



NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Partnership in the HITRANS Office, Building 25, Inverness Airport, on **Friday 3 April 2009 at 9:30am**. There will be an informal meeting of the Partnership for a briefing at the Golf View Hotel, Nairn, on 2 April 2009 commencing at 6.00 pm, followed by dinner at 7:30pm.

AGENDA

APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

MINUTES

FINANCE

- 3 **HITRANS Revenue Budget Report 2008/09** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Treasurer

- 4 **Travel Plans Programme 2008/09** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

RESEARCH

- 6 **Rail Studies** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

- 7 Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth (Park and Ride) (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

- 10 **Oban 5 a Day** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

COMMUNITY PLANNING

STAFF

- 12 **Salary Grade and Regrading of Office Manager Posts** (Item to be held in private)
Report by Partnership Director

AOCB

Item:

1



Minute of Meeting held in the Meeting Room
at Building 25 (HITRANS Office), Inverness
Airport on Friday 6 February 2009

PRESENT Mr Duncan Macintyre (Chairman) – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr John Laing (Vice-Chairman) – Highland Council
Mr George McIntyre – Moray Council
Mr Wilson Metcalfe

IN ATTENDANCE Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS
Mr Ranald Robertson - HITRANS
Mr Sam MacNaughton – Highland Council
Mr Howard Brindley – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Donald Macrae – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Gordon Holland – Moray Council
Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Derek Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr David Summers – Highland Council
Mr Mike Mitchell, Highland Council
Mr Okain MacLennan – NHS, Highland

APOLOGIES Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
Ms Louise Smith
Mr Frank Roach - HITRANS
Mrs Moya Ingram – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Douglas Forson – Scottish Government
Mr Gareth Williams – SCDI

WELCOME: The Chairman welcomed Mr Okain MacLennan to the meeting. The Chairman indicated that Mr MacLennan is to be nominated as the new Board Member for HITRANS and Ministerial confirmation of the appointment will be sought.

WELCOME: The Chairman welcomed Mr David Anderson, Transport Scotland to the Meeting.

HITRANS 1 Minute of Meeting of 9 January 2009 was **approved**.

Matters Arising 2 Mr Dave Duthie updated Members on progress with the Report into the Distribution of Fuel within the Highlands and Islands and indicated that final version of this Report would be considered at the April meeting. Members were informed that the Joint Chairs Meeting with CoSLA would take place on 20 February 2009, with the Joint Chairs Meeting with CoSLA and Cabinet Secretary John Swinney taking place on 2 March 2009. A meeting with MP's had been arranged in London on 24 February 2009 to discuss transport issues which have a Westminster locus and to promote the Strategy and work the Partnership undertakes.

It was agreed to note the updates.

FINANCE

HITRANS Revenue Budget Report 2008/09 3 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing HITRANS Revenue Monitoring Position for the period ending 31 December 2008. The Report stated that income and expenditure was in line with the budget outturn target and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered by the end of the financial year.

It was agreed to:

- (1) **note the Report; and**
- (2) **authorise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to approve alterations to the HITRANS Revenue Budget 2008/09 in order to bring forward previously agreed projects to ensure that spending targets were achieved.**

HITRANS Revenue Budget Proposal 2008/09 4 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report outlining the Draft Revenue Budget for 2009/10 including the Partnership's running costs and Research and Development Strategy Programme costs and identifying the projected income from partner Councils and the Scottish Government to cover these costs. The Report highlighted the funding formula for Council contributions which had been agreed by the Partnership in July 2006.

It was agreed to;

- (1) **approve the Revenue Budget 2009/10 as detailed in the Report; and**
- (2) **authorise the Partnership Director to discuss with Transport Scotland ways in which the Research and Strategy Development Programme Budget might help promote delivery of schemes included in the STPR.**

Travel Plans Programme 5 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing progress with the delivery of the Travel Plans Budget. The Report highlighted that the main expected outcomes of the programme was to increase the number of employees, visitors and suppliers in Local Authorities and Health Boards using more sustainable modes of transport. The Report highlighted where funding was being channelled in order to meet these objectives, while continuing to promote the take up of sustainable transport by organisations across both the public and private sector.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the current position in relation to the travel plans programme 2008/09; and**
- (2) **that partner members would inform Mr Ranald Robertson of any proposed Travel Plan projects within their areas.**

Review Discretionary Policies under the Local Government Pension Scheme 6 The Partnership Director submitted a Report reviewing the Partnerships discretionary policies in respect of the Local Government (Scotland) Pensions Scheme 2008. The Report stated that the proposals reflected those policies adopted by the Highland Council.

It was agreed to approve;

- (1) **that the recommendations contained Appendix 1 and 2 of this report;**
- (2) **that all policies be reviewed on 2013; and**
- (3) **that, in line with the main scheme policy, there be an "opt out" provision allowing reconsideration of any specific discretion if the special circumstances of an individual case merit it.**

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Transport Projects Review – Draft 7 With reference to Item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 9 January of 2009, the Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review. The Report detailed proposals to support the delivery of nationally significant land based transport services and infrastructure across the Highlands and Islands working in partnership with

the Scottish Government, its Agencies, Councils and other stakeholders in the transport sector. Mr Dave Thomson, Transport Scotland, was invited to update the Partnership in relation to the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

It was agreed to welcome the priority given to investment in transport services within the Highlands and Islands as detailed in the findings of the Scottish Governments Strategic Transport Projects Review and that HITRANS would support the Government and its Agencies in developing and delivering these investments priorities and strategies and would continue to argue the case for prioritisation and recognition of those nationally significant interventions included in the HITRANS Transport Strategy and draft Delivery Plan which had not been included in the STPR.

Single
Outcome
Agreement
Development
–
Draft
Position Paper

- 8 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the Single Outcome Agreements being developed by each partner Council through the Community Planning Process. The Report highlighted draft responses to each Partnership Authority in order to ensure that the Regional Transport Strategy Aims and Objectives flowed into the Single Outcome Agreement Process.

It was agreed;

- (1) **that Members and Principal Advisors be invited to submit their comments in relation to the draft submissions to Mr Ranald Robertson by 27 February 2009; and**
- (2) **to support Partnership Officers in the process of engaging with Community Planning Partnership Lead Officers in order to ensure that transport featured to an appropriate degree in each Single Outcome Agreement.**

GENERAL ISSUES

Livestock
Transport

- 9 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that the maximum journey times for transporting livestock, which were only recently confirmed in EC Regulation 1/2005, were again under review through a campaign lead by MEP's seeking a maximum journey of 8 hours before significant periods of rest. The Report highlighted the implications of such a move on the livestock industry within the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed;

- (1) **to liaise with ZetTrans, NESTRANS, NFU Scotland, Road Haulage Association, Crofters Commission and the Scottish Crofters Foundation in order to make a joint response to the European Commission on the impact of introducing further time limits for livestock transport; and**
- (2) **to seek a meeting with Mr Struan Stevenson, MEP in order to discuss the impact of further restrictions in livestock transport journey times.**

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Evidence to
Transport
Planning
Select
Committee on
Aviation

- 10 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing a Draft Response to the House of Commons Transport Committee Inquiry into the future of aviation in the United Kingdom.

It was agreed to approve the draft response detailed in the Report for submission to the House of Commons Transport Committee on Aviation.

AOCB

AOCB

- 11 Members were informed that Transport Scotland were currently undertaking a consultation on the future maintenance arrangements for trunk roads with responses due by 23 February 2009.

It was agreed;

- (1) **that the Partnership Director in liaison with the Permanent Advisors be authorised to respond to Transport Scotland's Consultation on future maintenance arrangements for trunk roads on behalf of HITRANS; and**
- (2) **The Partnership Director would invite Trunk Road Maintenance Contractors to the April 2009 Meeting.**

Report to Partnership Meeting of 3 April 2009

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2008 to 28 February 2009

Report by Partnership Treasurer

SUMMARY

This report sets out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 28 February 2009 and the projected year end position.

1. Current Position

- 1.1 The annual budget is as approved at the Board Meeting held on 1 February 2008, amended for the recovery of the 2007/08 overspend of £17,555 approved at the Board meeting on 5 September 2008. The attached summary statement shows the financial position to 28 February 2009. In total income and expenditure is broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

2. Year End Projection

- 2.1 The year to date actual figures represent the transactions for the eleven months ended 28 February 2009 and are in line with management expectations. At present officers are not aware of any anomalies that will distort the overall financial position.
- 2.2 Board Members will note that based on the financial performance to date, it is predicted that at the end of the financial year the budget will deliver a balanced budget.

3. Major Issues and Variances

- 3.1 The majority of miscellaneous income relates to income recovered from Orkney Islands Council in respect of Howard Brindley costs incurred whilst covering for Noami Coleman's maternity leave. Howard's costs are included in other costs.
- 3.2 At the 6 February meeting the Board were advised, due to a clerical oversight, the 2007/08 travel plan grant would not be paid, however officials were in discussion with Scottish Government officials, consequently there may be potential for the shortfall of £70,000 to be met by both parties 50:50. To be prudent, the full £70,000 shortfall has been allowed for in the current financial year. The shortfall has been met by anticipated underspends in Direct Running Costs (£36,000); Programme Costs (29,000); Finance and Administration Costs (£1,000); and increased income of £4,000.
- 3.3 There are a number of significant invoices awaited, and also commitments made for Research and Strategy Development, Travel Plan Work and Publicity. These amounts are shown in the "Outstanding Committed" column in the financial monitoring statement.

A verbal update will be given at the Board meeting.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Board Members are asked to note the above information as well as the attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 28 February 2009.

Signature:

Designation: Partnership Treasurer

Date: 26 March 2009

Author: Mike Mitchell, Finance Manager, Highland Council

<u>HITRANS - SUMMARY</u>							
STATEMENT OF REVENUE MONITORING TO: <u>28TH FEBRUARY 2009</u>							
2008/2009							
BUDGET	ANNUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL	This Month	Outstanding		PROJECTED
HEADINGS	BUDGET	TO DATE	TO DATE	Actual	Committed	TO GO	OUTTURN
INCOME							
Councils	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	£0	£0	£0	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Match Funding	(£200,000)	(£183,333)	(£183,333)	(£16,666)	£0	(£16,667)	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Travel Plan Officer	(£107,000)	(£98,083)	£0	£0	£0	(£107,000)	(£107,000)
Scottish Executive - Regional Transport Strategy	(£415,000)	(£348,667)	(£348,667)	(£35,334)	£0	(£66,333)	(£415,000)
Other Misc Income	£0	£0	(£21,961)	(£9,611)	£0	(£2,039)	(£24,000)
	(£922,000)	(£830,084)	(£753,961)	(£61,611)	£0	(£192,039)	(£946,000)
DIRECT RUNNING COSTS							
Director	£89,400	£81,950	£81,936	£7,447	£0	£7,464	£89,400
Partnership Managers	£111,100	£101,842	£103,238	£9,376	£0	£9,362	£112,600
Office Managers	£49,500	£45,375	£46,788	£4,181	£0	£4,212	£51,000
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£25,000	£22,917	£22,198	£3,878	£0	£2,802	£25,000
Members and Advisers Travel and Subsistence	£10,000	£9,167	£8,074	£1,095	£0	£1,926	£10,000
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£25,000	£22,917	£16,468	£849	£0	£4,532	£21,000
Office Costs - Property	£50,000	£45,833	£18,499	(£372)	£0	£1,501	£20,000
Office Costs - Admin	£30,000	£27,500	£22,669	£2,599	£0	£2,331	£25,000
	£390,000	£357,500	£319,870	£29,053	£0	£34,130	£354,000
PROGRAMME COSTS							
Publicity	£25,000	£22,917	£9,523	£2,250	£6,000	£6,477	£16,000
Travel Plan Work	£107,000	£98,083	£43,209	£16,095	£64,000	£63,791	£107,000
Research & Strategy Development	£336,445	£275,000	£144,084	£81,936	£172,000	£172,361	£316,445
Other Costs	£0	£0	£17,912	£6,617	£0	£2,088	£20,000
Loss of 2007/08 Travel Plan Grant	£0	£0	£70,000	£0	£0	£0	£70,000
2007/08 Deficit	£17,555	£17,555	£17,555	£0	£0	£0	£17,555
	£486,000	£413,555	£302,283	£106,898	£242,000	£244,717	£547,000
Finance and Administrative Services							
	£46,000	£28,433	£27,358	£20,330	£0	£17,642	£45,000
TOTAL COSTS	£922,000	£799,488	£649,511	£156,281	£242,000	£272,489	£946,000
(UNDER) / OVERSPEND	£0	(£30,596)	(£104,450)	£94,670	£242,000	£80,450	£0

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009**FINANCE – TRAVEL PLANS PROGRAMME 2008/09****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the position regarding delivery of HITRANS Travel Plans budget funded through the Scottish Government's allocation of £107,000 for 2008/09 through the grant stream directed to *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards*.

