

The Highlands and Islands

Transport Partnership

Annual Accounts

(Audited)

2016-2017

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MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

The purpose of the management commentary is to inform all users of the accounts, to help them assess how the Partnership has performed during 2016/17 and understand the year end financial position as at 31 March 2017. In addition, it provides a narrative on the financial outlook for the Partnership during financial year 2017/18 and beyond.

Background

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) was established under the Regional Transport Partnership (Establishment and Constitution) (Scotland) Order 2005, effective 5 December 2005. The power granted to the new statutory body came into force on 1 April 2006.

The Partnership was established as one of the seven Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships. The Transport Scotland Act 2005 requires these Partnerships to prepare Transport Strategies for their regions which will enhance economic wellbeing; promote safety, social inclusion and equal opportunity; plan for a sustainable transport system; and integrate across boundaries with other Partnerships. These Strategies must take account of future needs and set priorities for transport development and improvement, and will set the framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure and services for the next 5 to 10 years.

The Strategy was submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2007. The Partnership commenced working towards implementing the Strategy in 2007/08 and has continued every year, and will be ongoing. The Strategy is intended to be a live document, and needs to be reviewed and updated over its 15 year lifespan. The Partnership has prepared a monitoring strategy which includes setting both interim and final targets with progress being identified as part of ongoing reporting processes.

The Partnership comprises The Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Argyll & Bute Council (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond).

The Order states the membership will be made up from one Member from each constituent Local Authority, and two or three other (Non-Councillor) Members. The (Non-Councillor) Members were firstly appointed in 2007 by the Scottish Ministers and have subsequently been appointed by the Partnership with the agreement of Scottish Ministers.

Voting is weighted with Highland Council having three votes, Moray Council two and the remaining Councils one vote each. External Members are entitled to vote on such matters as the Partnership determines appropriate but not on financial matters.

Operational control of the Partnership is the responsibility of the Partnership Director. The Highland Council provides financial and computing services, and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar provides administrative, personnel and legal services.

Statutory Framework

The accounting framework defines local authorities as councils constituted under section 2 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 and the Valuation Joint Boards (Scotland) Order 1995; the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and those bodies to which section 106(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 applies (i.e. committees, joint committees and joint boards, the members of which are appointed by local authorities and charities, etc).

In Scotland the local authority accounting framework is enacted as follows:

- the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, section 96, requires Scottish authorities to keep accounts; The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, section 12 places a duty of Best Value on the authority and also a duty to observe proper accounting practices; the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom

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(the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Service Reporting Accounting Code of Practice (SeRCOP) and the Prudential Framework and other statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act, defines proper accounting practices for local authorities in the UK;

- the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2014 (SSI No.2014/200) amended the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1985 (SI No.1985/267) to require local authorities in Scotland prepare a Remuneration Report as part of the annual statutory accounts; under paragraph 21 of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 (Finance circular 7/2014) the proper officer is responsible for certifying that the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the local authority and its group for the year then ended. The certification includes a statement to this effect as part of the Statement of Responsibilities and by signing the Balance Sheet. This certification is required before the Annual Accounts are submitted to the appointed auditor. The proper officer re-certifies the audited Annual Accounts after they have been approved for signature by the local authority or a committee of the local authority, in this case the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership. The proper officer, known as the Treasurer, is the Director of Finance of Highland Council; and
- The Code was developed by the CIPFA/LASAAC Code Board under the oversight of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board and has effect for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2013.

The Code reiterates the primacy of legislative requirements whereby the overriding principle of public sector accounts is that where an accounting treatment is prescribed by law, the legal requirement must be applied.

The overriding requirement of the Code is that the Annual Accounts provide a true and fair view of the financial position and the financial transactions of the Partnership.

Review of 2016/17 Developments and Achievements

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and an associated RTS Delivery Plan set out the key priorities, proposals and interventions required to support successful implementation and realisation of the Strategy's Vision and Objectives. Each year the Partnership approves an annual Business Plan which sets out the Partnership's key delivery priorities for the financial year concerned.

The Business Plan details the projects the Partnership is involved in and an update is reported to the Partnership Board which meets five times per annum. These projects link to the aims of the strategy and the Annual Report provides a report of performance against objectives, targets and performance indicators as outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

During 2016/17 the Business Plan set out a wide range of regional, local regional and national scale projects that have been delivered. These include:-

- Ongoing development, monitoring and refresh of the RTS
- CHFS Ferry Service Booking Constraint Monitoring
- Skye Air Service Development
- Orkney Internal Air and Ferry Study / Routes and Services Methodology
- Real Time Passenger Information
- Bus Priority Measures
- Branchliner Project Development
- Inverness Airport (Dalcross) Station Development
- HiTravel Shared Service Travel Information Project
- Local Authority Bus Investment Fund Support
- West Lochaber National Smart and Integrated Ticketing Programme Project
- East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project
- Inverness Campus Community Links Project

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- Fort William to Ballachulish Community Links Project / National Cycle Network 78 Project
- Smarter Choices Smarter Places Project Support
- SPARA 2020 Northern Periphery and Arctic Area Project
- EU Project Development (G-PaTRA, INCLUSION, INSTRUCt, INSIEME)

In addition to the above projects, the Active Travel partnership with Sustrans during 2016/17 has secured a grant allocation of £100,000 per annum from the national Community Links programme to support the development and provision of Active Travel projects across the region during 2016/17. During 2016/17 projects delivered under this programme include:-

- Regional Active Travel Strategy
- Moray Active Travel Hub Feasibility Study
- Active Travel Workplace Challenge
- Cycle Counters
- Cycle Shelters
- Cycle Stands
- Cycle Lockers
- Kirkwall to Stromness Active Travel Route Study
- Active Travel Maps
- Active Travel Facilities at Transport Hubs

In addition to its principal focus on developing and delivering the RTS through work on the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme a significant proportion of staff time and resource was committed to supporting Community Planning engagement and activity in all five partner Council areas.

