

NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Partnership in the HITRANS Office, Building 25, Inverness Airport, on **Friday 4 December 2009 at 9:30am**. There will be an informal meeting of the Partnership for a briefing at the Golf View Hotel, Nairn, on 3 December 2009 commencing at 6.00 pm, followed by dinner at 7:30pm.

AGENDA

APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

MINUTES

1 **Minute of Meeting of 8 October 2009** (enclosed)

2 **Matters Arising**

FINANCE

3 **Revenue Budget Monitoring Report** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Treasurer

4 **Travel Plans Programme 2009/10** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

RESEARCH

5 **Delivery of Transport Services Review**
Presentation by David Scotney, ATKINS

6 **Active Travel Audits**
Presentation by Cathy Kay, Halcrow

RAIL

7 **Rail Update** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

8 **Sustainable Transport in Rural Tourism (STIR)** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

9 **Railway Round Up** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

10 **Concessionary Travel Schemes – Continuation from October meeting** (enclosed)
Report by Partnership Director

AOCB

Item:
1



Meeting held in the Willow Room, Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway on 8 October 2009 at 9.30am.

PRESENT

Mr Duncan MacIntyre (Chairman) – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
Mr George McIntyre – Moray Council
Mr Wilson Metcalfe
Mr Okain McLennan

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS
Mr Ronald Robertson - HITRANS
Mr Frank Roach – HITRANS
Mr Sam MacNaughton – Highland Council
Mr David Summers – Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum
Ms Naomi Coleman – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Donald Macrae – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Gordon Holland – Moray Council
Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Gareth Williams - SCDI
Mr Derek Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Mike Mitchell – Highland Council

Mr John Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Substitute member
Mr Murdo Gray – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

APOLOGIES

Mr John Laing (Vice-Chairman) – Highland Council
Ms Louise Smith
Ms Robert Pollock – Argyll and Bute Council
Ms Pip Farman – General Health Advisor
Mr Douglas Forson – Scottish Government
Mr Michael Craigie – ZetTrans
Mr Alistair Watson - SPT

MINUTES

HITRANS

1 The Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2009 was **approved**.

Matters Arising

2 Mr Sam MacNaughton updated Members in relation to the Transport Scotland Project at Berriedale Braes. A recent options report had identified the potential for a moderate scheme and funding was being sought from the Decommissioning Authority for a full Ground Investigation and Feasibility Study which would be taken forward by Transport Scotland.

Ms Naomi Coleman provided an update on the Orkney Ferry Services Review and Mr Jim Foubister provided an update on the Fixed Links Conference which had taken place in Norway in July 2009.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the updates; and**
- (2) **that HITRANS would support the Orkney Islands Council's position in relation to the review of Orkney Ferry Services**

FINANCE

- Final Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 3
- The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the final Outturn Revenue Monitoring Position for HITRANS for the year to 31 March 2009. The Report stated that expenditure was within budget with savings on property costs meeting the shortfall on Travel Plan Grants and the publicity underspend had been utilised for further research and strategy development work.
- It was agreed to note;**
- (1) the Report; and**
 - (2) the schedule appended to the Report showing the final outturn revenue monitoring position for the year ended 31 March 2009**
- Audited Statement of Accounts - 2008/2009 4
- The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report in relation to the Audited Statement of Accounts 2008/2009. Mrs Mary Bowman, Audit Scotland addressed Members in relation to the Statement of Accounts. Mrs Bowman stated that Transport Partnerships were required to produce an annual Statement of Accounts by 30 June each year which must prescribe all accounting standards and statements of recommended practice. Mrs Bowman indicated that the Statement of Accounts for the Partnership had required no adjustments and the Audit Report was unqualified with only one matter arising.
- It was agreed to**
- (1) note the Report together with the Auditor’s Clearance Report on the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008; and**
 - (2) homologate the actions of the Chair and Vice Chair in approving the draft “Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2008/09 Audit” on behalf of the Partnership.**
- Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2009 to 31 August 2009 5
- Mr Mike Mitchell submitted a Report detailing the Revenue Monitoring Position for the Period to 31 August 2009. 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 note;**
- (1) the Report; and**
 - (2) the schedule appended to the Report showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 August 2009.**
- Travel Plans Programme 2009/10 6
- The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing progress with delivery of the Travel Plans Programme 2009/10. The Programme sought to increase the number of employees, visitors and suppliers in local authorities and health boards using more sustainable modes of transport. The Report highlighted the allocation of the 2009/10 grant and outlined the targets against which progress in achieving objectives/expected outcomes would be monitored.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Review of HITRANS Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders 7
- The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the review of the Partnerships Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders which had been undertaken by the Partnership Director and Finance Manager. Proposed changes to the Regulations and Contracts Standing Orders were detailed in the Report.
- It was agreed to approve the changes to the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders as detailed in the Report.**