BACKGROUND

The main expected outcome of the Grant is to increase the number of staff, visitors and suppliers in Local Authorities and Health Boards using more sustainable modes of transport. The objectives of the grant are:

- i. work with Local Authorities and Health Boards to implement and expand the coverage and monitoring of Travel Plans and disseminate lessons learnt through the production of case studies; and
- ii. work with Local Authorities, and other sustainable and active travel stakeholders, to encourage organisations and individuals, for example through best practice, leadership, national events, promotion of publications, websites and tools, to test and habitually use more sustainable forms of transport.

HITRANS GRANT PROGRAMME

The following proposals summarise the areas where the Partnership agreed funding should be channelled.

Travel Plans Promotion

The HITRANS Board asked for additional funding to be directed to a promotional campaign to promote www.IfYouCareShare.com with the first phase of this to focus on local radio advertising. A budget of £21,827 was spent on this campaign in 2008/09.

Get Healthy, Get Active!

HITRANS introduced Get Healthy, Get Active! our sustainable travel grant scheme in 2007/08 and achieved good results in terms of promoting better travel with participation by our partner Councils. The budget in 2007/08 saw over £20,000 of successful active travel projects delivered by Argyll and Bute Council, Moray Council and Orkney Islands Council. The initial budget for this scheme for 2008/09 was increased to £35,000 to provide a greater opportunity for Councils and Health Boards to bid for funding of travel plan related actions. Unfortunately only Moray Council submitted bids for projects in 2008/09 so the budget was reduced to cover these projects with the final budget of £17,000 awarded to Moray Council to improve sustainable travel measures at Council offices. It is understood that the projects funded have been completed and we await the final invoice from Moray Council for our funding contribution.

Sustainable Travel Facilities

While it is important to develop travel behaviour change at large employment sites such as can be achieved through Get Healthy, Get Active! many communities across the Highlands and Islands depend on smaller scale enterprises as key employers. It is therefore important to improve sustainable travel opportunities to sites such as these with facilities that can be used by all staff and visitors in the public realm. A budget of £13,685 has delivered a number of improvements at or near employment facilities across the region in 2008/09 with a view to improving the accessibility of public transport and active travel opportunities.

Travel Plan Marketing

A budget of £10,355 has been delivered in 2008/09 on targeted travel plan and sustainable journey marketing. This has included personal journey plan preparation and the production of travel plan booklets and marketing materials. The Travel Plan publicity has been provided to Councils, Health Boards and a number of major employers to help encourage travel plan implementation and adherence.

www.IfYouCareShare.com

The www.IfYouCareShare.com journey share portal was launched in summer 2008. A budget of £33,266 has been spent on this in 2008/09. This includes licensing costs which will future proof the site for the next four years and some marketing and graphic design work in developing the concept and site.

HITRANS Site Travel Plan

While encouraging other employers to practice good travel planning behaviour it is important that HITRANS implement a site travel plan for both the Lairg and Dalcross offices. A travel plan taking account of staff, member and meeting travel will be developed this year. To support this document a practical measure identified is to trial the use of a folding bike stored at the Dalcross office and made available for use by staff, members and advisors travelling through Inverness Airport for business. Folding bikes are accepted for carriage on buses, coaches and trains and this will represent a highly visible and practical application of sustainable travel methods by the Partnership. This initiative is indicative of the sort of project that would qualify under the Get Healthy, Get Active! scheme should other employers choose to follow our example. £469 has been allocated to this project.

Real Time Information System Promotion

The real time information systems funded by HITRANS in 2007/08 in Argyll, Inverness, Moray and Orkney will be going live in 2008 and each scheme has the potential to provide bus stop information through a dedicated website, SMS and WAP mobile phone technology. This is a cost effective way of providing information but for this to achieve good take up it is essential that the system is promoted if we are to realise the benefits offered by these communication methods.

A budget of £2,000 has been used to design the marketing materials and website layout and graphics to support the promotion of our RTI scheme.

Site Specific Travel Plan Development

A budget of £305 was spent in 2008/09 to support public and private sector employers in the development of site specific travel plans. At the start of the year it was hoped this scheme would require significantly more funding but in the event little interest was shown by smaller employers in using this funding as a means of developing site travel plans.

Administration, Monitoring and Evaluation

A budget of £8,000 has been allocated to cover staff time and office costs associated with delivering Travel Plans work in the HITRANS area and monitoring the success in delivering previously initiated and new travel plans across the Highlands and Islands.

SUMMARY

In line with recommendations made by Scottish Government the programme to *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards* has been used to research and develop measures that support sustainable travel and modal shift in the Highlands and Islands. The full budget has been taken up in the delivery of these measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note the latest position with regard to delivery of the *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards* in the Highlands and Islands.

Report by:

Ranald Robertson

Designation:

Partnership Manager

Date:

6th March 2009

Background Papers:

Appendix A – Detailed Travel Plan Programme 2008/09

Appendix A – Detailed Travel Plan Programme 2008/09

Project	Description	Budget Allocated	Spend to Date
Travel Plan related promotions	Cost of advertising in local press to promote modal shift.	£21,827	£21,827
Get Healthy, Get Active!	Continuation of <i>Get Healthy, Get Active!</i> HITRANS sustainable travel grant scheme. The first round of projects has seen improved active travel opportunities and facilities at local government offices. It is hoped to extend the benefits to other public sector and private sector sites. Moray Council has been awarded £17,000 towards providing travel facilities in various Council offices and they will be invoicing HITRANS for our contribution shortly.	£17,000	
Travel Plan Marketing	Targetted promotion of sustainable travel. This has included targetted marketing and individual route promotion.	£10,355	£10,335
Travel Facilities	Funding for enhanced sustainable travel facilites for general use not tied into specific employers.	£13,685	£13,685
HITRANS Office Travel Plan	A folding bike for use by HITRANS members, advisors and staff to attend meetings using sustainable transport. Folding bikes will be acceptable for carriage on all buses and trains in the region.	£469	£469
www.IfYouCareShare.com	Operation, licensing, marketing and promotion of HITRANS carshare site.	£33,266	£33,266
Real Time Information System Promotion	Marketing and promotion of HITRANS real time information projects.	£2,040	£340
Site Specific Travel Plan Development	Support to Public Sector and Private Sector businesses in developing and implementing site travel plans.	£305	£305
Administration, Monitoring and Evaluation	Staff time and office costs associated with delivering Travel Plans work in the HITRANS area and monitoring its success.	£8,000	£8,000
		£106,948	£88,228

Item:

5



Report to Partnership Meeting of 3 April 2009

HITRANS Business Plan for 2009/10

SUMMARY

The Report seeks approval from the Partnership for the HITRANS Business Plan for 2009/10. This is the second Business Plan to be prepared by the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and it sets out what we intend to do during 2009/10 working with our constituent Councils and Stakeholders to improve the delivery of transport services across the Highlands and Islands. It defines how we will move forward in promoting and implementing our Regional Transport Strategy.

BACKGROUND

This is the second Business Plan to be prepared by the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and it sets out what we intend to do during 2009/10 in working with our constituent Councils and Stakeholders to improve the delivery of transport services across the Highlands and Islands. It defines how we will move forward in promoting and implementing our Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The Scottish Executive published guidance on Regional Transport Strategies in March 2006. Paragraph 112 of the Guidance requires the preparation of an annual delivery or business plan to be submitted to Scottish Ministers. There has been a change in Government since this Guidance was issued and this has significantly changed the mechanism for funding of transportation investment from 2008/09. Ring fencing of much of the Council and previously centrally managed funding has been removed. From 2009/10 Councils are tasked with their Community Planning Partners to develop their Single Outcome Agreements which link local spending to the National Purpose. HITRANS reviewed our Regional Transport Strategy in 2008/09 to reflect the changes to funding mechanisms and to tie this document more closely in future to Single Outcome Agreements and national priorities.

The Business Plan as included in the Appendix to this report is intended to fulfil our requirement to produce such a document. After approval by the HITRANS Board this will be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to

1. approve the one year Business Plan for 2009/10.

Report by:

Dave Duthie

Designation:

Partnership Director

Date:

27 March 2009

Accompanying Paper:

HITRANS Draft Business Plan 2009/10

HITRANS Draft Business Plan 2009/10

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- 1. The Partnership Approach to Delivery**
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- 4. HITRANS Marketing & Communications Strategy**

1. Foreword

A new year will as always bring variety and the one thing that doesn't stand still is transport. HITRANS are gearing up for a busy year as we strive to deliver as much as possible of the interventions and good practice we have identified in our Regional Transport strategy.

In these challenging times it is hardly a surprise that the key objective that underpins what we are doing is the economy.

With GVA in the Highlands and Islands sitting at 80% of the Scottish average we already have some catching up to do in the north of Scotland. We were pleased to see this recognised by Scottish Government in the recently published STPR which has identified historic levels of spending to bring our dilapidated transport links up to scratch. HITRANS' key focus is to work with Government and our regional stakeholders from the public sector and business to promote the measures which should be taken forward as a priority from 2012. This will see us undertake further work to identify the projects that will give the best benefits per pound, ensuring planning and design gets underway now to avoid delays when the funds become available from the Government's Capital programme.

HITRANS will also be working closely with our partners to promote and deliver improvements in sustainable travel opportunities across the region. In doing this we will make funding available from our core budget and our EU Atlantic Area START project with an emphasis on modal shift. We are already delivering measures to improve car sharing, intelligent transport systems, bus priority and public transport accessibility.

2. Guidance

The Scottish Executive published guidance on Regional Transport Strategies in March 2006. Paragraph 112 of the Guidance requires the preparation of an annual delivery or business plan to be submitted to Scottish Ministers. The plan should normally cover the first three years of implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy, and be updated annually to reflect local and central government planning and funding cycles and include plans for capital and revenue spending and borrowing. There has been a change in Government since this Guidance was issued and this has significantly changed the mechanism for funding of transportation investment from 2008/09. Ring fencing of much of the Council and previously centrally managed funding has been removed. Councils are tasked in 2008/09 with producing Single Outcome Agreements with Government and from 2009/10 onwards with their Community Planning Partners. HITRANS has been asked to review its Regional Transport Strategy. In these rapidly changing circumstances and pending approval of this by Scottish Ministers it is proposed that HITRANS produce a single year Business Plan identifying its intentions in 2008/09 and engage during that year with Government, its agencies, HITRANS constituent Councils and their Community Partners to develop its future focus and delivery role.

This Business Plan is intended to fulfil that requirement and, after approval by the HITRANS Board, will be submitted to Scottish Ministers.

It describes the good governance procedures adopted by HITRANS and defines the areas where HITRANS may in time seek additional powers beyond the current Model 1 level. It takes on board the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review and its detailed Capital and Revenue implications and forms the basis, with the detailed action plan related to its Regional Transport Strategy, of HITRANS' input to partner authorities' single outcome agreements with Government and future bids for finance.

3. The HITRANS Board

HITRANS was established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 ("the Act") and subordinate legislation, namely the Regional Transport Partnership (Establishment, Constitution and Membership) (Scotland) Order 2005. The Order came into effect - and HITRANS came into existence - on 1st December, 2005. The Partnership operates in terms of the Act and the Order. Although "the Board" is not a statutory term for Regional Transport Partnerships, it is a useful term for distinguishing between HITRANS' main decision making body, i.e. the members meeting together, from the Partnership as a corporate entity comprised of members, officials and other associated groups.

Membership

In terms of the Order which set HITRANS up, members consist of a total of 5 councillor members from the constituent councils, The Highland Council, Moray Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and Orkney Islands Council. In addition, HITRANS is entitled to have between 2 and 3 other (non-councillor) members (paragraph 1(2) of Schedule 2 of the Order) which, during the period ending with the ordinary elections for councillors in 2007, were appointed by the Scottish Ministers.

