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*Dear Leaders,*

Thank you for your letter of 17 March 2017 summarising the points raised at our meeting earlier this month.

I would also like to take this opportunity to add that I felt this was, indeed, a positive and helpful meeting. I was interested to hear about the challenges you face from a regional dimension and how you propose to tackle them going forward. It was also encouraging to hear about the journey travelled so far in the Ayrshire Pathfinder work and I look forward with interest to hearing of positive progress in the coming months.

As we touched on when we met, the Scottish Government is working with the UK Government to ensure that the UK Industrial Strategy will reflect Scottish needs and priorities and be genuinely UK-wide in scope. Separately from this, I would encourage you to respond to the consultation paper highlighting where you think the strategy could support your local ambitions.

With regards to an Ayrshire Transport Summit I am happy to provide official support through Transport Scotland with the timing, format and content to be agreed. Given the on-going official dialogue around the "Ayrshire Growth Deal" and the transport infrastructure requirements of both local development plans, my view is that we use the opportunities within these existing routes of engagement to highlight any transport policy or strategic infrastructure considerations in the three Ayrshire authorities. Transport Scotland currently await feedback from the Ayrshire Roads Alliance and stand ready to provide support when requested.

The NTS Early Engagement Survey, which sought to gather initial views from individuals and organisations across Scotland regarding transport, concluded on 31st March. Transport Scotland will build on this early engagement with a wide programme of in-depth engagement, likely to include stakeholder events and further use of online/digital channels, culminating with a formal public consultation on the draft strategy.

I also agree with you that it would be helpful to put in place a timetable for the AGD work and I have asked my officials to work with yours to take this forward.

Finally - as I have previously stated - I would like to acknowledge the collaborative work the three Local Authorities in Ayrshire have already taken, and are committed to, through working together at this strategic regional level not only on the Growth Deal, but also on the Ayrshire Pathfinder.



**Keith Brown**