

Minute of Meeting held in the Harris Hotel, Tarbert, Isle of Harris on Friday 15 April 2016 at 9.00am.

PRESENT Cllr. John Mackay (Vice Chair in the Chair), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
Cllr. James Stockan, Orkney Council Member
Cllr. Robert Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council
Cllr. John Cowe, Moray Council Member
Cllr Audrey Sinclair, The Highland Council Member
Prof. David Gray, Non-Councillor Member
Mr Okain MacIennan, Non-Councillor Member

IN ATTENDANCE Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council
Mrs Moya Ingram, Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council
Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE
Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI
Joanne Gray, Transport Scotland
Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland

APOLOGIES Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
Mr Wilson Metcalfe, Non-Councillor Member
Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council
Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland

MINUTES

It was agreed to suspend Standing Order 10(3) to enable the Vice-Chair to Chair the Meeting in order to avoid any conflict of interest for Cllr. James Stockan who was standing as a candidate in the Scottish Parliament Election.

Minutes of Meeting of 5 February 2016 1 The Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016 was **approved**.

Matters Arising 2 Mr Ranald Robertson gave an update on matters arising since the last Meeting.

It was agreed to note that:

- (1) **the Air Services Scoping Paper would be submitted to a future Meeting; and**
- (2) **the Report on Inverness Station Works would be submitted to the September 2016 Meeting.**

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 February March 2016 3 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016, the Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015. 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.

It was agreed to approve the revenue monitoring position for 2015/16.

Annual Audit Plan 2015/16 4 Ms Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland, presented the Annual Audit Plan 2015/16. The Report stated that the audit focused on the identification and assessment of the key challenges and risks facing HITRANS when seeking to achieve its business objectives.

It was agreed to note:

(1) the Report; and

(2) that Maggie Bruce would confirm the Audit Fee for 2015/16

PARTNERSHIP

Business Plan for 2016-17 5 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 10 April 2015 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report which sought approval of the HITRANS Business Plan for 2016/17. The Business Plan set out how HITRANS would support the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) during 2016/17, working with constituent Local Authorities and stakeholders, with a view to improving transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Plan defined how HITRANS would promote and implement the RTS in order to improve the delivery of transport services across the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to authorise the Partnership Director to finalise the Business Plan 2016/17, taking on board the comments of Board Members and Permanent Advisors

Review of HITRANS Financial Regulations 6 With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 6 February 2015 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Financial Regulations of the Partnership. The Report stated that the Regulations were based on The Highland Council's Regulations which had been updated in September 2015. The Report stated that it was proposed to adopt the revised Regulations.

It was agreed to approve the application to HITRANS of The Highland Council Financial Regulations September 2015.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research Strategy Development Programme for 2015/16 7 With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016, Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report providing an update on progress with delivery of the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2015/16 and seeking approval of amendments to the Programme to reflect commitments made, changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since the approval of the 2015/16 Business Plan.

It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2015/16 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Regional Transport Strategy Main Issues Report 8 With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2015 Mr Neil MacRae submitted a Report in respect of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) refresh. Following a presentation and workshop at the last Partnership meeting a Main Issues Report was developed for public consultation to help inform and shape the updated Strategy. Following the consultation a draft Regional Transport Strategy would be developed for consideration at the next Meeting.

It was agreed to note the Report and that the draft Main Issues Report would be considered at the June 2016 Meeting.

Branchliner 9 With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016, Mr Frank Roach gave a presentation in relation to the Branchliner Project. At the conclusion of the presentation Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions.

It was agreed to note the presentation.

- Active Travel Strategy Update 10 With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016 Mr. Neil Macrae submitted a Report in relation to the consultation on the Active Travel Strategy. The Report stated that HITRANS were currently updating the Active Travel Strategy which would take account of the requirements under the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. The Active Travel Strategy would sit as a standalone document to the overall Regional Transport Strategy but would complement the wider work being undertaken as part of its refresh, with an abridged version being incorporated into the final Regional Transport Strategy.
- It was agreed:**
- (1) to note that the deadline for comments for the draft Active Travel Strategy was 22 April 2016; and
 - (2) that the revised Active Travel Strategy would be submitted to the next Meeting.
 - (3) that the carriage of bicycles on trains would be included in the Strategy; and
 - (4) to make representations to Transport Scotland in relation to the carriage of bicycles on trains.
- Active Travel Update 11 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016, Mr Andrew Mckay submitted a Report providing an update in relation to active travel. The Report detailed progress with active travel project delivery. The Report stated that Transport Scotland had indicated that it was proposed to provide further funding for Active Travel under Smarter Choices/Smarter Places which sought to achieve modal shift to active and sustainable travel. The Report indicated that proposals for 2016/17 Active Travel Projects would be considered at the next Meeting.
- It was agreed to consider projects for 2016/2017 which would support the priorities identified in the HITRANS Active Travel Strategy.**
- Transport Scotland Rail Freight Strategy 12 Mr. Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS response to the Scottish Governments Consultation on Scotland's Rail Freight Strategy. The Strategy built on the support currently available for rail freight through the range of infrastructure improvements, the Rail Freight Strategy Strategic Investment Fund and the two freight mode shift grant schemes.
- It was agreed to:**
- (1) note the Report; and
 - (2) submit a Report on the development of a Scoping Study in respect of rail freight for the Far North Line to a future Meeting.
- Bus Investment Fund Update 13 With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016 Mr Neil Macrae and Ms Julie Cromarty submitted a Report providing an update on the implementation of the two Bus Investment Fund Projects for which HITRANS was the lead partner - East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor and HI- Travel. The Report stated that HITRANS had been able to draw down over £1million in public sector and over £2million in private investment in Public Transport in the Highlands and Islands since January 2014. HITRANS had also supported a number of projects led by partner Local Authorities or community transport groups including; Tagsa Uibhist, Moray Council's Access to Health project, Badenoch and Strathspey Integrated Transport Service and the Oban to Fort William Sunday service improvements.
- It was agreed to:**
- (1) note the updated report on the implementation of the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor and HI-Travel projects;
 - (2) authorise the Partnership Director to finalise the content of the Statutory Quality Partnership (SQP) for Inverness in partnership with colleagues at the Highland Council and Stagecoach North Scotland;