The current Chair, Duncan MacIntyre, was appointed on 22 June, 2007. There is one vice-Chair: Councillor John Laing.

The Partnership has a full quota of 5 councillor members and has 2 other (non-councillor) members. Guidance issued when Regional Transport Partnerships were created recommended that each Partnership should where possible include a member with particular knowledge of the Health Sector. This was not possible in the case of HITRANS at its inception as no one with this background applied to be considered for Membership. With the reduction in the numbers of other members with the resignation of one for the Board in 2008/09 it is now possible to redress this position and efforts in this regard are ongoing with a view to appointing a Board Member early in the new year.

In order to ensure that quorate decisions are achieved, an annual calendar of meetings is agreed each December.

Performance and Audit

Good governance of any corporate body involves three elements of a constant cycle: planning, performance and scrutiny. Proper scrutiny, which reviews performance and informs the next phase of planning of an organisation's activities, is often most difficult to achieve. However, for organisations such as HITRANS, it is essential that there are appropriate mechanisms for review of all the Partnership's activities. Whilst the burden of auditing HITRANS' performance falls in the first instance on its officials, and internal/external auditors, it is noted that Audit Scotland intend to review delivery issues in the transport sector in 2009/10 and the Partnership welcomes any opportunity that might arise to engage in the process with a view to improving the delivery of transport services in the Highlands and Islands and to take on board any suggestions that Audit Scotland might make on how best issues such as running of the Partnership might be improved.

4. Governance

Good governance is essential to any public body and HITRANS is no exception. The essential building blocks for governance are set out below.

Standing Orders

The existing Standing Orders were adopted by the Partnership at their meeting on 5 May 2006. The Scottish Government had, in its provisions in the Establishment Order, set out certain minimum parameters for Standing Orders and these have been incorporated wholesale into both the initial draft and the existing Standing Orders. The Standing Orders have used best practice from those of other organisations and are designed to meet the needs of the Partnership. They comprise not only procedural rules regarding meetings but also financial rules which dovetail with the financial regulations as well as the tendering and contractual rules which require to be followed for all contracts entered into by HITRANS. As with the Scheme of Delegation, these will be subject to review during 2008/09 and may additionally require to adapt to any new functional change, as well as the normal requirement for periodic review.

Scheme of Delegation

In any corporate body, day to day operational decisions need to be taken by officials rather than awaiting a formal decision making process. A clear distinction can be drawn between policy making and operational decisions and this is the purpose of a scheme of delegation which allows officers to keep the Partnership's activities running whilst leaving the main policy decisions to the Board itself.

The Scheme of Delegation was put in place at the Board meeting of 5 May 2006 and represents a set of powers tailored specifically for the workings of HITRANS as they currently stand.

Financial Regulations

As part of the Partnership's commitment to the development of its corporate governance Arrangements the Partnership has initially adopted the Financial Procedures of the Highland Council. The financial rules were adopted by the Partnership at their meeting on 20 January 2006 and provide the basis under which all actions overseen by staff that have financial responsibilities and interests are undertaken. It had been hoped to review The Financial Regulations in 2008/09 but this has not been possible due to commitments in other areas. These will now be reviewed early in 2009/10 and every two years thereafter.

Human Resources policies / procedures

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has been commissioned to take on the function of HR advisor for HITRANS. The agreement commencing in January 2006, saw the production and development of several policies, and the continuation of policy creation and development working with in-house staff is ongoing. The policies, listed in the table in Appendix 1, are shown as those approved by the Partnership Board and those still requiring further development.

Equalities

HITRANS, as a Regional Transport Partnership, has a statutory requirement to comply with requirements associated with Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality legislation and also tackle discrimination on age, religious and sexuality grounds. The requirements under the three headings have a common approach and therefore an agreement on the approach to fulfilling our requirements is required.

An Equality Scheme for HITRANS has been published on the website. The scheme provides clear cross referencing to other approved and published HITRANS documents so that anyone wishing to establish our position on equity issues can find it. A key element of the scheme was the establishment of an Equalities Forum which would meet on a six monthly basis, to discuss the work that HITRANS is doing and how it operates, to get feedback and suggestions from across the highlands and islands on how we could usefully

improve on equalities issues. We have engaged closely with our constituent Councils and in particular their Equalities officers in the past year as they develop their individual equality schemes as we implement our equality plan. It has been agreed with them that the best means of ensuring Equality issues are imbedded in transport processes and development is at a local level through their individual Forums. To this end each of our Council Permanent Advisors is tasked will consider any issues identified at Council level and feed these back to the Partnership for debate, action and dissemination as appropriate. With this change in emphasis agreed by the 5 Councils the decision has been taken not to set up a separate Equalities Forum for the Partnership as this would in many ways duplicate the work being done at Council level.

The implementation of equalities policies is an clearly ongoing process rather than simply the requirement to publish a specific scheme. Equal Opportunities are at the heart of the HITRANS ethos and we are committed to meeting our statutory duties in this regard. We will review the effectiveness of this change of process on an ongoing basis and change it should it be found not to be identifying relevant equality matters to the Partnership.

Interaction with Stakeholders

HITRANS has established a series of effective liaison groups with transport operators, service users, linked service providers, and the wider community planning groupings across the spectrum of its activities as detailed in HITRANS Partnership Approach to Delivery in Appendix 1. The Liaison Groups serve as forums for Members and officers of the Partnership, officers from the constituent Councils and wide stakeholder interests to discuss issues relating to policy, strategy and operations, and to form a consensus view (or otherwise) to inform the Partnership Board's deliberations. The Groups have no delegated powers and are not Sub-Committees of the Partnership. As such their meetings are not regulated by HITRANS Standing Orders but add significant value to HITRANS appreciation of issues and provide direction for further development of strategy and improved delivery by the Partnership and its constituent Councils. We continue to develop the structure and processes of these groups to ensure they best meet their function. They have proven to be invaluable in ensuring close working relationships with our partners and stakeholders. The current groups with their respective remits are described in Appendix 1.

Powers and Functions

One of the key elements of the 2008/09 Business Plan was the proposal that HITRANS investigate in 2008/09 the case for it taking additional functions in terms of section 10 of the Act. This work has commenced with the commissioning of a study to identify the merits of otherwise of the current arrangements and other options for the delivery of transport functions and services within the Highlands and Islands. The findings of this Study will form the basis of a debate within the Partnership and across the transport community in the Highlands and Islands later in 2009/10, on how services can be delivered most efficiently and with appropriate democratic accountability in promoting a viable and sustainable region into the future..

A distinction can be drawn between the **powers** and **functions** of HITRANS. Dealing briefly with its **duties**, these are, principally, in two categories. The first category relates to regional transport strategies and HITRANS, like the other transport partnerships, is under an obligation to produce a regional transport strategy and to monitor and, wherever possible, ensure its implementation (sections 5, 9 and 12 of the 2005 Act). The second category is in relation to a more general raft of duties to comply with various regulatory matters both under the 2005 Act and other pieces of legislation (auditing requirements; Ethical Standards in Public Life, etc. (Scotland) Act 2000; Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002; Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002).

HITRANS' Powers

In common with all transport partnerships, HITRANS' powers are set out by the 2005 Act. In summary, the powers of the Partnership, where it sees fit, are to (references being to sections of the 2005 Act):

- require funding from its constituent councils (section 3);
- give grants and loan in implementation of the RTS (section 3);
- borrow money for specific capital expenditure (section 3);
- employ staff (para. 1 of Schedule 1);
- acquire land by agreement or compulsorily and dispose of it (paras. 6 and 9 of Schedule 1);
- develop land for its own purposes - or if surplus for other persons' use (paras. 6 and 7);
- promote or oppose private legislation (para. 10);
- participate in community planning (para. 11);
- form or promote companies (para. 12); and
- erect buildings, provide offices, entering into building contracts etc. (para. 16).

HITRANS' Functions

The legislative framework setting up HITRANS recognises that transport functions are currently carried out by other bodies and makes provision for transfer of some or all of these functions in certain circumstances should HITRANS, its constituent Councils and Scottish Ministers consider this is appropriate and adds value to the delivery of transport services in the area. Section 10 of the 2005 Act provides that transport partnerships such as HITRANS can carry out transport functions either instead of the previous function provider (usually the constituent council or a Government Agency); or concurrently with that person.

To exercise further transportation functions, HITRANS would have two options. The first would be for HITRANS to reach agreement with all the constituent councils and/or the Scottish Ministers that it carries out certain of the transport functions which the councils are currently providing. This route is provided by section 14 of the 2005 Act. The second, as outlined above, is to apply to the Scottish Government under section 10 for additional functions. It is proposed to investigate in 2008/09 the case for promoting either course of action.

Section 10 of the Act sets out the procedure which will require to be followed, should HITRANS resolve to seek additional functional capability. The precise functions would require to be the subject of Board approval. Thereafter HITRANS would require to consult with its constituent authorities for additional functions (s.10(6)). It would in such circumstances be prudent to report to the Board on the results of that consultation before finalising the request, to the Scottish Ministers. In terms of s.10(8), the Scottish Ministers would again consult the local authorities on any request for additional functions.

The draft HITRANS RTS does not indicate any area where additional powers might be sought at this time but areas within which the Partnership might wish to examine the benefits of attracting additional powers would include:

Ticketing - Transport (Scotland) Act 2001: S28, 29. This area presents the strongest case for HITRANS to seek powers for direct delivery, as integrated ticketing is an area where the public and stakeholders would see the greatest benefit.

Quality Partnership and Quality Contracts - Transport (Scotland) Act 2001:
S3,13. There could be benefits of HITRANS facilitating a Quality Partnership or a Quality Contract on some strategy cross-boundary corridors along with the local authorities affected and the bus operator(s). The potential benefit for HITRANS to assume some statutory Quality Partnership and Quality Contract functions to support and simplify any negotiation should be considered.

Supporting Constituent Authorities - Where constituent councils may not have the capacity and resources to deliver local authority measures, the RTP could consider providing support to the local authority to implement projects and initiatives relevant to the RTS, with agreement from the relevant authority. This could be the case in developing real time information systems and management and management of demand responsive transport services.

For HITRANS to implement the strategy, projects, and initiatives, there is no need to transfer any powers from local authorities or central government to HITRANS, but there may be benefits in taking on parallel powers to ensure that the strategy is delivered in accordance with the associated delivery plan.

5. Funding

Business Plans should be based upon a realistic estimate of the funding which is likely to be available to HITRANS and its partner authorities. Grant income from the Scottish Government directly to HITRANS in its first two years represented the vast majority of the Partnership's funding. The outcome of the 2007 Spending Review has fundamentally changed the funding route for implementation of proposals within the RTS. Capital funding has now been included in the Local Authority block grant with little or no ring fencing for transport. Core revenue funding for HITRANS continues over the three years from 2008 to 2011 on the basis of core funding from Government and match funding from partner authorities. HITRANS funding to allow the development of proposals and implementation of sustainable transport measures to encourage organisations to facilitate modal shift and carbon reduction within transport for its operations will enter its final year in 2009/10 at a much reduced level based on the budget set by Government. The level of capital funding that has been included in the local authority settlement is understood to be generally in line with the RTP core capital grant that has been forthcoming from government in 2006/7 and 2007/8 and has been distributed to the authorities on the basis of 95% on population and 5% on area. This amounted to £3.530m within the partnership area in 2007/08. The five partner authorities have indicated that they would each wish to make provision in their developing capital programmes for regional initiatives to the extent that they can having regard to local priorities and are currently developing their proposals within their revenue and capital proposals as part of their commitment and that of their Community Planning Partners to their Single Outcome Agreements with Government.

In 2008/2009, HITRANS received Grant-in-aid from Government of up to £717,000 to fund revenue expenditure, comprising £200,000 for Core Funding, additional funding of £517,000 in connection with Travel Planning and to support implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy. In 2009/10 for the purposes of development of the business plan, HITRANS have assumed funding directly to HITRANS of £651,000 of which £200,000 is what was previously defined as core funding, and £36,000 a final commitment from Government for promoting Travel Planning through the Partnership.

Constituent Authority Requisitions

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the constituent councils of each Regional Transport Partnership to fund its net expenses, after allowing for any income, including any grants from the Scottish Government. In 2008/2009, HITRANS constituent Councils contributed £200,000 towards the Partnership's net expenses. This represents match funding to complement the Scottish Government's revenue Grant-in-aid contribution towards Core Funding. For the purposes of development of the business plan, HITRANS has intimated to the partner authorities a proposed requisition of £200,000 as core revenue funding.