In accordance with revised Ministerial direction in 2008, the Regional Transport Strategy is a "high level" strategy. Reporting on the approved RTS Monitoring Framework, consisting of 22 defined Indicators, is reported annually within the Partnership's Annual Report. A review of the RTS Monitoring Framework is being undertaken alongside review and updating of the RTS which will have a focus of 2016 – 2036 once completed. The RTS will align with all relevant national and local strategies and Action Plans/Programmes, including the recently reviewed National Transport Strategy. The setting of targets or milestones, which will require to be agreed with partner Councils, Transport Scotland and other relevant delivery partners or agencies, will be considered as part of this process.

Further information on the Partnership's activity, the Regional Transport Strategy and our Revenue and Strategy Delivery Programme work can be obtained by visiting our website www.hitrans.org.uk.

Going Concern

Note 11 to the Core Statements details the income and expenditure charged to the income and expenditure account under IAS 19 in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme, based upon assessments provided by the Actuary to the Scheme. The Balance Sheet on Page 20 shows that the Partnership has an excess of liabilities over assets of £1.215m as at 31 March 2017 (31 March 2016 - £0.682m) due to the accrual of pension liabilities and accumulated absences in accordance with IAS 19. A going concern basis of accounting has been adopted in the preparation of the financial statements as future actuarial valuations of the pension scheme will consider the appropriate employer's rate to meet the commitments of the Scheme. The constituent authorities of the Partnership are required to fund the liabilities of the Partnership as they fall due.

Primary Financial Statements

The Annual Accounts summarise the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership's transactions for the year, its year-end position at 31 March 2017 and its cash flows. The Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements (the

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IASB Framework) as interpreted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

A description of the purpose of the Primary Financial Statements has been included immediately prior to the five statements: the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Expenditure and Funding Analysis, Movement in Reserves Statement, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement. These five Statements are accompanied by Notes to the Accounts which set out the Accounting Policies adopted by the Partnership and provide more detailed analysis of the figures disclosed on the face of the primary financial statements.

The Primary Financial Statements and Notes to the Accounts, including the accounting policies, form the relevant Annual Accounts for the purpose of the auditor's certificate and opinion.

Financial Performance

The purpose of the Annual Accounts is to present a public statement on the stewardship of funds for the benefit of both members of the Transport Partnership and the public. The Partnership is funded by The Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Argyll & Bute Council (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond). The Partnership normally meets five times a year, with its budget meeting taking place in February. The Partnership's budget is its prime annual planning document and actual expenditure is monitored against it during the year.

The Partnership's financial results for the year, compared against budget, are as shown below.

Budget Performance Statement For the year ended 31 March 2017

	2016/17		
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Staff costs	359	365	6
Property costs	22	23	1
Travel and subsistence costs	36	32	(4)
Administration and meeting costs	32	34	2
Research and strategy development costs	948	816	(132)
Publicity costs	10	12	2
European projects costs	-	66	66
Support services	40	37	(3)
Gross expenditure	1,447	1,385	(62)
Government grants	(1,140)	(819)	321
Other grants	(100)	(119)	(19)
Other income	-	(247)	(247)
Constituent Council requisitions	(207)	(200)	7
Gross income	(1,447)	(1,385)	62
Net expenditure	-	-	-

Overall the budget balanced for both years, 2015/16 and 2016/17. The main variations from budget during the year were as follows:

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- Included in research and strategy development costs is expenditure of £0.147m for the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project, £0.056m for Community Links Projects and £0.092m for the Hi-Travel Project. All of these projects are funded by Scottish Government grants. The bulk of the underspend relates to a Community Links Project, the North Bridge link at the University of the Highlands and Islands Inverness Campus, which was originally timetabled for completion in 2015/16. The original award of funding for this project has been withdrawn and replaced by a more ambitious application for a multi sustainable travel mode bridge with Highlands and Islands Enterprise taking the lead and providing the match funding. Included in other income is £0.245m of third party contributions to project work.
- The overspend on European projects relates to costs incurred on Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports 2020 (SPARA), the majority of which will be recovered next financial year from grant due from Europe.
- The budget for other grants relates to a grant from Sustrans for cycling project work.

All government grants in respect of 2016/17 were received in the financial year with the exception of the grant from the Community Links Project, the North Bridge now not being progressed through HITRANS.

The Partnership's underspend on the 2016/17 revenue budget was £7,000 which the Partnership intend to use as a commitment towards the jointly funded 'smart cities' transport projects between Highland Council, HITRANS and the European Regional Development Fund.

Balance Sheet

Highland Council's Loans Fund provides short term borrowing facilities for the Partnership, as and when required. At 31 March 2017 the Partnership was in credit with the Loans Fund by £0.226m, compared to short term borrowing of £0.125m at 31 March 2016. This was an improvement of £0.351m on the previous year. The movement was due to a fall in short term debtors and a slight increase in short term liabilities.

Unusable reserves increased by £0.533m from £0.682m to £1.215m as at 31 March 2017. This was due to a combination of actuarial losses and gains on the Pension scheme liabilities and assets respectively.

Reserves

In Scotland, a local authority may only hold a reserve where there is a statutory power to do so. There are two Acts which provide local authorities with statutory powers to hold a reserve, the 1973 and 1975 Local Government Acts. Section 93 (1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires all local authorities to have a General Fund into which all revenue income should be paid into and all revenue expenses paid out. As such any difference is held as a General Fund Balance (a reserve). Regional Transport Partnerships (RTP) are classed as local authorities in terms of the enabling legislation, and the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 extends section 93 of the 1973 Act to RTPs. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires 'The net expenses of a Transport Partnership for each financial year shall be paid by constituent Local Authorities' and defines net expenses as 'those of its expenses for that year which are not met by grant and other income'. Local authorities are only required to meet the 'net expenses of a Transport Partnership for a financial year'. Therefore it is not possible for the RTP to make a surplus or deficit or have any balance on the General Fund, and therefore the General Fund reserve will always be nil.