- (3) approve the allocation of a £5000 contribution in 2016/17 Business Plan towards supporting the implementation and monitoring of the Inverness SQP;
- (4) write a letter to the Minister of Transport and Chief Executive of Transport Scotland highlighting the successes of the various BIF projects within the HITRANS area and express support for the continuation of the fund, or similar fund in future years;
- (5) agree that a further Report be taken to a Partnership meeting later this year that would consider the merits of continuing the shared service collaboration model for delivering public transport information across the HITRANS area; and
- (6) to provide members with an update on the status and use of Journey Genie.

HubOb 14 With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2015 Mr. Frank Roach gave a presentation in respect of potential developments at Oban's Railway Pier. HITRANS commissioned Robert Gordon University (RGU) to undertake a Scanning and Engagement study of Oban Harbour, Rail Station and Bus Stance area. The presentation detailed visuals on what the pier might look like and outlined options for making the ferry terminal and railway station operate more effectively, while ensuring that rail capacity could meet future needs.

It was agreed to note the presentation.

Skye Air Service Update 15 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report on the development strategy for the reintroduction of air services between Skye and the Central Belt. Following completion of the initial Feasibility Study a working group with representatives from HITRANS, The Highland Council and HIE was set up with the objective of developing a more detailed business case to a level that would enable decisions on investment to be made. The Report indicated that it was anticipated that the business case would take two months to complete and would be reported to a future meeting.

It was agreed to support the proposed Development Strategy for the re-introduction of air services to Skye.

Air Discount Scheme Update 16 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report in respect of the recently commissioned research into the Air Discount Scheme (ADS). The research would explore the potential benefits, costs and feasibility of reintroducing ADS for all types of business users. The Report detailed a proposal to extend the research would be extended to consider use of air services by public sector bodies.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and
- (2) approve the extension of the Study to consider use by the public sector of air services where ADS applied subject to further discussion with the consultant undertaking the research.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

COMBI 17 With reference to item 22 of the Minute of Meeting of 4 September 2015 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report in relation to the application for funding for the COMBI Project under the EU InterReg VB Sea Region Programme. The Report stated that the application had been unsuccessful in the first funding round but the Project Partners had been invited to resubmit the Project in the second round. The Report further stated that Project Partners had refined the Project to address weaknesses. The work packages were detailed in the Report.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and
- (2) consider opportunities which the COMBI project may present if successful in being awarded EU InterReg funding.

SPARA 2020 18 With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 27 November 2015 Ms Jayne Westbrook submitted a Report detailing progress made in developing the SPARA 2020 INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme project. The Report stated that work packages were progressing well with HITRANS maintaining regular communication between project partners to ensure that each work package meets its project deliverables.

It was agreed to note the Report.

G-Pa TRA Update 19 Ms Julie Cromarty submitted a Report indicating that HITRANS had submitted an application as one of members of the G-PATRA (Green Passenger Transport in Rural Areas) Project under the EU Interreg VB North Sea Region Programme. The original Project application had been unsuccessful but HITRANS invited to reapply to the second call for applications in March 2016. The Report stated that the Project would identify innovative, integrated transport services and new organisational and ownership models to allow transport operators to deliver on the Project goals of providing a sustainable rural public transport network.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

Network Rail
Scotland Route
Study 20 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2016 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report in relation to Network Rail's Scotland Route Study. The Report stated that the purpose of the Route Study was to provide an evidence base that would inform funders in Scotland when considering rail industry investment choices for Control Periods 6 and 7 2019-2029. The Report detailed a proposed response on behalf of HITRANS to the Route Study.

It was agreed to note the Report.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Low Carbon
Strategy 21 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Low Carbon Strategy which was being developed in conjunction with the refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The Report stated that low carbon transport was an area of significant national policy change and it was agreed that a separate Strategy as a related document to the RTS would be developed.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) submit any comments on Appendix A; and**
- (3) propose projects in association with the direction of travel outlined in the Low Carbon Strategy.**