The detailed Revenue Budget for 2009/10 is shown in Appendix 2.

Revenue: Other sources of funding

In order to deliver on the aspirations of HITRANS and its partner authorities, it is beneficial to investigate alternative sources of funding. There are numerous European funding initiatives through which HITRANS and its partners could achieve added value. These opportunities were assessed during 2008/09 by HITRANS working with the constituent Councils and the Partnership has successfully engaged with other regions across the Atlantic seaboard of Europe in a project promoting better integrated public transport with improvements in real time information and services between transport hubs and the areas they serve. This fits with HITRANS strategy objectives and the aspirations of the Member Councils. There is usually a requirement for co-funding of trials, projects and studies from these sources; and while no specific funding was identified within the HITRANS budget for 2008/09 match funding was available from committed Council schemes to facilitate taking the project forward.

HITRANS will continue to investigate opportunities for adding value to transport service delivery across the region by working through Europe with other regions facing similar challenges, but this will only be possible as long as match funding for joint working can be identified within Council and partner budgets as we move forward.

Borrowing

Under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, HITRANS is permitted to borrow money for the purposes of its capital expenditure. HITRANS must have regard to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities when determining any programme for capital investment. The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable. No borrowing for the purposes of capital expenditure is anticipated during the period covered by this business plan. The Regional Transport Partnerships as a group continue to engage with Government and CoSLA on whether these powers may through joint working help support Member Councils and Government in delivering the Government's Purpose and in particular it's Economic Strategy.

Reserves

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to advise the Partnership about the level of reserves that they should hold and to ensure that there are clear protocols in place for their establishment and use. Guidance issued by CIPFA advises that local authorities and Partnerships, on the advice of their Finance Directors / Treasurers should make their own judgements regarding an appropriate level of reserves, taking into account all the relevant local circumstances.

Under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, constituent authorities are required to meet the net expenses of the Partnership. This means that, technically, it is not possible for HITRANS to make a "surplus" or "deficit" in any year and, therefore it is not possible for the Partnership to have a General Fund balance or Reserve. Scottish Government officials have indicated that they may recommend an amendment to the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, to allow for reserves, be made at the earliest opportunity. In the absence of a properly constituted reserve, any shortfall in the net expenses of HITRANS will fall to be met by the Partnership's constituent authorities.

6. The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy was submitted to the Scottish Government on 14 May 2008 and approved by Scottish Ministers on 25 July 2008.

We believe that our RTS remains a valid strategy reflecting closely Government's aspirations in its Economic Strategy announced in November 2007. HITRANS is confident that its Strategy is in line with both Regional and National aspirations for the HITRANS area.

In reviewing the draft Strategy before submission and revising and updating the associated delivery plan in the light of available national and local resources and the new funding mechanism for delivery of capital projects and service improvements, we have made the necessary adjustments to the RTS to ensure it provides a prioritised approach to investment while still meeting the realistic aspirations of the constituent Councils, Community Planning Partners and service providers. Councils have been revising their Capital Programmes in the light of the developing Single Outcome Agreements and the RTS Delivery Plan is still being finalised in reflecting this position and also the likely impacts of the output from the Government's recently completed Strategic Transport Projects Review which aims to set the national transport investment priorities until 2030.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important that HITRANS demonstrates that it is achieving its aims and objectives. The RTS provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation but this has been developed further in 2008/09 following approval of the strategy. The final Monitoring Framework is still being finalised and awaits confirmation by Councils of their Capital Programmes and completion of the Delivery Plan. Once in place, the results of the annual monitoring and evaluation of the achievements of outputs and outcomes will be reported to the Board and included in the Partnerships Annual Report using this Framework..

Monitoring and evaluation needs to be able to identify the progress HITRANS, Government, constituent Councils and its partners have made in achieving its objectives. This requires an extensive data gathering exercise but it is the intention to use existing sources of data wherever possible to minimise costs. No allocation of funding has been included at this stage in the 2009/10 budget for collection of new data sets, although this may have to be reviewed later in the year .

Delivery Mechanisms

The predominant method of delivery that HITRANS has utilised to deliver the 2007/08 Capital Programme has been by the issue of Grant in Aid to the Partnership Authorities and other stakeholders. This will change with the funding for regional transport projects in 2008/09 as funding will be provided directly to the Partnership authorities by the Scottish Government.

HITRANS had begun the process to establish Term Framework contracts for a range of interventions and activities with the intention of appointing consultancy support, including that from constituent Councils, through frameworks scheduled from July 2008. By establishing these Framework contracts HITRANS and its constituent Councils had been intending to call on the appropriate technical support without the need for lengthy tendering procedures which will reduce the timescales for project delivery. Some Councils had however already entered into individual Framework Agreements, and with the possibility of extending their use to a wider area through a partnership approach being available, there would have been significant duplication of effort had HITRANS promoted a separate Term Framework at this time. This is still an option for the future. The sharing of resources between Councils, between the RTP and Councils, and between RTPs is now possible and being used to promote specific activities to the benefit in the delivery of transport services across the Highlands and Islands. With the announcement of the output from the STPR and the opportunity for HITRANS and the constituent Councils to work with

Government and its agencies to develop the Interventions to be taken forward, it is intended through 2009/10 to further develop joint working and collaboration to realise Government's, RTP's, and Council's joint goals in the preliminary design and preparation of schemes and action strategies on transport corridors.

Risk

Regional Transport Partnerships are mandated through the Transport Scotland Act 2005 to manage their resources properly. Proper systematic risk management of the HITRANS organisation where Board members and staff are engaged or employed is an essential and inherent in the standing orders and regulations of the Partnership. The identification of risks and opportunities has been an inherent part of developing the RTS and will continue to be a core focus as we move into the delivery element of the Partnership's work.

Risk management is about managing the Partnership's exposure to risk, the probability of it occurring and the impact it would have. It involves identifying the risks, assessing them and responding to them. Risk management is not restricted to limiting adverse outcomes and it can be used to achieve desirable outcomes.

Risk exists in all aspects of the Partnership business from strategies to project delivery and good risk management will mean:

- More confidence in the Partnership's ability to deliver
- More confidence in the Partnership making informed decisions
- More confidence that resources are utilised efficiently and effectively.

HITRANS through its staff and Permanent Advisors will in 2009/10 consider how best to measure and monitor the risks faced by the Partnership, having not achieved this in 2008/09, and report to the Board on the outcome of their deliberations

7. Revenue

The Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2009/10 and the programme for delivery are as detailed in Appendix 3

8 Marketing & Communications

The objective of HITRANS' marketing & communications strategy, the action Plan for which is detailed in Appendix 4, is to increase awareness of our role and objectives among the travelling public within the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, engender change in public behaviour towards transportation, and indicate to our partners and other stakeholders that HITRANS is achieving its aims.

Our continuing communications objectives through 2009/10 are therefore to:

- Make HITRANS a household name in the Highlands and Islands.
- Make people aware of what we are doing and why, explained in terms of the high level aims of the RTS, what HITRANS aims to deliver as described in the RTS and the benefits that will accrue to business and the population of the region.
- Become the automatic first point of contact on transport planning and delivery issues in The Highlands and Islands: **e.g. transport = HITRANS**.
- Encourage behavioural change among the public in line with the objectives laid out in the RTS – e.g. making “smart transport choices” including: greater use of public transport, car sharing, personal travel plans, alternative transport options, etc, through highlighting the advantages, practical benefits and needs which these address.

9. Resources

Establishment

With effect of 31st March 2008, HITRANS will employ 5 paid Staff:

Dave Duthie- Partnership Director

Ranald Robertson - Partnership Manager

Frank Roach – Partnership Manager

Katy Cunningham - Office Manager (Dalcross)

Chris Kendal – Officer Manager (Lairg)

Their specific areas of engagement and activities of each employee in 2009/10 is detailed in HITRANS Partnership Approach to Delivery in Appendix 1.

Part time consultants may in addition be employed as and when required to support strategy, research and project requirements, as has been our ongoing practice.

Accommodation

The Partnership employees have been located in 2 offices from April 2008, at Dalcross and at Lairg station. The Lease for the Dalcross premises was renegotiated at the end of 2008 and a new lease for our more focussed needs has been signed for the next 3 years, at a reduced cost to the Partnership. Energy efficiency measures will be installed in the Dalcross office in 2009/10 now that this longer term tenancy is in place.

Equipment

Over the next year the need for ongoing replacement of PC equipment has been reflected in the budget. The intention is to replace PCs on a 3 to 4 year cycle and two of the 5 PCs are now within this age grouping and, are in need of replacement as they become less capable of meeting demand and demonstrating the inevitable signs of normal wear and tear. The Server is continually upgraded as and when required with additional storage capacity added in 2008/09 to meet immediate operational needs. This now proves adequate capacity for the medium term. Previous investment in video conferencing equipment should meet the ongoing needs of the Partnership to minimise unnecessary travel and produce efficiency gains.

Appendix 1: The Partnership Approach to Delivery

Summary

HITRANS is committed to working with all sectors and interests within transport in adding value to the transport services delivered across the region. This note indicates the structures HITRANS has put in place to achieve this aim.

Involvement in each area of policy development and delivery

The partnership has identified eight areas in which it would aim to work towards improving service provision as follows

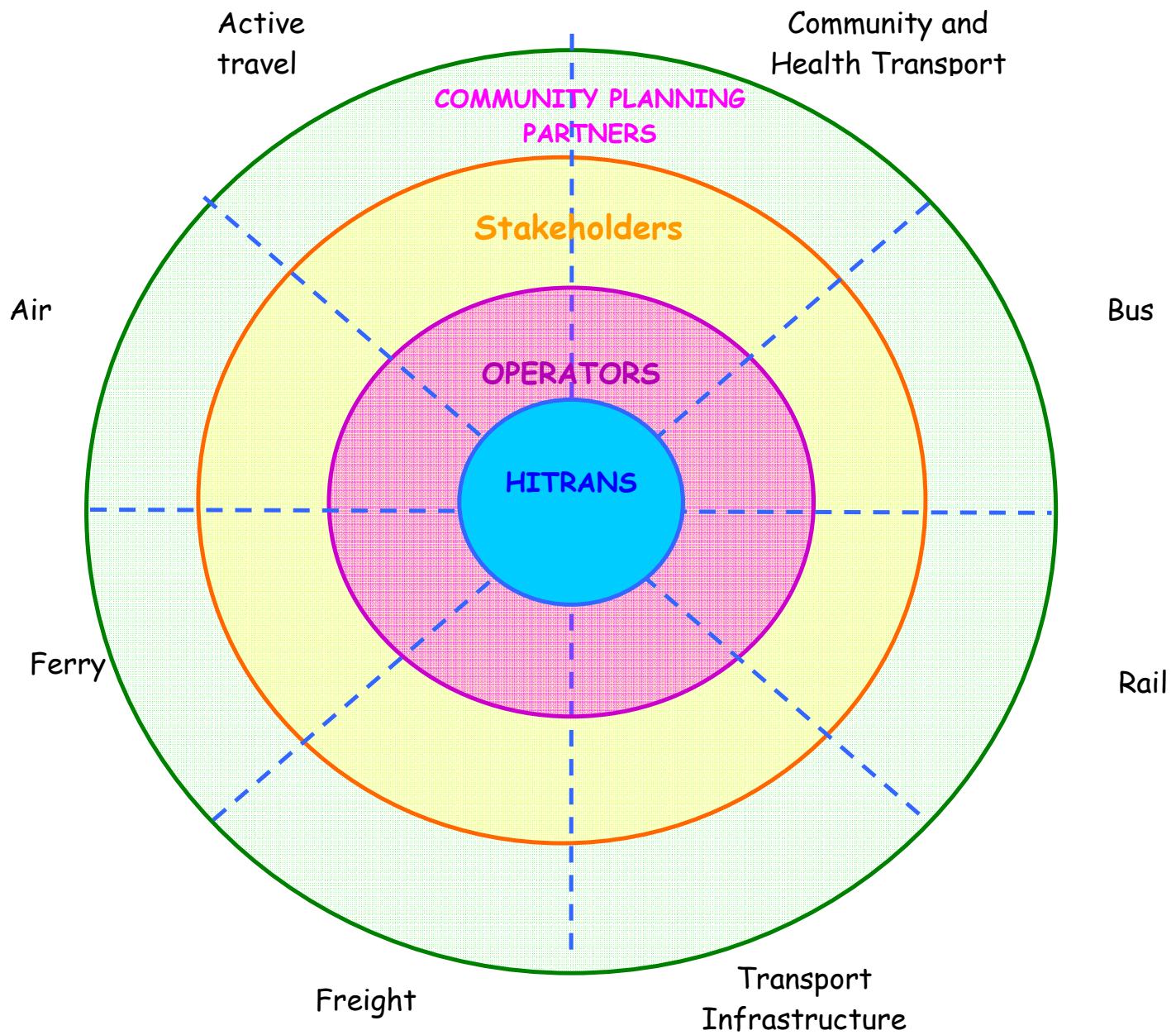
Area	Description
Active travel	Walking, cycling
Community and health transport	Third sector transport, social and health transport, car sharing schemes
Bus	Supported and commercial bus services, and taxis
Rail	Passenger and freight rail services
Transport Infrastructure	Roads (both trunk and local), Rail Infrastructure, Airports, Ports, Harbours, and Ferries
Freight	Cross modal, road, rail, ferry, air and sea
Ferry	Supported and commercial ferry services, national and local
Air	Supported and commercial air passenger services, including charter and freight

In each area HITRANS will seek active participation from the 5 constituent Councils, our Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders, Operators, Permanent Advisors and the Board. HITRANS will encourage its Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders and Operators to participate in policy development and delivery options appraisal. Operators in particular will be encouraged to interact not only within their individual area of expertise but across the 8 areas and will be given the opportunity individually to discuss issues with Board Members. This will allow HITRANS the greatest opportunity to learn from their knowledge and experience.