The funding formula for Council contributions was agreed by the Partnership in July 2006. This is based 50% on voting weight and 50% on population share. The population figures have been updated to take account of the 2012 position as shown in the General Register Office for Scotland. The amended percentage share of income to be contributed by each Council for 2016/17 is as follows:

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2015/16		Constituent Authority	2016/17	
£000	% share		£000	% share
91	45.5	The Highland Council	91	45.5
46	23.0	Moray Council	46	23.0
27	13.5	Argyll and Bute Council	27	13.5
19	9.5	Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	19	9.5
17	8.5	Orkney Islands Council	17	8.5
<u>200</u>	<u>100.0</u>	Total	<u>200</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Statement of Requisitions 2016/17

Constituent Authority	Budget requisition £000	Actual requisition £000	Balance due to constituent authority £000
Highland Council	94	91	(3)
Moray Council	48	46	(2)
Argyll and Bute Council	28	27	(1)
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	20	19	(1)
Orkney Islands Council	17	17	0
Total	207	200	(7)

The Partnership is not permitted to hold a balance on the General Fund reserve.

Retirement Benefits

International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 has been fully adopted in preparing the accounts of the Partnership. The standard prescribes how employing organisations are to account for pension benefits earned by employees in the year and the associated pension assets and liabilities.

Employees are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered by the Highland Council. Note 11 to the Core Statements details the income and expenditure charged to the income and expenditure account under IAS 19 in respect of the Local Government Scheme, based upon assessments provided by the Actuary to the Scheme.

The Balance Sheet on Page 20 shows that the Board has a net pension liability of £1.209m as at 31 March 2017 (31 March 2016 £0.677m) due to the accrual of pension liabilities in accordance with IAS 19.

The pension liability represents the best estimate of the current value of pension benefits that will have to be funded by the Partnership. The liability relates to benefits earned by existing or previous employees up to 31 March 2017.

These benefits are expressed in current value terms rather than the cash amount that will actually be paid out. This is to allow for the 'time value of money', whereby the value of cash

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received now is regarded as higher than cash received in the future. In order to adjust the pension liability cash flows for the time value of money a discount factor based on corporate bond rates is used.

Financial Outlook

The current economic climate has led to funding pressures within the public sector, consequently placing challenges on the Partnership to continue to deliver the most effective and efficient services possible. Regional Transport Partnerships face substantial real-term reductions in finance in the coming years. Public finance and the funding pressures associated with reductions continue to provide challenges but real progress is being made in developing efficient working practices and models through partnership working. A core aim of the Partnership is to support its partner Local Authorities, Scottish Government and other key public and private sector partners in delivering improved transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Partnership will continue to work hard to attract external funding and focus on a partnership approach to delivery.

On 3 February 2017, the Partnership's Board agreed a revenue budget for 2017/18, which made provision for £0.428m of core service costs and £0.395m of project expenditure in support of Regional Transport Strategy projects. In recognition of the current financial constraints faced by public sector organisations, the 2017/18 budget makes provision for no increase in constituent council requisitions. Council and Scottish Government funding is confirmed for a period of one year. The Partnership is working towards identifying further cashable efficiency savings for 2018/19 and anticipates savings on a number of budget lines in 2017/18 when compared with 2016/17.

Continuing pressure on public finances makes it very difficult for the Partnership to plan ahead with certainty. There is a significant risk to the level of work that the Partnership will be able to complete should resources reduce. The Partnership will continue to work with its Constituent Authorities, and the Scottish Government, to get clarification of future funding levels. This will allow medium to long term financial plans to be prepared.

Events after the Balance Sheet

Events after the Balance Sheet date until the date of signing the accounts have been taken into consideration.

Acknowledgements

During the 2016/17 financial year the Partnership's financial position has undertaken regular scrutiny and strict budgetary control. We would wish to place on record our appreciation of the excellent work carried out by the Partnership's officers, supported by the officers of Highland Council in the financial management of the Partnership and in the preparation of the 2016/17 Annual Accounts.

Cllr. Allan Henderson
Chair of the Partnership Board
15 September 2017

Derek Yule B.Com, FCPFA, IRRV(Hons)
Treasurer
15 September 2017

Ranald Robertson
Partnership Director
15 September 2017

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Responsibilities of the Partnership

The Partnership is required to:

- (i) Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to ensure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership that officer is the Treasurer to the Partnership.
- (ii) Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- (iii) Ensure the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014), and so far as is compatible with that legislation, in accordance with proper accounting practices (section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003).
- (iv) Approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

Cllr. Allan Henderson
Chair of the Partnership Board
15 September 2017

The Treasurer's Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Partnership's Annual Accounts in accordance with proper practices as required by legislation and as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Accounting Code).

In preparing the Annual Accounts, the Treasurer, has:-

- (i) Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- (ii) Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent
- (iii) Complied with legislation
- (iv) Complied with the local authority Accounting Code (in so far as it is compatible with legislation)

The Treasurer has also:-

- (i) Kept adequate accounting records which were up to date
- (ii) Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

I certify that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Partnership at the reporting date and the transactions of the Partnership for the year ended 31 March 2017.

Derek Yule B.Com, FCPFA, IRRV(Hons)
Treasurer
15 September 2017

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership's aim is to develop a transportation system for the region covering Highland, Moray, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Argyll & Bute (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond) Council areas, as outlined in the Partnership's Regional Transport Strategy 2008 to 2023.

The Partnership is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Partnership also has a duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are carried out.

In discharging these overall responsibilities, the Partnership is responsible for implementing proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Partnership has approved and adopted a set of governance documents which is consistent with appropriate corporate governance. These documents are reviewed every 2 to 3 years, the most recent review was carried out in 2016/17.

This statement explains how the Partnership delivers good governance and reviews the effectiveness of these arrangements.

The Partnership's Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Partnership is directed and controlled, and the activities used to engage with and lead the community. It enables it to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services. The framework reflects the arrangements in place to meet the six supporting principles of effective corporate governance.

Focusing on the purpose of the Partnership and on outcomes for the community, and creating and implementing a vision for the area:

- Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- Promoting values for the Partnership and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective;
- Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

The Partnership recognises that good governance is essential to any public body and their arrangements are set out in their business plan. This details the various policies and procedures within the Partnership including their Scheme of Delegation, Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, through to their arrangements for interaction with stakeholders and the Partnership's powers and functions.

