

Minute of Meeting held in The Knipoch House Hotel, Oban on Friday 28 November 2014 at 9.30am.

PRESENT

Cllr. James Stockan (Chair), Orkney Council Member
 Cllr. Thomas Prag (Vice-Chair), The Highland Council Member
 Cllr. John Cowe, Moray Council Member
 Cllr. Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
 Cllr. Maurice Corry, Argyll and Bute Council Member
 Prof David Gray, Non-Councillor Member
 Mr Wilson Metcalfe, Non-Councillor Member
 Mr Okain Maclennan, Non-Councillor Member

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
 Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council
 Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE
 Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council
 Mr Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council
 Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr David MacKechnie, The Highland Council
 Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland
 Ms Fiona McNally, HITRANS
 Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
 Miss Joanie McBride, Audit Scotland

APOLOGIES

Cllr John Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
 Cllr Duncan Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council Member
 Mr Stuart Black, The Highland Council
 Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2014 1 The Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2014 was **approved**.

Matters Arising 2 The Partnership Director provided an update detailing the actions taken following the last Meeting of HITRANS. Members were informed that the HITRANS Meeting of 9/10 April 2015 would now take place in Moray and the Meeting scheduled to take place on 26/27 November 2015 would take place in Orkney.

It was agreed to note the update.

A82 Progress Update 3 The Chairman welcomed Mr Andy Anderson, Project Manager, Transport Scotland and Mr Euan Nicolson, Depute Programme Manager, CH2M Hill Fairhurst JV to the Meeting. Mr Anderson and Mr Nicolson gave a presentation on the proposed route options for the A82 improvements between Tarbet and Inveraman. The presentation detailed the various options and it was indicated that the preferred option would be announced in Summer 2015. Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions of Mr Anderson and Mr Nicolson. Members reiterated the view that the preferred option should incorporate a 7.3 metre wide carriageway for the entire length of the route. The Chairman thanked Mr Anderson and Mr Nicolson for the presentation.

It was agreed to note the presentation.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget 4
Monitoring Report
– 1 April to 31
October 2014

Mr Mike Mitchell submitted a Report detailing HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 October 2014. The Report stated that income and expenditure were both in line with the budget outturn target and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered at the end of the financial year. The Report indicated that the European part-funded project, Seamless Travel across the Atlantic Area Regions using Sustainable Transport (START), was completed in 2011/12. The final grant claim had only now been agreed and, consequently, HITRANS was now in receipt of a sum of £147,107 in respect of this claim. Officers were currently drawing up a proposed programme of work to utilise this sum of money.

In relation to the 2013/14 final position an underspend of £10,483 was reported to the September Board Meeting. On the eve of the Board Meeting, Audit Scotland requested audit adjustments to the financial statements. Audit Scotland provided a verbal report on their Annual Report, including the audit adjustments, at the Board Meeting. The total of the adjustments was £135,172, of which, £125,335 related to expenditure on the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project, however the corresponding grant claim accrual was reduced accordingly, therefore the net effect on the underspend was £nil. The remaining £9,837 resulted in an increase in the publicity spend of £959, and a reduction in the research and strategy development expenditure by £8,878. The underspend of £20,320, after audit adjustments, has been carried forward for inclusion in the 2014/15 Research and Strategy Development budget.

It was agreed:

- (1) to approve the information detailed in the Report for the period to 31 October 2014;
- (2) to authorise the Partnership Director to draft a programme of expenditure for utilising START funding and to circulate the programme to Board Members for final approval; and
- (3) that the Chair would propose that Regional Transport Partnerships be permitted to carry forward reserves at the next Meeting of RTP Chairs.

Annual Report on 5
the 2013/14 Audit

Miss Joanie McBride submitted a Report providing a summary of the findings of Audit Scotland's 2013/14 Audit of HITRANS. The Report set out the scope, nature and extent of the Audit and summarised Audit Scotland's opinions on the financial statements and conclusions on significant issues arising. The Report stated that Audit Scotland had given an unqualified opinion that the financial statements of HITRANS gave a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Partnership and income and expenditure for the year ended. Members expressed concerns that Audit Scotland had raised audit questions at a late stage in the process with a knock on impact on the production of the Audited Accounts.