RESEARCH

Delivery of Transport Services Review	8	<p>Mr David Scotney, Atkins gave a presentation in relation to the Review of the Delivery of Transport Services. The Report detailed the emerging recommendations from the Review and indicated that option generation and assessment was being undertaken with a view to reporting to the December 2009 Meeting of the Partnership. Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions of Mr Scotney.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the presentation.</p>
Air Services Review	9	<p>Mr Laurie Price, Mott Macdonald, gave a Presentation on the Review of Air Services in the Highlands and Islands. Mr Price outlined the objectives of the Review, the key issues to be addressed and highlighted recommendations to address the problems identified through the Review. Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions of Mr Price.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Draft Review Document would be issued for consultation and that the outcome of the consultation would be reported back to a future Meeting.</p>
Regional Access Scoping Study	10	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing the Regional Access Scoping Study which had been undertaken by Transport and Travel Research Ltd. The Study summarised the findings of a Review of Public Transport Services and information provision for some key defined tourist routes in the Highlands and Islands Region of Scotland and investigated whether existing Public Transport and Information Services were suitable for marketing to tourists.</p> <p>It was agreed to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) note the Report(2) approve Regional Access Scoping Study findings and recommend their implementation by Member Councils; and(3) approve the Regional Access Scoping Study for publication on the HITRANS website.
Active Travel Audit Update	11	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to Active Travel Audits. The Report stated that Audits for Dunoon, Fort William and Thurso had been completed and that the audit for Oban was underway and would be followed by Alness – Invergordon. The Audits would identify a number of small capital projects which could be considered for support by Developers, HITRANS and Partner Authorities subject to funding availability and which would enable some of the barriers to increasing cycling and walking to become overcome.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
Freight Capability Study	12	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report indicating that HITRANS were seeking expressions of interests from consultants to carry out a review of the Highland and Islands Rail Freight Network.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
Car Parking Strategy Response	13	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing a proposed response to the consultation and Station Car Parking Policy in Scotland.</p> <p>It was agreed to approve the HITRANS response to the consultation on Station Car Parking Policy in Scotland.</p>

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| Mid Term Review of Research/Development Programme | 14 | <p>The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing progress with the Research/Strategy Development Programme. The Report detailed proposed amendments to the Programme in order to reflect changing priorities and funding opportunities identified through the year.</p> <p>It was agreed;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) to note progress on the Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2009/10;(2) to approve the amendment to the Research/Strategy Development Programme 2009/10 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report;(3) that the Partnership Director would liaise with ScotEuropa, START Partners and Transport Scotland in relation to identifying European funding opportunities; and(4) that a study would be instigated to investigate the possibility of utilising shared services among Local Authority partners, with the initial phase establishing the level of skills and experience currently available within partner organisations. |
| Highland Wide Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report | 15 | <p>The HITRANS Co-ordinator submitted a Report in relation to Highland Councils Local Development Plan. The Plan would develop guidance for development of the key growth areas in the inner Moray Firth and Caithness as well as policies to guide development across the Highland Council Area. HITRANS as a key agency were invited to comment on the Development Plan.</p> <p>It was agreed;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) that Members be invited to submit comments on the Highland wide Local Development Plan to the Partnership Director; and(2) the Partnership Director be authorised to submit a response on behalf of HITRANS |
| Concessionary Travel Schemes | 16 | <p>The Partnership Director submitted a Report providing an update in relation to the provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area following the recent completion of the review of the national bus concessionary travel scheme by the Scottish Government. The Report indicated that the application on Concessionary Travel across the HITRANS area was delivered and funded by both Scottish Government and Local Authorities depending on the mode and nature of travel involved and the benefits of the current schemes were detailed.</p> <p>It was agreed to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) note the current arrangements for provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area;(2) consider supporting the case for extension of eligibility in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme to cover all local and regional ferry travel by passengers, and journeys using Community and Demand Responsive Transport in areas where minimum levels of bus services are not available; and(3) consider the matter further at the December 2009 Meeting. |

Inverness-Aberdeen Additional Services 17 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report indicating that HITRANS and NESTRANS have engaged timetable consultants to examine options for improving the frequency of Sunday Services on the Inverness – Aberdeen Route. Economic Analysis of extra Sunday Services was undertaken and demonstrated a positive benefit cost ratio with potential passenger uplift of 3.9% in Sunday demand. The Report further stated that HITRANS and NESTRANS have each made provision for £25k revenue support for an experimental first year of operation and Transport Scotland were currently evaluating the proposal.