A Risk Management Strategy, which sets out the aims and objectives of the Partnership and the management of its risks in the short to medium term, was approved by the Partnership Board in February 2011. Annual updates on the Risk Register are provided to the Board with the most recent information provided on 26 November 2016.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to an acceptable level, and provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance that

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policies, aims and objectives can be delivered. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Determining the Partnership's Purpose, Its Vision for the Local Area and Intended Outcomes for the Community

The Partnership aims to develop a transportation system for the region covering Highland, Moray, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands and Argyll & Bute (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond) Council areas, which will enable business to function effectively and provide everyone living in the region with improved access to health care, education, public services and employment opportunities. The vision for achieving this is outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

The Annual Research and Strategy Development Programme detail the projects the Partnership is involved in and an update is reported to each Partnership Board. These projects link to the aims of the strategy and the Annual Business Plan provides a report of performance against objectives, targets and performance indicators as outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

Review of Effectiveness

Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, financial regulations, administrative procedures (including segregation of duties), management supervision, and a system of delegation and accountability. Development and maintenance of the system is undertaken by managers within the Partnership and The Highland Council. In particular, the internal control system includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting systems;
- Regular reviews of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts;
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- The preparation of regular financial reports which indicate actual expenditure against the forecasts.

The Treasurer to the Partnership has overall responsibility for Internal Audit in Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership. The Highland Council's Corporate Audit Manager is responsible for the day to day management of the service and reports to the Treasurer on management and performance issues. In accordance with the principles of Corporate Governance, an annual report is made to the Partnership. The Internal Audit Service operates in accordance with the Code of Practice for Internal Audit (the standards) which came into effect from 1 April 2013 and applies to all internal audit service providers. These Standards have been developed through collaboration between the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA). The Corporate Audit Manager prepares an Annual Report containing a view on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control.

The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by:

- The work of managers within the Transport Partnership;
- The work of the internal auditors as described above, and
- The external auditors in their annual audit letter and other reports.

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In order to inform the Corporate Audit Manager's annual Statement of Internal Control, work was undertaken to review the Highland Council's financial systems, which are also used to administer HITRANS' transactions. This consisted of:

- A review of the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of internal control for the financial year 2016/17.
- Review of grant claims in respect of the SPARA 2020 project.

Audit recommendations are action tracked to ensure that the management agreed actions have been satisfactorily implemented. There were 2 medium grade recommendations made in the Matters Arising from the Statement of Internal Control 2015/16 which have been implemented as agreed. There are no outstanding agreed actions from previous reports.

On the basis of the work undertaken during the year, it is considered that the key systems operate in a sound manner and that there has been no fundamental breakdown in control resulting in material discrepancy. However as no system of control can provide absolute assurance against material loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance, it is the audit opinion that Reasonable Assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the HITRANS' framework of governance, risk management and control for the year to 31 March 2017.

In 2010 CIPFA issued its Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government together with an application note enabling authorities to review the effectiveness of their own governance arrangements by reference to best practice and using self-assessment. This review has been undertaken and the arrangements within the Partnership are broadly compliant with the CIPFA Statement. One area of exception is the requirement for the Chief Financial Officer (nb the Treasurer) to report directly to the Chief Executive (nb the Partnership Director) and be a member of the leadership team. With regard to the Partnership the following arrangements are in place which contribute to delivering the same impact:

- The Partnership's Financial Regulations recognise the Treasurer as being "responsible for the proper financial administration of the Partnership's affairs, and acts as financial adviser to the Partnership". In addition, the Regulations require:
 - That the Partnership Director ensures that all spending conforms to proper accounting standards and will seek appropriate clarification on such matters from the Treasurer.
 - The accounting procedures, records of the Partnership and Annual Accounts to be prepared in accordance with directions provided by the Treasurer.
 - Reports to the Partnership containing financial implications to be discussed with the Treasurer.
- The Treasurer's staff work closely with the Partnership's staff regarding financial matters.

Cllr. Allan Henderson
Chair of the Partnership Board
15 September 2017

Ranald Robertson
Partnership Director
15 September 2017

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REMUNERATION REPORT

All information disclosed in the tables at paragraphs 3 and 4 in the Remuneration Report has been audited by Grant Thornton. The other sections of the Remuneration Report have been reviewed by Grant Thornton to ensure that they are consistent with the financial statements.

1. Appointments

Appointment of the senior employee (Partnership Director) in the Transport Partnership is made by the Partnership Board. The Director is responsible for making any further appointments and ensuring that they are made in accordance with staff structures approved by the Partnership.

2. Remuneration Policy

2.1 Senior Employees

There is no national salary mechanism in place for Regional Transport Partnerships. It is up to individual authorities and Transport Partnerships to determine these salaries. As such, the salary of the senior employee (Partnership Director) is set and approved by the Partnership, based on advice received from the Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar's Personnel Service. The current grading of the senior post was agreed by the Partnership in June 2012.

2.2 Senior Councillors

The Chair and Vice-chair of the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership are remunerated by the Council of which they are a council member.

The remuneration of councillors is regulated by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 (SSI No. 2007/183). The regulations provide for the grading of councillors for the purpose of remuneration arrangements, as either the Leader of the Council, The Civic Head, Senior Councillors or Councillors. The regulations are silent on the payment of the Chair and Vice Chair of Regional Transport Partnerships. Therefore, on the basis there is no specific provision in legislation, the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership does not remunerate the Chair or Vice Chair of the Partnership.

3. Remuneration

3.1 Remuneration of Senior Employee of the Partnership

Name and Post Title	Salary, Fees and Allowances	Total Remuneration 2016/17	Total Remuneration 2015/16
	£	£	£
Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director	77,103	77,103	76,341
Total	77,103	77,103	76,341

The senior employee did not receive any taxable expenses.