It was agreed:

- (a) to note the Report;
- (b) to note that the Chairman and Partnership Director would meet with Audit Scotland to discuss the concerns raised by Members in relation to Audit Scotland's timescales for completing the Audit and non-recognition of the nature of the Bus Investment Fund late grant award that could be drawn down against 2013/14 or 2014/15 without causing any issue to Transport Scotland in the grant award; and
- (c) that the Partnership Director would submit a Report to the next Meeting detailing options and advice on the value of setting up an Audit Sub-Committee.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research and Strategy Development Programme 2014/15 6 With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2014, Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report detailing progress with the delivery of the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2014/15. The Report stated that the Programme supported the development, implementation and delivery of HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy and the variations to the Programme in light of changing circumstances were detailed. The Report indicated that the Programme included provision for the contingency of an underspend emerging on any individual Project and the Programme would be updated once a clear achievable spend was identified for the Inverness Campus, North Bridge Project which would dictate the level of funding drawn down from Sustrans in the current financial year.

It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2014/15 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Transport Integration Forum (TIF) 7 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report providing an overview of a recent Transport Integration Forum held in Oban in October 2014 which HITRANS hosted in partnership with Caledonian MacBrayne. The purpose of the Forum was to take a strategic look at the barriers and opportunities for improving integration between different transport modes. Transport Scotland recognised the importance of improving integration as essential to helping make public transport a more attractive option for those travelling to work and for leisure and made this a key focus of the new ScotRail franchise. Within the HITRANS area multi-modal journeys were often a necessity so it was essential that all transport operators, bodies and regulators worked together to improve the service available to the public. The Report detailed the key issues identified at the Forum. The final report on the Transport Integration Forum would identify a number of recommendations to tackle these issues.

It was agreed to:

- (1) support the production of a Report on the Forum which would outline the key issues identified on the day and how these may be addressed; and**
- (2) support HITRANS hosting similar events in the future focussing on areas such as the Abellio franchise and services to/from Caithness and the Northern Isles**

Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring Report for 2013/14 8 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report on the Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation for the 2013/14 period. The information would be reproduced in full along with the detailed spreadsheet of indicators in the 2013/14 Annual Report in line with the recommendations made to HITRANS by Audit Scotland.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Inverness Airport (Dalcross Station) 9 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of meeting of 26 September 2014 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report in relation to the proposed re-opening of Dalcross Station.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Bus Investment Fund – Local Authority/Community Transport 10 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing the successful applications to the Scottish Government Bus Investment Fund which were led by either Local Authorities or Community Transport providers within the HITRANS area and which were financially supported by HITRANS through match funding contributions. The fund would run for two years and Transport Scotland had awarded funding to thirteen projects with this second round announced in November 2014.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) consider specific opportunities presented by the improvements identified for the ITravel project in the Table on Page 2 of the Report.**