It was agreed to note the Report.

High Speed Rail 18 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to proposals for the introduction of High Speed Rail across the network. Network Rail have produced a Study to enable it to plan for future growth once current network capacity had been reached and the Study proposed a high speed route to Scotland via Preston with terminals in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Report detailed the implications for the Highlands and Islands area.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Cycling Action Plan for Scotland 19 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing a proposed response to the Scottish Government Cycling Action Plan for Scotland.

It was agreed to respond to the consultation on the basis of the Report and the comments made by Members.

EUROPEAN FUNDING

Cearcall na Gaidhlig ERDF Application 20 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the Cearcall na Gaidhlig Tourism Marketing Initiative which sought to create an authentic Gaelic based cultural tourism experience along routes through the Hebridean Islands and West Coast Mainland of Scotland. The Report stated that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar had acted as lead partner in the development and management of Cearcall na Gaidhlig and an ERDF Application had been prepared and submitted on behalf of the steering group.

It was agreed to;

- (1) note the Report.**
- (2) approve the continuation of HITRANS support to Cearcaill na Gàidhlig with £15,000 being allocated by HITRANS each year in 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 from the Partnership's Research and Development budget; and**
- (3) approve HITRANS continued membership of the Cearcaill na Gàidhlig Steering Group until 2012/13.**

START Project – Publicity Dissemination and Brochure 21 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the START Project Brochure which had been produced by Transport and Travel Research. The Report stated that START was a trans-national project relevant to cities and regions throughout the Atlantic area and dealt with the broad issue of improvement of accessibility and internal links by promoting inter-operability and continuity of existing transport networks and sea/road/rail/air inter-modality.

It was agreed;

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) that the Permanent Advisors would arrange to circulate the brochure within their respective organisations.**

START Project - Elgin to Inverness Airport JET Service 22 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the development and delivery of an extension to the JET bus service to Inverness Airport which would include hourly links to Elgin. The enhanced service would be subject to the same management and monitoring that was already in place for the services funded through the original bus route development scheme and Stagecoach would add this information to the monthly reporting invoicing processes.

It was agreed to note the Report.

START Project – Argyll Real Time Information Project 23 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing progress made in the development and delivery of the extended coverage of real time passenger information in Argyll and Bute. The Report detailed the project timescales for delivery of the project.

It was agreed to;

(1) note the Report; and

(2) approve the project scope and delivery timescale.

PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report 2008/09 24 The Partnership Director circulated the HITRANS Annual Report 2008/09.

It was agreed to approve the draft content of the HITRANS Annual Report 2008/09.

Programme of Meetings 2010 25 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing proposed meeting dates for 2010.

It was agreed that the Programme of HITRANS Board Meetings for 2010 would be as follows, with additional Meetings called should circumstances warrant;

Date	Location
4 and 5 February 2010	Inverness
8 and 9 April 2010	Oban
3 and 4 June 2010	Inverness/Orkney (TBC)
2 and 3 September 2010	Inverness/Orkney (TBC)
2 and 3 December 2010	Inverness

Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2009 to October 2009

SUMMARY

This report sets out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 October 2009 and the projected year end position.

1. Current Position

1.1 The annual budget is as approved at the Board Meeting held on 6 February 2009, subsequently amended for the inclusion of the 2008/09 underspend of £15,919. The attached summary statement shows the financial position to 31 October 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 seven months ended 31 October 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.

2.3 The monitoring statement is currently showing a projected underspend of £5,266 at the end of the financial year. This is in respect of the final bank balance, now transferred to HITRANS, of the Highland Rail Partnership. The Partnership Director will update Board Members as to the transfer conditions at the meeting. Any amount unutilised in this financial year will be carried forward to next financial year.