The table includes any senior employee:

- Who has responsibility for management of the Partnership to the extent that the person has power to direct or control the major activities of the Partnership (including activities involving the expenditure of money), during the year to which the report relates, whether solely or collectively with other persons;
- Who holds a post that is politically restricted by reason of section 2(1) (a), (b) or (c) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; or
- Whose annual remuneration is £150,000 or more.

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3.2 Remuneration by Pay Band

Analysis of Employees Earning Over £50,000

	2016/17	2015/16
Salary Band	Number	Number
£75,000-£79,999	1	1

3.3 Senior Councillors and Chairs and Vice Chairs of Regional Transport Partnerships

The following table provides details of the remuneration paid to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership.

Councillor Name & Responsibility	2016/17			2015/16
	Salary, Fees and Allowances	Non-cash expenses & benefits-in-kind	Total Remuneration 2016/17	Total Remuneration 2015/16
	£	£	£	£
J Stockan Chair	-	4,156	4,156	4,190
J MacKay Vice-Chair	-	-	-	-
Total	-	4,156	4,156	4,190

The Chair and Vice-Chair did not receive taxable expenses.

3.4 Remuneration Paid to Councillors

The Partnership paid the following salaries, allowances and expenses to all councillors (including the senior councillors above) during the year.

Type of Remuneration	2016/17	2015/16
	£	£
Salaries	-	-
Expenses	5,090	4,933
Total	5,090	4,933

The annual return of Councillors' salaries and expenses for 2016/17 is available for any member of the public to view at all public offices and is also available on the Constituent Councils (Highland Council; Moray Council; Argyll and Bute Council; Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar; and Orkney Islands Council) websites.

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4. Pension Benefits

The pension entitlement of the senior employee for the year to 31 March 2017 is shown in the table below, together with the contribution made by the Partnership to the Senior Employee's pension during the year

Name and Post Title	In-year pension contributions			Accrued Pension Benefits	
	For year to 31 March 2017	For year to 31 March 2016		As at 31 March 2017	Difference from March 2016
	£	£		£000	£000
Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director	14,033	13,512	Pension Lump Sum	21 29	19 29
Total	14,033	13,512		50	48

The senior employee shown in the table above is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The pension figures shown in the table relate to the benefits that the person has accrued as a consequence of their total local government service.

The employer's contribution rate in 2016/17 is 18.2% of the pensionable salary which is an increase on the 2015/16 contribution rate of 17.7%.

Cllr. Allan Henderson
Chair of the Partnership Board
15 September 2017

Ranald Robertson
Partnership Director
15 September 2017

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COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices governed by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), rather than expenditure permitted by regulations which is funded by requisitions from the constituent authorities. The funding position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2015/16 (restated)				2016/17		
Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000		Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
394	-	394	Staff costs	396	-	396
24	-	24	Property costs	23	-	23
38	-	38	Travel and subsistence costs	32	-	32
38	-	38	Administration and meeting costs	34	-	34
1,669	-	1,669	Research and strategy development costs	816	-	816
9	-	9	Publicity costs	12	-	12
12	-	12	European projects costs	66	-	66
38	-	38	Support services	37	-	37
-	(1,984)	(1,984)	Income	-	(1,185)	(1,185)
2,222	(1,984)	238	Cost of services	1,416	(1,185)	231
		28	Interest on net defined benefit pension liability			24
		(193)	Requisition from Constituent Authorities			(200)
		73	Deficit on provision of services (note 6)			55
		19	Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in net interest expense) (note 11)			(227)
		(266)	Actuarial losses arising on changes in financial assumptions			705
		(174)	Total comprehensive income and expenditure			533

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EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

This statement shows for the Partnership, how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, other grants and other income); in comparison with those resources consumed or earned, in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2015/16 (restated)			2016/17		
Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the CIES £000	Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund £000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis £000	Net Expenditure in the CIES £000
349	45	394	365	31	396
24	-	24	23	-	23
38	-	38	32	-	32
38	-	38	34	-	34
1,669	-	1,669	816	-	816
9	-	9	12	-	12
12	-	12	66	-	66
38	-	38	37	-	37
2,177	45	2,222	1,385	31	1,416
(2,177)	28	(2,149)	(1,385)	24	(1,361)
-	73	73	-	55	55
-			-		
		Opening and Closing General Fund Balance at 31 March 2017			

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MOVEMENTS IN RESERVES STATEMENT

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Partnership, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and other reserves. The Statement shows how the movements in the year of the Partnership's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to the Constituent Authorities. The net increase/decrease line shows the movement in the year for the various reserves and fund following these adjustments.

2015/16				2016/17				
General Fund £000	Total Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves £000	Total Reserves £000		General Fund £000	Total Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves £000	Total Reserves £000
-	-	(856)	(856)	Balance brought forward	-	-	(682)	(682)
				Movement in reserves				
(73)	(73)	247	174	Total Comprehensive Expenditure and income	(55)	(55)	(478)	(533)
73	73	(73)	-	Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (note 5)	55	55	(55)	-
-	-	174	174	Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Statutory Reserves	-	-	(533)	(533)
-	-	(682)	(682)		-	-	(1,215)	(1,215)

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BALANCE SHEET

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Partnership. The net assets of the Partnership (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Partnership. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Partnership may use to provide services, however, legislation dictates the balance is always nil. The second category of reserves is those that the Partnership is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Pension Reserve) and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

31/03/16		Notes	31/03/17
£000			£000
305	Short term debtors	14	8
<u>-</u>	Cash and cash equivalents	8	<u>226</u>
305	Current assets		234
(125)	Short term borrowing	8	-
<u>(185)</u>	Short term creditors	15	<u>(240)</u>
(310)	Current liabilities		(240)
<u>(677)</u>	Other long term liabilities	11	<u>(1,209)</u>
(677)	Long term liabilities		(1,209)
<u>(682)</u>	Net assets		<u>(1,215)</u>
(677)	Pensions reserves	7	(1,209)
<u>(5)</u>	Employee statutory adjustment account		<u>(6)</u>
(682)	Total reserves		(1,215)

The unaudited financial statements were issued on 26 June 2017, and the audited accounts were authorised for issue on 15 September 2017.