Objectives

HITRANS wishes to ensure maximum effective involvement of all groups and will devise, in each service area, mechanisms and structures that will ensure that each group's views are heard and their input valued in ensuring the Partnership delivers improved transport services across the region. HITRANS has formed and will continue to develop advisory and consultative groups both within and between linked transport areas, to promote improved integration across the highlands and islands. Regular meetings of these groups are arranged to obtain valuable input and provide information on developments and proposals.

The chart below diagrammatically reflects the approach HITRANS is taking to achieve this aim.



Engagement with Stakeholders and Operators

The following are the HITRANS proposed arrangements for engagement and consultation in 2009/10

Area	Proposed action	timescale
Rail	Users and A+C Groups Meet 2x Stakeholders 1x	April 08 June 08, Dec 08
Bus	Regional Bus Forum Operators Meeting	June 09 and November 09 2 formal meetings and regular business meetings
Community and Health Transport	Form A+C forum Meet 2x Meet Health Boards	Initiate forum by Dec 09
Active Travel	A+C forum Meet 2x	April 09, Nov 09
Air	Stakeholder meeting 2x	July 09 and Jan 10
Ferry	Tier 1 Meetings Tier 2	Aug/Sep 09, Feb/Mar 10
Freight	Meetings of Freight Quality Forum to consider forming a FQP	April 09
Transport Infrastructure	Operator meetings, trunk, rail, air, meet each 1x	ongoing
Equality Plan Development	Feedback from Council Permanent Advisors	Ongoing through Advisors Meetings
Integration of Services	Form operator group Meet 1x	Oct 09
Public Transport co-ordination	Meeting of public transport officers of each Council	May 09 and Oct 09

Key

A+C	Advisory and Consultative	
DD	Dave Duthie	Partnership Director
RR	Ranald Robertson	Partnership Manager
FR	Frank Roach	Partnership Manager
KC	Katy Cunningham	Office Manager, Inverness
CK	Chris Kendall	Office Manager, Lairg
MM	Mike Mitchell	Finance Manager (THC)
DM	Derek Mackay	Partnership Secretary (CNES)
DS	David Summers	Permanent Advisor, Public Transport
SMacN	Sam MacNaughton	Permanent Advisor, (THC)
PG	Peggy Morrison	HR support (CNES)
GL	Gavin Lawson	Legal (CNES)

Delivery Areas – Lead officer

Area	Administration	Development	Stakeholder Engagement
Rail	CK	FR	CK/FR
Bus	KC	RR	KC/RR
Community and Health Transport	KC	RR	CK/RR
Active Travel	CK	FR	KC/FR
Air	CK	RR	CK/RR
Ferry	KC	RR	KC/RR
Freight	CK	FR	CK/FR
Transport Infrastructure	KC/CK	DD/RR/FR	DD/RR/FR KC/CK
Equalities	KC	DD	DD/KC
Integration of Services	CK/KC	FR/RR	FR/RR
Public Transport Co-ordination	CK	DS	DS

Other Areas of Partnership Activity

Area	Lead	Comment
RTS Development - Monitoring and evaluation	DD	RTS approved by Government. Need to produce framework to assess success in achieving target outcomes linked to governments objectives
Community Planning – engagement in CPPs	DD and Board member for each CPP Council	Critical development and implementation of SOAs and cross sector agreement of priorities
European Best Practice – Working with partners in EU	DD	Intention to identify opportunities for working with partners to develop best practice
RTPs – joint working	Chair and DD	Joint working to support government in achieving its Purpose and key national outcomes
Working to support Councils	Individual Council Board Members and Council Permanent Advisors	Engage with Councils to support the development of their SOAs and to support optimum development of best practice throughout the H+I
Joint Working between Councils	SMacN and DD	Delivery of working arrangements between the 5 Councils to encourage sharing of resources and expertise and in particular to support Government in delivering STPR and Regional priorities.
START Interreg 4 Project	RR	Delivery of European Project actions and outputs with Partners within the Highlands and Islands and across Europe
Travel Planning	RR	KC supporting in promoting sustainable transport arrangements by public and private sector employers and employees

HITRANS General and Support Activities

In meeting its aims and objectives the Partnership is involved in a wide area of general and support activities. These are identified below with details of the roles of both employees and support service providers during 2008/09

Function	Sub function/description	Lead Officer
Revenue budget management	Overall budget management THC Internal systems plus inputting to THC Individual budget line management	MM KC/CK RR/FR
Equalities scheme management	Implementation of HITRANS Equality Plan	KC
Board administration	Overall administration by WI Distribution of papers and local admin	DM KC
HR and Legal support	HR – CNES support Legal – CNES advice and support	PM/DD GL/DD
Travel Planning	Promote Travel Planning by Employers and monitor success	RR with external support
Press Relations/ Promotion	Establish delivery mechanism to best meet the Partnerships needs	DD/RR/FR with external support
Media Information/ cuttings	Distribute key press coverage of Transport issues to Members/Advisors	KC
Integration of Pub Trans	Improve linkages between transport modes and service providers	FR/RR
Community Planning	Engage in Community Planning across the highlands and islands	DD supported by KC
Study Management	Delivery of Research programme	RR/FR with external support
Project Management	Delivery of individual projects	RR/FR
IT and Website Management	Support by external supplier RR/FR/KC/CK input to website	KC
Meetings, Events and Diary Management	Organisation/management of events other than Board Meetings	KC
Member/ Officer/ Advisor Travel arrangements	Organisation, management and arrangements for payment	KC
Employee Development	Complete Personal Development Review for each employee	DD

Appendix 2: Revenue Budget for 2009/10

Budget Heading	Budget 2009/10 Recommendation
Income	
Argyll and Bute	£28,700
CnES	£18,900
Highland	£88,800
Moray	£46,400
Orkney	£17,200
Scot Exec - Core	£200,000
Scot Exec – Travel Plans	£36,000
Scot Exec – Non-core	£415,000
Total Income	£851,000
Running Costs	
Director	£94,000
Programme Managers	£117,500
Office Managers	£52,000
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£25,000
Members/Advisors Travel/Subsistence	£10,000
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£25,000
Office Costs - Property	£45,000
Office Costs - Administration	£26,500
	£395,000
Programme Costs	
Publicity	£25,000
Travel Plan Work	£36,000
Research and Strategy Development	£354,000
2007/08 Deficit	£0
	£415,000
Finance/HR/Legal/Admin	
CnEs	£8,000
Highland	£22,500
External Audit	£10,500
	£41,000
Total Costs	£851,000

Appendix 3: Research/strategy development programme for 2009/10

Area	Funding	Delivery Timescale	Lead Officer/s
Key settlement active travel audits – Inverness and Argyll	50000	April 09 to Mar10	FR
Air Services Review	35000	Apr-July 09	RR/HB
Functions Review	50000	Apr-July 09	DD
Freight on rail - capacity	25000	Sep-Dec 09	FR
Aberdeen Inverness and Invernet 2	25000	Apr-Sept 09	FR plus Nestrans
Tourism by rail – the economic benefit (joint study with HIE)	10000	July-Oct 09	TJ/FR
Sustainable travel initiative/ project	45000	Sep09 to Mar 10	RR/FR
O/D survey on tourist travel habits in the H+I	15000	July- Oct 09	RR
Development of Regional Traffic Model Development covering all modes as an adjunct to the national LATIS model supported by Transport Scotland	15000	Nov-Mar 09	DD
Sub total	270000		
STPR support			
Strategic Park and Ride Development	50000	Jun 09 – Mar 10	RR
Funding to support means by which HITRANS and the member Councils can support Government and Transport Scotland delivering interventions in the STPR	34000	Jun 09- Mar 10	DD plus Pas from High/A+B and Moray
Overall total	354000		

Appendix 4: HITRANS Marketing & Communications Strategy

HITRANS Marketing and Communications Strategy will be promoted by implementing the following action programme through 2009/10

Corporate Marketing & Communications

Routine marketing and communications work will be carried out using the core corporate marketing and communications budget. There are five main areas of activity which form the key planks of our communications work.

Branding - A suite of branded materials highlighting HITRANS corporate image has been produced for use at events and distribution in connection with appropriate HITRANS initiatives.

HITRANS' website is a key area of branding and our main "shop window" for making information available to the public and other interested parties. The site is currently undergoing redevelopment in order to make it a more effective marketing tool and to place day-to-day control of the site more directly under the control of HITRANS employees.

Media work – Our chief targets are the national, regional and local media; both broadcast and print, and including web based media. In general there are only limited direct costs incurred in media work, relating to producing and distributing press statements, and making available high quality images for local and smaller regional and some web based outlets. It is important that we include within the budget for the services of media personnel and a professional photographer on selected occasions.

Given the busy schedule of Chair and Partnership Director, the Partnership Managers will receive media training during 2009/10 to enable them to identify media opportunities and stand in as media spokespersons as required.

Events - HITRANS will participate in events which will advance awareness of the aims and objectives of the RTS, to the public, stakeholders, decision makers or the transport constituency. Participation may range from sponsorship or contributing a keynote speaker, to an exhibition presence, depending upon the nature of the individual event. In 2009/10 HITRANS will arrange events with MSPs and MPs in Edinburgh and London as appropriate to discuss current issues and developments and in particular the promotion of nationally and regionally significant transport interventions in the region.

Advertising – Having HITRANS' name and contact details included in key reference publications, such as the telephone directories and business directories, is essential to raising our overall profile within Highlands and Islands.

Publications – Some publications must be produced as part of our statutory obligations; others will be produced as part of our overall strategy to communicate HITRANS aims and objectives to a wider audience. Although HITRANS will standardise on web based publications, in line with our environmental objectives and for reasons of cost effectiveness, a small quantity of high quality printed publications will still be required. All publications will be produced to conform to the requirements of HITRANS equalities policy and, where appropriate, charges will be levied in accordance with the Freedom of Information Scotland Act (FOISA).

Funding - Although additional funds for marketing and communications work may on occasions be available from other sources, for example the further promotion of car sharing through the reduced Travel Planning budget, these are generally ring fenced for specific purposes. The above approach to improve communication is designed to be carried out within HITRANS core corporate budget for marketing and communications work.

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009**RESEARCH****Rail Studies****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the current status of HITRANS ongoing rail studies.

BACKGROUND

HITRANS is currently engaged in completing a number of rail studies across the region which we hope will help inform the development and future investment decision making at national level.

Invab Sundays

HITRANS have commissioned Halcrow to analyse the business case for additional Sunday services between Inverness and Aberdeen. This commission will use as its base for the costing work the draft timetable developed for HITRANS in by our consultant Habtrans. This comprises two additional through services, and one Keith and one Inverurie terminator.