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| Rail Franchise Update | 12 | <p>Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on on the status of rail franchises. Serco had been appointed by Transport Scotland to run the Caledonian Sleeper franchise for fifteen years, starting on 1 April 2015. The trains would continue the current practice of telescoping five trains into two arrivals in Euston and vice versa. Serco would base their main office in Inverness. Abellio, the UK arm of Nederlandse Spoorwegen, were appointed by Transport Scotland to operate the ScotRail franchise for ten years from 1 April 2015, with a possible break point at five years. First Group, Keolis Eurostar and Stagecoach/Virgin were shortlisted for the East Coast franchise which is expected to be announced shortly. The eight year franchise covered services from London to Edinburgh with some trains continuing from Edinburgh to Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p> |
| Barra Air Service Enhancement Report | 13 | <p>Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing the results of the Barra – Glasgow Service enhancements and proposals for how HITRANS may work with other partners to maintain the additional services in future years. Following discussions with Loganair - HITRANS, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and HIE agreed to support the provision of additional rotations on Tuesday and Wednesdays from the end of May until the beginning of September for a period of 15 weeks giving an additional thirty rotations at a cost of £24,000. The trial t saw an average load factor of 68%, and the partners agreed to extend their support up to the end of the October school holidays with fifteen further rotations at a cost of £12,000. Representatives of HITRANS, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar met with Transport Scotland officials earlier this month to review the benefits of the 2014 trial and discuss how the enhancements may be supported in future years.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) to note the Report and approve HITRANS engaging with HIE, CnES and Loganair to agree a reduced level of de-minimis funding support for an extension of the double rotations on Tuesday and Wednesday between May and September 2015; and (2) to support efforts by key stakeholders to encourage the inclusion of these additional flights in the new Transport Scotland PSO. |
| Ferry Accessibility Fun/Thistle Assistance Card | 14 | <p>Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report on the detail of the Ferries Accessibility Fund which was launched in October 2014 and HITRANS application for support from the fund to allow HITRANS to produce and roll out the Thistle Assistance Card in the Highlands and Islands. The introduction of the Thistle Assistance Card would help people with disabilities have their needs understood and catered for when they access transport modes.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) note the Report; and (2) approve the allocation of £7,500 from the Research and Strategy Delivery programme budget for External Funding Application Support to fund HITRANS share of costs for the deployment of the Thistle Assistance Card should the application for match funding form the Ferries Accessibility Fund be successful |
| Branchliner | 15 | <p>With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2014 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report in relation to the Branchliner Project. A project application was submitted to the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme to provide funding for mode shift to rail, obviating heavy use of fragile road networks. The project aimed to deliver a managed trial of rail haulage of timber between Caithness and the Flow country to Inverness in the summer of 2015. HITRANS submitted the funding and the application was followed on 28 October 2014 with a joint presentation being made with the Highland Council to the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) funding body at Forestry Commission Scotland in Edinburgh. The outcome of the application was awaited.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p> |

Green Bus Fund	16	<p>Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report advising Members of the outcome of the latest round of Green Bus Fund support for projects in the Highlands and Islands. The Scottish Government introduced the Green Bus Fund to support the roll out of low carbon buses throughout Scotland. The latest round of funding was the fifth and represented the largest allocation to the fund to date with a total budget of £4.75million. The fund offered successful bidders up to 80% of the price differential between a new low carbon bus and its diesel equivalent. Two proposals submitted by organisations and operators in the Highlands and Islands secured funding through the fifth round of the Green Bus Fund. Details of the proposals' were outlined in the Report</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <p>(1) note the Report; and</p> <p>(2) approve the allocation of £15,000 from the Research and Strategy Delivery programme budget for External Funding Application Support to fund the Inverness Bus Station Fast Charge System</p>
Active Travel Update	17	<p>With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2014 Miss Fiona McInally submitted a Report in relation to active travel projects within the HITRANS area. The Report indicated that the Active Travel budget 2014/15 had been allocated to cycle friendly roads; Active Travel Audit refresh; HiBike Active Travel Maps; the NCN 78 feasibility study and the Scottish Station's Fund.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p> <p>CONSULTATION</p>
Review of Options for Ferry Freight Fares	18	<p>Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the review of freight ferry fares being undertaken on behalf of Transport Scotland. The Report indicated that Transport Scotland's ferry plan 2013-22 recognised the need to develop an overarching policy for freight fares which aim to deliver a new fare structure which was simple, transparent and did not disadvantage any apart of the network and balance the well-being of communities against the public sector cost. The Report further indicated that a consultation paper would be issued and would seek comments before the end of December 2014.</p> <p>It was agreed to approve the proposal that the Partnership Director and Manager develop the HITRANS response to the Fares Consultation taking input from the Partnership Advisors from Argyll and Bute, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highland, Orkney Islands and HIE before seeking approval from Board Members on the draft response.</p> <p>PARTNERSHIP</p>
Risk Management – Risk Register Update 2014	19	<p>With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 4 February 2011 Mr Ranold Robertson submitted a Report in relation to HITRANS Risk Register. The revised list of Risk Management Controls were detailed in the Appendix to the Report. Members were asked to approve the Risk Register which covered strategic, management and operation and financial risks faced by HITRANS. The Risk Register would continue to be monitored by officers and advisors and presented to the Partnership for approval on an annual basis.</p> <p>It was agreed to approve the adoption of the HITRANS Risk Register November 2014 as included in the Appendix to the Report.</p>