Derek Yule B.Com, FCPFA, IRRV(Hons)
Treasurer
15 September 2017

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CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Partnership during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Partnership generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Partnership are funded by way of requisitions or from the recipients of services provided by the Partnership. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Partnership's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Partnership.

31/03/16 £000		Notes	31/03/17 £000
73	Net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services	6	55
(38)	Adjust net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements		296
-	Adjust for items included in the net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities		-
<u>35</u>	Net cash flow from operating activities		<u>351</u>
<u>-</u>	Financing activities		<u>-</u>
<u>35</u>			<u>351</u>
<u>(160)</u>	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<u>(125)</u>
<u>(125)</u>	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	8	<u>226</u>

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

General principles

The Annual Accounts summarises the transactions of the Partnership for the 2016/17 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2017. The Partnership is required to prepare Annual Accounts by the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and section 12 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 requires that they be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Annual Accounts is historical cost.

Accruals of income and expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Partnership transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Partnership.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Partnership can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Partnership.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption; they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including those rendered by officers of the Partnership) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received, rather than when payments are made.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instruments rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where there is evidence that debts are unlikely to be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

Cash and cash equivalents

The Highland Council loans fund provides all the day to day banking requirements of the Partnership. The balance of £0.226m (2015/16 negative balance £0.125m) represents the positive balance in Partnership funds that temporarily sits with the Highland Council loans fund.

Employee benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits (those that fall due wholly within 12 months of the year-end), such as wages and salaries, bonuses, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees, are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the Partnership. An accrual is made against services in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services for the cost of holiday entitlements and other forms of leave earned by employees but not taken before the year-end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the remuneration rates applicable in the following financial year and is required under statute to be reversed out of the General Fund balance by a credit to the Employee Statutory Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Post Employment Benefits

Employees of the Partnership are admitted to the Highland Council Pension Fund which administers the Local Government Pension Scheme. As of 1 April 2015 this is a defined benefit career average revalued earnings (CARE) scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the Highland Council Pension Fund attributable to the Partnership are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method which assesses the present value of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projected earnings of current employees
- The assets of the Highland Council Pension Fund attributable to the Partnership are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

Service cost comprising:

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service accrued in the year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
- past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- net interest on the defined benefit liability, ie net interest expense for the authority – the change during the period in the net defined liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the net defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

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Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability (asset) comprising:

- the return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net pensions liability – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Contributions paid to the Highland Council pension fund

- cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Partnership to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact on the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Partnership also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Events after the reporting period

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Annual Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

Adjusting events

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Annual Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events

Non-adjusting events

- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Annual Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Annual Accounts.

Government grants and contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Partnership when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Partnership will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received

Amounts recognised as due to the Partnership are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attaching to the grant or contribution have been satisfied.

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Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants/contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. The Partnership does not have any finance leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Partnership as Lessee

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

Property, plant and equipment

The Partnership does not currently hold fixed assets. Any expenditure on the acquisition or creation of property, plant and equipment will be capitalised on an accruals basis provided it yields benefits to the Partnership and the services that it provides for more than one financial year. A de minimis level of £20,000 has been applied to all asset categories.

Provisions, Contingent liabilities and Contingent assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Partnership a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Partnership may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Partnership becomes aware of the obligation, and measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another

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party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Partnership settles the obligation.

Contingent liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Partnership a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Partnership. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

Contingent assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Partnership a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Partnership.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

Reserves

Legislation dictates usable reserves are always nil in respect of Regional Transport Partnerships, however certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for employee benefits and retirement benefits, and are classed as unusable resources for the Partnership.

VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

2. Accounting standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

Amendments to the following accounting standard will be adopted within the 2017/18 Code effective from 1 April 2017. There is therefore no impact on the 2016/17 financial statements.

- Amendment to the reporting of pension fund scheme transaction costs

Amendments to the following accounting standard will be adopted within the 2018/19 Code effective from 1 April 2018. There is therefore no impact on the 2016/17 financial statements.

- Amendments to IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers (recognition of revenue to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to the service recipient or customer in an amount that reflects the consideration to which the authority expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services)

Amendments to the following accounting standard, not yet endorsed, will have an impact on the accounts, however will be largely presentational.

- Amendments to IFRS 16 Leases (specifies an IFRS reporter will recognise, measure, present and disclose leases. The standard provides a single lessee accounting model, requiring lessees to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases unless the lease term is 12 months or less or the underlying asset has a low value.

The overall impact of this adjustment on the financial position of the Partnership is not expected to be material.

3. Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Partnership has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Annual Accounts are:

- There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government and regional transport partnerships. However, the Partnership has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the Partnership might need to reduce levels of service provision.

4. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Annual Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Partnership about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The only item in the Partnership's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2017 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year is the pension liability. The impact of changes in the assumptions used on the pension liability has been assessed by the actuaries and is illustrated in note 11.

5. Movement in Reserves Statement – adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Partnership in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Partnership to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

General Fund £000	Unusable reserves £000	Total 2015/16 £000		General Fund £000	Unusable reserves £000	Total 2016/17 £000
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve						
			Reversal of items relating to post-employment benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (see note 11)			
(127)	127	-		(106)	106	-
			Employers' pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year			
49	(49)	-		52	(52)	-
Adjustments involving the Employee Statutory Adjustment Account						
			Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements			
5	(5)	-		(1)	1	-
(73)	73	-	Total adjustments	(55)	55	-

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6. Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis

Net Change for the pensions Adjustments £000	2015/16		Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	Net Change for the pensions Adjustments £000	2016/17	
	Employee Annual Leave Accrued Adjustment £000	Total Adjustments £000			Employee Annual Leave Accrued Adjustment £000	Total Adjustments £000
50	(5)	45	Staff costs	30	1	31
50	(5)	45	Net Cost of Services	30	1	31
28	-	28	Other income & expenditure	24	-	24
78	(5)	73	Total Adjustments	54	1	55

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7. Balance Sheet – pensions reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Partnership accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Partnership makes employer's contributions to pensions funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Partnership has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
846	Balance at 1 April	677
19	Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(227)
(266)	Actuarial losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	705
<u>(247)</u>		478
127	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	106
(49)	Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(52)
<u>677</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>1,209</u>

8. Cash flow statement – cash and cash equivalents

The balances of cash and cash equivalents comprise:

31/03/16 £000		31/03/17 £000
-	Temporary Advances to Highland Council Loans Fund	226
(125)	Temporary Advances from Highland Council Loans Fund	-
<u>(125)</u>	Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>226</u>

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9. External audit costs

The Partnership has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Annual Accounts, certification of grant claims and statutory inspections and to non-audit services provided by external auditors

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
10	Fees payable to Audit Scotland with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year	9

No non-audit services were provided by the external auditor during the year.

