stage of the ICS’ 18-month programme will see the Commission provide guidance to Scottish Government on how best to consider the 23 recommendations set out in the strategy.

**ENDS**

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