West Highland Section Running Times

The purpose of this study is to identify potential journey time savings on current infrastructure, and also what the future might be with different rolling stock on enhanced infrastructure. Delta Rail have been awarded the contract to deliver this commission which will see them compare the current timetable against theoretical running times using current Rules of the Route, gradient profiles and Class 156 rolling stock performance data. They are also investigating higher loop entry/exit speeds and Class 170 and Class 170 re-engined variants.

Sutherland Timber

In order to progress timber on rail, we are working on lineside loading at Borrobol, and new sidings at Altnabreac. Both will serve as demonstration projects that could if successful be rolled out elsewhere across the area. A survey is being undertaken at Borrobol, while at Altnabreac a consultant is designing a layout for the timber terminal. In both cases we are in productive and useful discussions with Network Rail in relation to contractualising the scheme proposals.

Far North Level Crossings

In order to develop the HITRANS menu of affordable and achievable enhancements, Scott Wilson are examining potential journey time savings through level crossing upgrades on Inverness-Wick. The trend currently is for train speeds across level crossings to be reduced; we would wish to investigate the rational of that scenario with the case for investment.

Switches and Crossings on RETB routes

Similar to the work on Far North Level Crossings (detailed above), this scheme investigates opportunities that could arise on services within, to and from the Highlands with the replacement of RETB signalling. Scott Wilson are investigating the options for increasing loop entry/exit speeds through the provision of new point equipment.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 27th March 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

RESEARCH

Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth (Park and Ride)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

An introduction to the background to HITRANS commission of Halcrow to study Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth which focused on the feasibility of developing park and ride opportunities to relieve congestion on key arteries into Elgin and Inverness.

BACKGROUND

HITRANS commissioned Halcrow to consider the potential for Park and Ride to meet the transport needs of Elgin and Inverness. This included consideration of existing needs and congestion issues affecting key arteries into each city and the study also considered the demand potential in the context of future growth in and around both cities as well as current and future transport policy.

STUDY FINDINGS

The full report follows this covering paper as Appendix A and a detailed summary of the study findings and conclusions is included at the end of the main report. For Members benefit though the findings are condensed in summary below.

For both cities Halcrow looked at potential demand analysing trips from origin and destination survey data, identifying the number of trips that could potentially be attracted to Park & Ride, based on their journey pattern. Further consideration was given to the likelihood of transferring given traffic conditions and transport policy, particularly parking policy.

Based on existing traffic conditions and population Halcrow believe Park and Ride is unlikely to be successful in Elgin at the present time. Given future growth projections for Elgin with its hinterland the consultants believe in time Park and Ride could potentially become viable in the future but at the lower end of scale. Feasibility would critically depend on willingness to impose restraint measures in the city centre, particularly removing free long term parking, and secondly supported by bus priority at any critically congested locations on the P&R bus route. The study concluded that the conditions do not exist currently to pursue this option further but HITRANS and Moray Council should continue to monitor this in the future should these conditions change.

Halcrow considered the opportunity for Park and Ride sites to be introduced on the four key arteries into Inverness from North, South, East and West. The study found that Inverness has a high volume of trips on the potential Park and Ride corridors from the North and East.

The pattern of travel from the south and west into Inverness was not felt to show any substantial demand for Park & Ride services for commuters to the city. However both of

these sites were identified as a potential opportunity for the tourist market although this need is less acute than would be the case for high volumes of daily commuters.

Inverness has a high volume of trips on the potential P&R corridors from the North and East. This led Halcrow to conclude that there is a case for a Park & Ride site on the east of the city to provide for trips to the city centre; the demand from the north is smaller for city centre trips, but enough to make some service worthwhile especially if the facility could be provided through a low cost option.

SITE SELECTION AND INDICATIVE COSTS

HITRANS identified 6 corridors for potential P&R sites around Inverness. Two of these were ruled out at an early stage due to likely demand and location. At each location a number of sites were considered to determine the likely best option for each corridor. The initial desk study and site walkover enabled the study team to quickly identify the potential sites, and a study of the planning issue was undertaken to help determine the viability of the sites. Following consultation with Highland Council, Transport Scotland and HITRANS to further inform the identification process, the preferred options at each site were taken forward for outline design and costs prepared. A further site to the north was put forward by the client working group, this option is located by the service station at Tore. Thus two sites to the north, one to the east and one to the west had site layout and costs prepared.

The three sites at North Kessock (north) 402 spaces, Torvean (west) 241 spaces and Smithton (east) 401 spaces, have been assessed to potentially provide a good quality car park comprising:

- surfaced parking area and designated paved pedestrian routes;
- waiting area with heated/lit waiting room;
- moderate level of landscaping;
- street lighting and CCTV;
- 2.4m high fence and lockable entrance gate;
- adjacent space for future expansion of the site.

The site at Tore (north) 100 spaces, has been assessed on the basis of provision of a trial lower cost option and the design features reflect this:

- gravel type surfacing;
- some landscaping;
- fencing;
- no security or waiting facilities on site.

It is anticipated that users of any such trial site would be encouraged to use facilities at the local service station where there is a tea room / truck stop. The presence of this also gives informal security to the site.

The P&R routes have been looked at for the opportunity to improve bus journey times, by implementing bus priority measures at locations where congestion and delay occur at peak times in and around Inverness. Conditions on the routes have been considered and bus priority measures address congestion where possible, taking into account existing and potential road widths and junction layout. Outline indicative costs have been included with recommendations.

A summary of the size of car park proposed, and associated cost of provision is listed in the table below.

	Site construction cost	bus priority measures cost	initial demand potential
1B A9 North Kessock 02 spaces	£2,332,000	£1,263,000	74 vehicles per day
1D A9 Tore 100 spaces	£222,845	£1,263,000	60 vehicles per day
3B A96 Smithton 401 spaces	£2,061,000	£949,300	212 vehicles per day
4B A82 Torvean 241 spaces	£1,374,000	£8,000	10 vehicles per day <i>commuter trips only; tourist trips unquantified</i>

THE WAY FORWARD

The Strategic Transport Project Review identifies the development of strategic Park and Ride for Inverness as nationally significant and worthy of progress within the timescale of the Review. The Government has indicated its wish that it should work in Partnership to deliver interventions where this is possible and adds value. Strategic Park and Ride provides the opportunity for co-operation of this type as to deliver effective schemes, commitments from Transport Scotland, the Council, the Bus Operator, and HITRANS will be necessary to realise the aims. Early working up of a scheme for the A96 Smithton site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver real improvements in a relatively short timescale and should be progressed as a matter of priority by all parties. This scheme links very closely with the work being progressed on the eastern leg of the Trunk Link Road and Stagecoach's desire to relocate its operation to a more suitable site. An early meeting of all parties will be called by HITRANS to identify how best to take forward this scheme through the detailed planning and implementation phase.

RECOMMENDATION

3. Members are asked to note the final report which forms Appendix A of this covering paper.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 24th March 2009
Background Papers: Appendix A – HITRANS Inner Moray Firth Park and Ride Study

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009**STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY****Quality Partnership Opportunities in the Highlands and Islands****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of an opportunity that exists to develop statutory quality bus partnerships in Argyll & Bute, Highland, Moray and Orkney that would secure a partnership between bus operators, local authorities, HITRANS and Transport Scotland to support the delivery of high quality bus services in the Highlands and Islands featuring modern buses, real time information, improved bus stop infrastructure and bus priority measures.

BACKGROUND

A statutory Quality Partnership is a Scheme whereby local authorities provide particular facilities, in the whole or part of their area, and bus operators of local services who wish to use the facilities must undertake to provide local services of a particular quality standard when using them.

Such partnerships would normally be on a corridor by corridor basis, whereby the investment in infrastructure facilities provision, and the provision of local services of that standard, will improve the quality of local services in the scheme area by bringing benefits to passengers using those services. A Quality Partnership Scheme is a Statutory Scheme with its process, form and content prescribed by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 and can be a development of existing voluntary quality bus corridor partnership agreements that might have been established in the past.

While there have been some informal voluntary arrangements established in the past to mark investment in services in the Highlands and Islands (outlined in more detail in the local authority area sections below) there has been little formal acknowledgement of the substantial investment made in recent years to improve the quality of bus services and infrastructure. HITRANS identified the need to look at statutory quality partnerships as a way of building on the foundation of good services that has been established as a result of investment by operators, local authorities through enhanced contracts and HITRANS through capital investment and bus route development schemes.

The development of a quality partnership document was included in the Road Based Passenger study taking the network of upgraded bus services to Inverness Airport as its basis. Having commenced preliminary discussions with Stagecoach about adopting this document it became apparent that there is a real appetite to extend the coverage of any Statutory Quality Partnership to cover a much larger number of local services operated by Stagecoach. Further discussions have revealed that West Coast Motors share this desire and would wish to equally move towards a formal quality partnership for the services they provide in Argyll and Bute.

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL AREA

Argyll and Bute have not formally introduced a Quality Partnership as a voluntary document but the Council do have an informal arrangement with Oban & District Buses in which certain guarantees were exchanged on either side with respect to quality of vehicles to be used on certain local services within Oban (both tendered and commercial) and from the local authority side where there was to be improved infrastructure and information provision.

In recent years there has been substantial partnership working involving Argyll and Bute Council, HITRANS and bus operators in Argyll and Bute that has delivered a step change in quality of bus accessibility and interchange facilities. Information provision has been significantly improved both in terms of static publicity and real time information. Again although not formalised this progress underlines the real value of partnership working to achieve lasting improvement in the delivery of bus services. More than 20 new accessible buses have entered service in Argyll and Bute since 2004 transforming the fleet profile of local buses. There has also been substantial investment in new bus stop infrastructure as well as the investment in improved passenger information.

With the large scale of investment made by bus operators, Argyll and Bute Council, and HITRANS in recent years there is significant potential to establish formal Statutory Quality Partnerships in the area.

Preliminary discussions have been held with West Coast Motors with a view to establishing a Quality Partnership to cover a number of their routes in Argyll and Bute. The operator is very positive about having a Statutory Quality Partnership introduced as this would formalise and underline the level of investment that has taken place in recent years. Should a SQP be formalised for routes operated by West Coast Motors the signatories would probably be West Coast Motors, Argyll and Bute Council, HITRANS and the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland.

HIGHLAND

There are no statutory partnerships between Highland Council and its local operators. However the Council has been active in formulating partnerships with local operators over some of the major corridors. Introduced in March 1998, a partnership between Stagecoach and the Council set out a statement of intent as an "umbrella" under which more specific projects could be developed. Stagecoach's involvement in this area was on fare levels, ticketing initiatives, limit on timetable changes, improving vehicle standards, providing low floor vehicles and customer care.

Record investment levels have taken place in the bus network serving much of the Highland Council area in recent years. This has only been possible through a partnership culture that has developed and been fostered. The key players in this have been a number of bus operators, Highland Council and HITRANS. This approach has delivered real benefits to bus passengers in terms of quality and accessibility of buses and investment in interchange facilities. Investment in real time passenger information will also improve passengers' journey experience and we hope this will be an important tool in encouraging more people to use the bus. Although not formalised into a Quality Partnership this progress underlines the real value of partnership working to achieve lasting improvement in the delivery of bus services and recent annual increases in bus use underline this.

Since 2004 more than 110 new accessible buses have entered service in the Highland Council area. This has transformed the fleet profile indeed this is exemplified by the current average vehicle age of buses operated by Stagecoach in Inverness being less than four years old. There has also been substantial investment in new bus stop

infrastructure including the refurbishment of bus stations in Inverness and Aviemore in recent years.

With the large scale of investment made by bus operators, Highland Council and HITRANS in recent years there is significant potential to establish formal Statutory Quality Partnerships in the area.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Stagecoach with a view to establishing a Quality Partnership to cover a number of their routes in Highland. The operator is very positive about having a Statutory Quality Partnership introduced as this would formalise and underline the level of investment that has taken place in recent years.

The introduction of a Statutory Quality Partnership at this time would support the aspirations of Highland Council, HITRANS and Stagecoach for the introduction of Park and Ride facilities supported by bus priority measures in Inverness. A SQP would give the commitment of all partners to support such investment in infrastructure through continued investment in fleet and marketing.

Should a SQP be formalised for routes operated by Stagecoach in Highland the signatories would probably be Stagecoach, Highland Council, HITRANS and the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland.