10. Grant income

The Partnership credited the following specific grants to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
551	Scottish Government – core funding	523
122	Scottish Government – East Inverness Bus Corridor Improvement Project	149
755	Scottish Government – Community Links Projects	-
186	Scottish Government – Hi-Travel Project	92
14	Food Port Project (Lifting the Spirit)	-
100	Active Travel Project	119
-	Inverness Campus North Bridge Project	56
4	Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports 2020 (SPARA) – European transport project	-
1,732		939

11. Defined benefit pension schemes

Participation in pension schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Partnership makes contributions towards the cost of post employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Partnership has a commitment to make the payments and this needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The authority participates in one post employment scheme:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered locally by the Highland Council Pension Fund – this is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Partnership and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

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Transactions relating to post employment benefits

The Partnership recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge that is required to be made against requisitions is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

2015/16		2016/17
£000		£000
	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
	Cost of services	
99	Current service cost	82
<u>99</u>		<u>82</u>
	<i>Financing and investment income and expenditure</i>	
71	Interest cost	73
(43)	Interest income on plan assets	(49)
<u>28</u>		<u>24</u>
127	Total post employment benefits charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services	106
	Other post employment benefits charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement	
	<i>Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:</i>	
19	Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(227)
(266)	Actuarial losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	705
<u>(120)</u>	Total post employment benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	<u>584</u>
	Movement in reserves statement	
(127)	Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services for post employment benefits in accordance with the code	(106)
	Actual amount charged against the General Fund balance for pensions in the year	
<u>49</u>	Employers contributions payable to the scheme	<u>52</u>

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Pension assets and liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

	31/03/16 £000	31/03/17 £000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(2,051)	(2,889)
Fair value of pension fund assets	1,374	1,680
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(677)	(1,209)

Information about the defined benefit obligation

	Liability split		Duration
	£000s	Percentage (%)	
Active members	1,864	64.5	32.3
Deferred members	-	-	-
Pensioner members	1,025	35.5	14.0
Total	2,889	100.0	21.5

Assets and liabilities in relation to post employment benefits

Reconciliation of present value of scheme liabilities (defined benefit obligation)

		31/03/17 £000
31/03/16 £000		
2,168	Opening value	2,051
99	Current service cost	82
71	Interest cost	73
(266)	Actuarial loss/(gain)	705
(41)	Estimated Benefits paid net of transfers in	(42)
20	Contributions by scheme participants	20
2,051	Closing value	2,889

Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets

		31/03/17 £000
31/03/16 £000		
1,322	Opening value	1,374
43	Expected return on Scheme assets	49
(19)	Actuarial (loss)/gain	227
49	Contributions by employer	52
20	Contributions by Scheme participants	20
(41)	Estimated Benefits paid net of transfer in and including unfunded	(42)
1,374	Closing value	1,680

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Analysis of Pension Fund's Assets

The Local Government Pension Scheme's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

2015/16		2016/17
4%	Cash and cash equivalents	2%
	Equity securities: <i>By Industry type</i>	
14%	Consumer	11%
5%	Manufacturing	12%
3%	Energy and utilities	4%
11%	Financial institutions	10%
2%	Health and Care	3%
8%	Information Technology	8%
2%	Other	0%
	Debt securities: <i>By sector</i>	
13%	Corporate	12%
5%	Government	5%
4%	Private Equity	4%
	Property:	
10%	UK	11%
0%	Overseas	0%
	Other Investment Funds:	
19%	Equity	18%
100%	Total	100%

Notes:

- a) All pension fund assets other than private equity and property have quoted prices in active markets
- b) The risks relating to assets in the scheme are also analysed below:

Fair value of pension fund assets

31/03/16 £000		31/03/17 £000
	Equity Instruments	
1,319	• Quoted in an active market	1,412
55	• Not quoted in an active market	268
1,374	Sub total equity instruments	1,680

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Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Local Government Pension Scheme has been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Highland Council Pension Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2014.

The significant assumptions used by the actuary have been:

2015/16		2016/17
	Mortality Assumptions:	
	Longevity at age 65 for current pensioners (years)	
22.5	• Men	22.5
24.1	• Women	24.1
24.7	Longevity at age 65 for future pensioners (years)	24.7
26.8	• Men	26.8
	• Women	
2.2%	Rate of inflation	2.4%
4.2%	Rate of increase in salaries	4.4%
2.2%	Rate of increase in pensions	2.4%
3.5%	Rate for discounting fund liabilities	2.6%
50.0%	Take up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum (pre 2009)	50.0%
75.0%	Take up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum (post 2009)	75.0%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligation is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The methods and types of assumption used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

	Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Fund	
	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary amount (£000)
Member life expectancy (increase in 1 year)	3%	87
Rate of increase in salaries (increase by 0.5%)	6%	175
Rate of increase in pensions (increase by 0.5%)	7%	215
Rate for discounting fund liabilities (decrease by 0.5%)	14%	406

Impact on the Partnership's Cash Flow

The aims of the fund are to:

- Ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet all liabilities as they fall due
- Enable employer contributions to be kept as nearly constant as possible and at reasonable cost to the taxpayers and employers
- Manage employers liability effectively
- Maximise the returns from investments within reasonable risk parameters

The employer's contributions are set by the Fund actuary at each triennial actuarial valuation (the most recent being as at 31 March 2014), or at any time as instructed to do so by the Council. The actuaries have estimated that contributions for the year to 31 March 2018 will be approximately £0.053m.

12. Related parties

The Partnership is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Partnership or to be controlled or influenced by the Partnership. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Partnership might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Partnership.

Highland Council

The Highland Council provided £0.091m representing 45.5% of the requisition funding for the Partnership and holds 3 of the 8 votes on the Board. In addition Highland Council provides financial and computing services, at a cost of £0.020m, to the Partnership. The Highland Council also provided £0.124m towards Smarter Choices Smarter Places projects, Bus Shelter costs, a Public Transport Information Officer post and a Ferry Availability Study. In the year the Partnership contributed £0.010m towards travel related projects undertaken by Highland Council.

Moray Council

Moray Council provided £0.046m representing 23.0% of the requisition funding for the Partnership and holds 2 of the 8 votes on the Board. Moray Council also provided £0.008m towards the cost of the Partnership employing a Public Transport Information Officer. During the year the Partnership contributed £0.012m towards travel projects undertaken by Moray Council.

Argyll and Bute Council

Argyll and Bute Council provided £0.027m representing 13.5% of the requisition funding for the Partnership and holds 1 of the 8 votes on the Board. Argyll and Bute Council also provided £0.012m towards a Ferry Availability Study and a Public Transport Information Officer post. During the year the Partnership contributed £0.015m towards travel projects undertaken by Argyll and Bute Council.

Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar

The Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar provided £0.019m representing 9.5% of the requisition funding for the Partnership and holds 1 of the 8 votes on the Board. Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar also provided £0.055m towards the Smarter Choices Smarter Places projects, a Ferry Availability Study and a Public Transport Information Officer. Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar provides administrative, personnel and legal services at a cost of £0.008m.

Orkney Islands Council

Orkney Islands Council provided £0.017m representing 8.5% of the requisition funding for the Partnership and holds 1 of the 8 votes on the Board. Orkney Islands Council also provided £0.005m towards the cost of the Partnership employing a Public Transport Information Officer. The Partnership provided £0.004m to

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reimburse Orkney Islands Council for members' expenses and advertising costs. During the year the Partnership contributed £0.004m towards travel projects undertaken by Orkney Islands Council.

Scottish Government

Scottish Government exerts significant influence through legislation and grant funding. Scottish Government provided grant funding of £0.523m for the Partnership, £0.149m for the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor project, £0.092m for the Hi-Travel Scheme, £0.020 for active travel work in Argyll & Bute and Lochaber, and £0.008m towards a Train2Ride Study.

13. Operating Leases

The Partnership leases office premises at two locations.

Partnership as Lessee

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are

31/03/16 £000		31/03/17 £000
10	Not later than one year	10
<u>10</u>		<u>10</u>

The expenditure charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was

31/03/16 £000		31/03/17 £000
9	Minimum lease payments	10
<u>9</u>		<u>10</u>

14. Short Term Debtors

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
82	Central government bodies	8
198	Other local authorities	-
25	Other entities and individuals	-
<u>305</u>	Total	<u>8</u>

15. Short Term Creditors

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
7	Central government bodies	7
89	Other local authorities	21
89	Other entities and individuals	212
<u>185</u>	Total	<u>240</u>

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16. Financial Instruments Balances

The following categories of financial instruments are carried in the Balance Sheet:-

2015/16 £000		2016/17 £000
<u>-</u>	Cash and cash equivalents	<u>226</u>
<u>125</u>	Short-term borrowing	<u>-</u>
<u>305</u>	Short-term debtors	<u>8</u>
<u>185</u>	Short-term creditors	<u>240</u>

17. Events after the Balance Sheet date

The unaudited annual accounts was issued by the Treasurer on 26 June 2017 and the audited accounts were authorised for issue on 15 September 2017. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the annual accounts or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2017, the figures in the annual accounts and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

Independent auditor's report to the members of The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and the Accounts Commission

This report is made solely to the parties to whom it is addressed in accordance with Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and for no other purpose. In accordance with paragraph 120 of the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission, we do not undertake to have responsibilities to members or officers, in their individual capacities, or to third parties.

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

We certify that we have audited the financial statements in the annual accounts of The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership for the year ended 31 March 2017 under Part VII of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The financial statements comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement in Reserves Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash-Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) as adopted by the European Union, and as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17 (the 2016/17 Code).

In our opinion the accompanying financial statements:

- give a true and fair view in accordance with applicable law and the 2016/17 Code of the state of affairs of the body as at 31 March 2017 and of its deficit on the provision of services for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with IFRSs as adopted by the European Union, as interpreted and adapted by the 2016/17 Code; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, and the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK and Ireland (ISAs (UK&I)). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the body in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standards for Auditors, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Treasurer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with the financial reporting framework, and for such internal control as the Treasurer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable legal requirements and ISAs (UK&I) as required by the Code of Audit Practice approved by the Accounts Commission. Those standards require us to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standards for Auditors. An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the circumstances of the body and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Treasurer; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

Our objectives are to achieve reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK&I) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Other information in the annual accounts

The Treasurer is responsible for the other information in the annual accounts. The other information comprises the information other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon except on matters prescribed by the Accounts Commission to the extent explicitly stated later in this report.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements in accordance with ISAs (UK&I), our responsibility is to read all the financial and non-financial information in the annual accounts to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Report on other requirements

Opinions on other prescribed matters

We are required by the Accounts Commission to express an opinion on the following matters.

In our opinion, the auditable part of the Remuneration Report has been properly prepared in accordance with The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit

- the information given in the Management Commentary for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with statutory guidance issued under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; and
- the information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and that report has been prepared in accordance with the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016).

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required by the Accounts Commission to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the auditable part of the Remuneration Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- there has been a failure to achieve a prescribed financial objective.

We have nothing to report in respect of these matters.

Joanne Brown CPFA, (for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP)

110 Queen Street

Glasgow

G1 3BX

September 2017