MORAY

There is no statutory or voluntary partnership between The Moray Council and local operators. In common with other councils in the region Moray has delivered a number of projects that contain the types of initiative which in other areas have been formalised as voluntary quality partnerships.

The Moray Council's contracted network of local bus services has been branded as Network M and is delivered by a fleet of DDA compliant buses operated by a number of bus operators. This is probably a unique situation in Scotland and Moray Council are to be commended for having achieved this while also making seat belts a contractual requirement and the Council has also been active in promoting the roll out of CCTV on buses and in bus shelters.

In common with other local authorities across the region Moray Council have delivered a great deal of partnership working involving the Council, HITRANS and bus operators that has delivered a step change in quality of bus accessibility and interchange facilities. Information provision has been significantly improved both in terms of static publicity and real time information. Although not formalised as a document this progress underlines the real value of partnership working to achieve lasting improvement in the delivery of bus services. More than 40 new accessible buses have entered service in Moray since 2004 transforming the fleet profile of local buses. There has also been substantial investment in new bus stop infrastructure as well as the investment in improved passenger information.

With the large scale of investment made by bus operators, Moray Council and HITRANS in recent years there is significant potential to establish formal Statutory Quality Partnerships in the area.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Stagecoach with a view to establishing a Quality Partnership to cover a number of their routes in Moray. The operator is very positive about having a Statutory Quality Partnership introduced as this would formalise and underline the level of investment that has taken place in recent years. Should a SQP be formalised for routes operated by Stagecoach Bluebird the signatories would probably be Stagecoach, Moray Council, HITRANS and the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland.

ORKNEY ISLANDS

Orkney Islands Council has not established a voluntary quality partnership in the past although substantial progress has been made in improving the islands' bus network in recent years. The pace of change in Orkney has been particularly evident in the improvement in the fleet of buses that provide the core network of local bus services. The entire local bus network is now operated by modern easy access low floor buses having previously been served by aged coaches which formed the backbone of the local bus network as well as providing school and tour service duties.

Orkney has also seen substantial change in the quality of bus stop infrastructure since 2002. A partnership of Orkney Islands Council and HITRANS delivered the new Kirkwall Travel Centre which opened in 2008 and gives Kirkwall an exceptional bus station incorporating tourist information and real time passenger information. A similar partnership of OIC and HITRANS also saw Stromness gain a travel centre in 2006 while HITRANS funding has helped treble the number of bus shelters available for passengers waiting at bus stops in the islands.

Preliminary discussions have been held with Stagecoach with a view to establishing a Quality Partnership to cover a number of their routes in Orkney. The operator is very positive about having a Statutory Quality Partnership introduced as this would formalise and underline the level of investment that has taken place in recent years. Should a SQP be formalised for routes operated by Stagecoach in Orkney the signatories would probably be Stagecoach, Orkney Islands Council, HITRANS and the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland.

RECOMMENDATION

4. Members are asked to note the report.
5. Members are asked to approve further investigation of statutory quality partnership opportunities by officers.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 26th March 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Report on Fuel Prices in the Highlands and Islands

Background

The Part 1 report into Road Fuel Supply in the Highlands and Islands, jointly commissioned by HIE, HITRANS and the Highland Council, was presented to the Board on 5th December 2008. In the discussion that followed, questions were raised regarding fuel price differentials between Orkney, Western Isles and the Scottish mainland. Allegedly, in Orkney these had recently increased to 20ppl compared to the more usual 10ppl, and concerns were raised about the charges being made by the fuel distributors to retail sites. It was also noted that, perhaps in response to this situation, some fuel had been entering Orkney by road tanker transported via Pentland Ferries, bypassing the main island fuel terminals.

Following the discussion, Experian Catalyst were commissioned to undertake some additional analysis into recent fuel price patterns and supply routes to the islands.

Their report tracks fuel retail prices at 25 key sites across the Highlands for the 3 month period from 2nd November 2008 to 3rd February 2009, including 4 sites in Orkney and 3 in each of the Isle of Lewis and Shetland. The remainder were spread across the Highland Council area and included Inverness, Caithness, Skye and Wester Ross.

Findings

1. Overall, against a background of rapidly falling prices, the price differentials between island and mainland sites remain consistent throughout the period, with prices in the islands generally being 10ppl higher than Tesco in Wick and 12.5ppl higher than Tesco in Inverness. No evidence was found of the reported 20ppl differences between the sites in Orkney and the Scottish mainland.
2. Whilst the price differentials remain consistent throughout the period, there are short periods in a downward price market when the large volume supermarkets sites are able to reduce their prices ahead of the smaller volume sites both in the islands and on the mainland. The ability of sites to reduce prices in a downward price market is linked to the frequency of re-stocking and hence overall sales volume, so this pattern is as expected. It will, however, lead to some days on which price differentials are greater than the general pattern described above.
3. The report confirms that some fuel was imported to Orkney via road tanker in this period, but it does not appear to have been a significant feature of the overall market, and there has been no notable impact on prices overall. In certain market conditions, it may be cheaper for some retailers to purchase fuel in this manner rather than from the sea-fed terminals operated by Highland Fuels and Scottish Fuels. The fact that this option exists and has been used implies that Highland / Scottish Fuels do not have a monopoly, and are pricing competitively with other distribution routes.

4. Although not covered in this report, we are aware that since the introduction of RET in the Western Isles, Brogan Fuels have started importing some fuels by road tanker into the Isle of Lewis. The impact of this on the commercial, domestic and road fuel markets in the islands will be reported through the RET monitoring and evaluation exercise being undertaken by Scottish Government / Halcrow.

Conclusions

The report concludes that throughout the period being assessed, there was nothing abnormal about fuel pricing in Orkney, Shetland or the Western Isles, and that the market was behaving normally for a downward price market. It re-asserts that the observed fuel price differentials reflect primarily the lower sales volumes at island sites compared to mainland sites, plus the increased cost of distribution to the islands.

Report by: Tony Jarvis
Designation: Partnership Adviser Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Date: 27th March 2009
Appendix: See separate paper enclosed with the papers.

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Oban 5 a Day

1. HITRANS' Regional Transport Strategy makes the case for 4 trains per day being the minimum for Highland rural routes. This has now been achieved on the Wick and Kyle lines, leaving Oban and its three trains per day in each direction with the worst service in the country. This frequency is unacceptable given Oban's position as a key interchange for ferry services to the islands and as an important tourist destination in its own right. The West Highland Lines have recently been voted 'the most scenic railway in the world' by readers of travel magazine Wanderlust, which will further increase demands on capacity.
2. In December 2005 Highland Rail Partnership helped to bring about the extension of the Garelochhead commuter service back to Arrochar. This helped to preserve the peak hour slot at Glasgow Queen St.
3. In 2008 HITRANS commissioned timetabling work and economic analysis for a frequency enhancement of three trains per day to Oban to five per day. The resulting figures showed a strong business case, with a benefit:cost ratio of 5.0 optimistic, 3.9 pessimistic. Additional resources would be needed, requiring an additional £450k of subsidy in year one. Currently all the Class 156 units that are fitted for radio-signalling needed for this route are required in the evening peak in Strathclyde, but units may be released following the re-opening of Ardrie-Bathgate and infill electrification.
4. Transport Scotland have indicated that the corridor was investigated as part of the STRP sifting process but it is not being taken forward. Economic benefits which would aid development of the area's economy, were not identified as key objectives for interventions on the west highland transport corridors. It is evident that funds are to be focussed on projects/corridors that were included in the final document.
5. HITRANS has asked transport academic James Laird to consider the application of option values and other wider economic benefits in order to further refine and strengthen the business case.
6. We will now investigate alternative funding streams that may allow the project to start up in advance of the next ScotRail franchise (due 2014), in a similar manner to the very successful Invernet services which were subsumed into the franchise following local funding.
7. There may in addition be alternative interim scenarios which can be implemented on a deminimus basis, such as running the Summer Saturday 1037 GLQ-OBN and return every day, and these will be investigated and presented to Government and its Agency.
8. In doing this we will also work with SPT and TACTRAN who have an obvious interest in service improvements on the route.

RECOMMENDATION

6. Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 27th March 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

COMMUNITY PLANNING

**SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS (SOAs) 2009
GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY of SOAs**

SUMMARY

Advice from the Director General Economy and Chief Economic Advisor to the Scottish Government indicates that signing up to SOAs is a formal corporate commitment of each Council and Boards of Public Sector Partners. HITRANS within its legal commitments has a duty to engage in Community Planning and the Board is therefore asked to consider each CPP's draft SOA prepared by each of the 5 Councils.

HITRANS has received copies of the Draft Single Outcome Agreements as submitted to Government from each of the Community Planning Partnerships in the HITRANS area and these have been provided to Board Members. The Report recommends that the Board consider the Draft submissions and responds to each Partnership confirming our commitment to the SOA and indicating, where considered appropriate, any way in which the Board considers value could be further added to the Draft Document.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is asked to consider the five draft Community Planning Partnership SOAs and agree to agree to adopt each SOA as a corporate commitment of HITRANS, acting as a partner, taking on board the suggested additional input to and comment on each SOA as detailed in Appendix 2.

DETAIL

As a companion document to the Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships on Single Outcome Agreements issued from the High Level Steering Group (HLSG) on Single Outcome Agreements, a note, as included in the Appendix 1 to this Report, has been issued by the Concordat Oversight Group (COG).

The Guidance recognises that as second phase SOAs, from 2009, would be an agreement between the Scottish Ministers and Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) and thus signed by Councils, statutory community planning partners and, as a minimum, those public bodies in the CPP. It was therefore considered that there was a need to identify good practice and workable options for governance and accountability which will support the collective delivery of national and local outcomes.

The note attempts to spell out some of the broader issues of governance and accountability and the expectations different partners and stakeholders might have of these. The guidance aims to set out what councils and their partners are committing to in signing an SOA and the subsequent implications to them of these commitments.

HITRANS can contribute to community planning and has offered to become full partners of each of the Partnerships established by the five constituent Councils. The Board agreed this action at its Meeting in October 2007 and a request was subsequently made to each Council, as leaders of the local community planning process to consider this request. Most CPPs were then, and still are, in the process of developing the structure of their Partnership and establishing how best it can help deliver the Government's Purpose at a local level, through implementation of Single Outcome Agreements. HITRANS has provided input to each SOA as noted by the Board at its meeting on 6 February and it is now appropriate, based on the Guidance included in Appendix 1, for the Board to consider each Draft SOA as submitted to Government by the CPPs and agree to adopt each SOA as a corporate commitment of HITRANS.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Director
Date: 24 March 2009

Appendix 1 **Note on Governance and Accountability for SOAs**

1. The Guidance to Community Planning Partnerships issued in October 2008 indicated that further good practice advice on governance and accountability might be useful. Discussions with Councils and their partners since then have indicated that this was seen as desirable, as the October 2008 Guidance was quite narrowly focused on the expected structure and content of an SOA, and the arrangements for the development, agreement and signing of SOAs in 2009. This note attempts to spell out some of the broader issues of governance and accountability and the expectations different partners and stakeholders may have of these.

Background

2. The governance and accountability framework for SOAs flows out of the Concordat between national and local government in Scotland who between them have the political accountability for the performance and good value of all of our public services. The Concordat combines support for an agreed framework of national outcomes with a commitment to SOAs based on local needs, local circumstances and local priorities. Phase 1 of SOA development was focused on initial agreement with Scottish Ministers and Councils: This next phase brings the SOA into the Community Planning Partnership.
3. Two points are worth noting. All the statutory public sector partners to Community Planning are ultimately accountable to Ministers and Parliament or Councils. In that sense, an agreement between Ministers and Councils could be seen to cover other partners as well. However, partners have an independent statutory basis conferred by Parliament, and powers, duties and accountabilities that flow from that. As constituted public boards, they will have to consider their commitment to the SOA against that background.
4. The second important background factor is the law and guidance with respect to Community Planning itself. That places a duty on Councils to lead the Community Planning process; on named partners to participate in the process and on Ministers to facilitate and support the process. For present purposes, two key points need emphasised. First, although there is provision for it in law, no CPP in Scotland has chosen to incorporate itself as a partnership. In terms of good governance and accountability for performance as public finance, CPPs operate on the authority of the parent bodies, not their own authority.
5. Second, Community Planning is not just about public partners but also about communities, the third sector and the private sector. Most CPP Boards in Scotland have that wider representation. Accountability for public finance and public performance however, still unambiguously lies with the public partners within Community Planning. It is important that the wider CPP engages with and agrees the SOA but public accountability for it lies with the public sector partners.

6. For those reasons, the Guidance issued in October noted that all statutory and, 'other relevant', public partners would be signatories to the SOA, not the partnership, which as an unincorporated body cannot commit the individual public sector partners. This is not to demote the CPP, or the community, third sector and private sector representatives on the CPP Board. It is to be clear about the current status of CPPs, and the fact that only Councils and their public partners can be ultimately accountable for public spending and public performance. The whole CPP should agree the SOA but the accountable signatories will be the public partners individually.

Governance and Accountability

7. The logic of the guidance is that the public governance and accountability for SOAs locally flows from the Councils and the Boards of the statutory and other public sector partners. That being the case then it is important to spell out clearly what Councils and their partners are signing up to when they sign the SOA with Ministers. At minimum, this includes:
 - (i) That partners are signing up to the whole SOA, not selected parts of it.
 - (ii) That signing up is equivalent to adopting the SOA as a formal corporate commitment of the Council or Board.
 - (iii) That such a commitment is to support the delivery of the SOA in all possible ways compatible with their duties and responsibilities.
 - (iv) That all partners are willing to review their pre-existing structures, processes and resource deployment to optimise delivery of outcomes.
8. What this patently does not mean is that each partner is signed up to deliver all of the services and infrastructure necessary to achieve outcomes: None of them has unrestricted general empowerment. What it means is they are corporately committed to the agreed outcomes for the area and its people and, within the constraints of their duties and responsibilities, will take every opportunity to promote and support the achievement of outcomes. For example, Health Boards are not empowered to be economic development agencies, but they are entirely able to review how they use their procurement and recruitment capacity to better support local economic outcomes.
9. In relation to the Enterprise Agencies, whilst they remain statutory Community Planning partners their remit has changed. They no longer have responsibility for a number of functions that are of importance to local economic development (*i.e. Skills, Business Gateway, and in the case of Scottish Enterprise local regeneration*). These are now the responsibility of Local Government or Skills Development Scotland. While the work of Scottish Enterprise in particular is now more firmly focused on the achievement of national outcomes, the Enterprise Agencies continue to have an important and beneficial role to play within SOAs. This role includes working with local partners to establish economic challenges and opportunities, to contribute to articulating realistic and stretching economic outcomes and where national and local outcomes are complementary, to contribute to the delivery of local outcomes.

10. Once the Council, the Boards of partners and the CPP have agreed on the outcomes to be achieved (and it is critical that they explicitly decide and own the SOA), it would normally be delegated to Chief Officers to come up with appropriate recommendations about implementation arrangements.
11. This will be likely to include each partner looking at how they individually can contribute to outcomes and prioritising these contributions through their corporate, service and financial planning processes. It may be helpful here for each partner to think in terms of 'lead' and 'value added' roles with respect to outcomes. A 'lead' role is where a partner has a substantial primary role in delivering the outcome; a 'value added' role is where that is not the case but value can be added by innovative thinking, targeted partnering, etc. Each partner will need to do work on this themselves and, for accountability, show that a 'golden thread' runs from the SOA through their planning, resourcing and performance management processes. This individual work needs to be shared, and a matrix of contribution and performance commitments created for reporting individual and collective progress.
12. As importantly, most outcomes will need to be delivered on a partnership basis, from intelligent alignment through to integrated partnerships, and it will be important that the SOA drives review, development and innovation here. The SOA focuses questions about whether existing arrangements are 'fit for purpose', including the wider CPP itself or specific delivery partnerships that are part of it. The presumption of the SOA is moving beyond 'business as usual' and the whole process is developmental. Critically, the SOA provides the basis for strengthening and deepening Community Planning which remains a statutory commitment for all partners.
13. The potential of a Chief Officers Group here is important. Driving SOA commitments through partnership, corporate and service planning and improving budgetary alignment and resource allocation is an executive leadership, not a co-coordinative role. Discussions with SOLACE, ACPOS, CFOAS and the NHS Chief Executives Group indicate that current schemes of delegation would encompass this role, and would bring more senior level engagement with implementation issues than has sometimes happened at earlier stages of Community Planning. Accountability will be directly back to the Elected Members or Boards.

Key Points

14. It is clear that external scrutiny, and the performance and accountability frameworks for public bodies, will progressively be focused on national outcomes and SOAs. The Guidance on SOAs for public bodies emphasises this. The Guidance to Health Boards makes contribution to local outcomes a key part of their performance and accountability framework and BV2 will provide a similar framework for Councils. This means that individual and collective performance management and self-assessment around outcomes is critical. Strong baselines; robust measure of performance; challenging targets and comparability with others need developed at the outset as a basis for governance and accountability.
15. The guidance already issued emphasised that outcomes cannot be 'done to' people and communities, geographical or community of interest. Public services need to engage people and communities, and work with them to achieve mutually shared outcomes.

The immediate challenge for the public signatories of SOAs will be to assess whether the mechanisms and levels of engagement achieved to date are sufficient for the delivery of the SOA and, if not, how these can be strengthened and improved.

16. Finally, the development of SOAs is a work in progress, and has been explicitly and repeatedly defined as a 'developmental process'. It would not be inappropriate therefore to have short-term outcomes related to developing and improving governance, performance management, and accountability to local communities built into the SOA itself, accompanied by progress measures and targets. This could certainly flow from National Outcome 15, but is, in any case, an entirely legitimate local priority.

Conclusion

17. The above is not an innovative proposal: It is largely a statement of where we are. It does not preclude possible future developments (e.g. widespread incorporation of CPPs) but it does spell out the only public governance framework available for the next round of SOAs. Moving beyond this position, and developing the CPP as a more robust basis for collective governance and aligned performance management, is an important task for the next phase of SOA development.

Appendix 2

Draft Single Outcome Agreements

Comments on current Drafts as submitted to Scottish Government

The development of SOAs for 2009/10 by Community Planning Partnerships is an iterative process in which the initial draft as submitted at the end of February 2009 is subject to consideration by Government, and Partner Organisations at a corporate level before the final Document is signed off by all Partners later in the year.

The Board is therefore asked to consider each Draft as currently developed and to consider endorsing the full SOA in principal, and feeding back any positive input from a HITRANS perspective which would add value to the final SOAs.

The following comments are offered for consideration of the Board:-

Moray Community Planning Partnership SOA 2009/10 -27 Feb 2009

The Document clearly identifies the issues facing Moray and in particular the critical part that improved transport services and infrastructure can play in delivering the 15 national outcomes within the Moray area. In terms of local priorities 8/9 regarding Roads/ Transport and Economic Development, mention might have been made of the need for better public transport connectivity from the Area to both Aberdeen and Inverness airports to promote sustainable inward investment and tourism. The key roles of the strategic transport corridors their development both in terms of infrastructure and services is highlighted. With the promotion of improved bus based public transport by extending the JET bus service to Elgin through the European START project, and the efforts being made by NESTRANS to improve links at Aberdeen Airport, improvements in this area should become apparent during 2009/10 to the overall benefit of the community.

Argyll and Bute SOA 2009 Submission

Argyll and Bute Partnership goals are aimed at promoting economic development in three areas, in the town centres and waterfronts, in the strategic transport network, and in vulnerable areas. Strategic transport outcomes as reflected in the RTS and the LTS are therefore included as elements in the means by which the Partnership will seek to achieve improvements in National and Local Outcomes.

In National Outcomes 6 and 14, on health and the environment respectively, the efforts being made to improve overall health by encouraging walking and cycling through Travel Planning scheme implementation will help achieve the outcomes identified. Targets in this area might help focus commitments to monitor and implement travel plans now in place.

Orkney Community Planning Partnership SOA 2009/11

The draft SOA identifies clear aims of the Partnership and in transportation terms focuses on the means by which transport service improvements can help Orkney achieve its aims and how in doing so that will assist Government in achieving its National Outcomes.

While HITRANS is not currently being considered for full membership of the Orkney CPP it can and does add value to realising the aims of the CPP and supports the Partnership and Council in achieving its identified 'asks' of Scottish Government. This input from HITRANS is recognised within the SOA.

SOA between the Highland Community Planning Partners and the Scottish Government 27 Feb 2009

In the Draft SOA HITRANS are not being asked to be a party to the Agreement nor corporately to commit to its delivery. It is understood this document is currently under significant review, and in particular the task of identifying local outcomes has yet to be completed and incorporated in the SOA. Only seven specific Partners are being invited to sign the Agreement, and four others are involved through alignment of strategies. This appears to be at odds with Guidance from Government and the duty of Regional Transport Partnerships in engaging in Community Planning. Clarification will be sought as to how HITRANS can best engage in Community Planning in the Highland Council area and work with the other partners in delivering the Government's National Outcomes at a local level.

The Scope of the Agreement, as defined in Para 2 covers only local authority services in Highland. The document however states that it is focused on regional priorities aligned to national outcomes.

At a regional level HITRANS is working on initiatives that will add value to the economy, improving access, safeguarding the natural environment and reducing carbon emissions and would welcome the opportunity to offer input into how the local outcomes, when identified , can best be achieved through partnership actions in the transport sector.

Item:
12



Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

STAFF

REQUEST FOR ACCELERATION THROUGH SALARY GRADE AND REGRADING OF OFFICE MANAGER POSTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval from the Board to accelerate employee through the current salary grade and overcome the apparent discrepancy of the current Office Manager scale with the application of equal pay good practice.

SUMMARY

Catherine Cunningham was appointed to the post of Clerical Assistant, HITRANS on 3 July 2006. Her salary for the post was GS1/2, with salary placing at SCP9, i.e. £12,297.

On 13 April 2007 the HITRANS Partnership agreed to revise her post of Clerical Assistant to that of Office Manager. The salary grade for the post, agreed by the Partnership was AP2/3, with placing at SCP 19 as at April 2008, i.e. £17,352.

In August 2008 Catherine Cunningham made a request that her salary be reviewed specifically in relation to work she had undertaken in preparing the Equalities Scheme for HITRANS. Catherine also indicated that the previous HITRANS Co-ordinator had advised her that she would achieve the maximum point of grade within 5 years. This, however, was NOT discussed with HR following her appointment, and therefore not reflected in her contract. Incremental progression is normally on an annual basis within local authorities and not performance based.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board take into consideration the advice in the report and also consider the fact that this is a generic post with a fellow postholder currently on maximum point of grade AP3, i.e. SCP23-26.

If in agreement, the Office Manager posts should be regraded from AP2/3 to AP3, SCP23-26, and consideration given to the placing within the grade of Catherine Cunningham, taking into account that the request has been outstanding since August 2008 and that Highland Rail Partnership employees were transferred to HITRANS on 1 April 2008.

BACKGROUND

Following Catherine's request discussion were held with HR on the best way to deal with evaluation of her grade taking into account the introduction of Single Status, the requirement to integrate the existing pay structures in relation to APTC and MW grades, and requirements to demonstrate working within the terms of the Equal Pay Act.

Advice from HR has been sought through the COSLA Secretariat in relation to Councils evaluating posts and providing salary advice for external bodies should this in time be identified as the definitive way of demonstrating the application of equality legislation in terms of employee conditions.

It is felt that the Board should at this time consider the specific outstanding request from Catherine Cunningham.

Pay and Guidance data which came from the COSLA Job Evaluation Consortium highlights some useful factors which could be taken into consideration in relation to Catherine's request.

To summarise the guidance, it appears that longterm progression through pay scales **in recognition of service** is considered by the EOC to discriminate in favour of male employees. Lengthy pay scales are considered discriminatory for women when you take into consideration career breaks, maternity leave etc. It also highlights that the top pay point of the scale is the "**rate for the job**". Hence new pay scales within the CNES and other Council Pay Models generally have only three spinal column points within each grade. It is also worth noting that within our organisation the male employees, as mangers and Direcot, are on either a three point or fixed point scale. The 2 female Office Managers are on a scale which straddle over 8 points – therefore, the expectation would be that it takes 8 years to reach the maximum point of the scale, i.e. the "rate for the job." It is considered incorrect that 8 years experience is essential to become fully competent with the duties of Office Manager, and as result the current grade is inappropriate in terms of reflecting best practice in implementing equal pay policy.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 27 March 2009