3. Major Issues and Variances

3.1 The final 2008/09 outturn figures were reported to the October Board meeting, and in light of the position, the current year's budget has been reviewed. Office costs, for both property and administration, and partnership/consultation meeting costs are expected to collectively underspend by £35,000. It is proposed to decrease the respective budget headings by £35,000.

- 3.2 To utilise the underspend, it is proposed that the research and strategy development budget be increased by £35,000. Coupled with the 2008/09 underspend of £15,919, this will enable further project work totalling £50,000 to be undertaken. Allowance for use of this potential additional resource has already been made in part in the Research and Development Programme agreed by the Board at their meeting in October, and further options for meaningful funding this year are being developed by Officers and Permanent Advisors, focussing on implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Board Members are asked to approve the virements of £35,000 between budget headings and to note the above information as well as the attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 October 2009.

Report by: Mike Mitchell
Designation: Partnership Treasurer
Date: 25th November 2009

HITRANS - SUMMARY							
STATEMENT OF REVENUE MONITORING TO: 31ST OCTOBER 2009							
2009/20010							
BUDGET HEADINGS	ANNUAL BUDGET	BUDGET TO DATE	ACTUAL TO DATE	This Month Budget	This Month Actual	TO GO	PROJECTED OUTTURN
INCOME							
Councils	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	£0	£0	£0	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Match Funding	(£200,000)	(£116,667)	(£116,667)	(£16,667)	£0	(£83,333)	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Travel Plan Officer	(£36,000)	(£21,000)	£0	(£3,000)	£0	(£36,000)	(£36,000)
Scottish Executive - Regional Transport Strategy	(£415,000)	(£144,333)	(£144,333)	(£12,333)	(£60,000)	(£270,667)	(£415,000)
2008/09 Surplus	(£15,919)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£15,919)	(£15,919)
Other Misc Income	£0	£0	(£15,807)	£0	£0	(£1,193)	(£17,000)
	(£866,919)	(£482,000)	(£476,807)	(£32,000)	(£60,000)	(£407,112)	(£883,919)
DIRECT RUNNING COSTS							
Director	£94,000	£54,833	£56,996	£7,833	£8,191	£37,004	£94,000
Partnership Managers	£117,500	£68,542	£72,831	£9,792	£10,060	£44,669	£117,500
Office Managers	£52,000	£30,333	£31,557	£4,333	£4,479	£20,443	£52,000
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£25,000	£14,583	£14,546	£2,083	£2,618	£10,454	£25,000
Members and Advisers Travel and Subsistence	£10,000	£5,833	£4,215	£833	£729	£5,785	£10,000
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£25,000	£14,583	£9,944	£2,083	£3,591	£10,056	£20,000
Office Costs - Property	£45,000	£26,250	£10,073	£3,750	£116	£9,927	£20,000
Office Costs - Admin	£26,500	£15,458	£13,953	£2,208	£700	£7,547	£21,500
	£395,000	£230,417	£214,115	£32,917	£30,484	£145,885	£360,000
PROGRAMME COSTS							
Publicity	£25,000	£14,583	£16,879	£2,083	£4,440	£8,121	£25,000
Travel Plan Work	£36,000	£21,000	£4,048	£3,000	£0	£31,952	£36,000
Research & Strategy Development	£369,919	£127,500	£123,815	£40,000	£23,320	£282,838	£406,653
Other Costs	£0	£0	£6,683	£0	£0	£3,317	£10,000
	£430,919	£163,083	£151,425	£45,083	£27,760	£326,228	£477,653
Finance and Administrative Services	£41,000	£23,917	£24,277	£23,917	£23,917	£16,723	£41,000
TOTAL COSTS	£866,919	£417,417	£389,817	£101,917	£82,161	£477,102	£878,653
(UNDER) / OVERSPEND	£0	(£64,583)	(£86,990)	£69,917	£22,161	£69,990	(£5,266)

Report to Partnership Meeting – 4th December 2009

FINANCE

TRAVEL PLANS PROGRAMME 2009/10

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on progress in developing and delivering the £35,000 2009/10 allocation by Scottish Government to HITRANS to *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards*. The budget allocation was approved by Members at the Partnership meeting on 5th June 2009.

BACKGROUND

The main expected outcome of the Programme 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.

The targets against which progress in achieving objectives / expected outcomes will be monitored are:

- i. The continuation or implementation of a monitoring scheme. Implementation of the Energy Saving Trust Travel Plan monitoring tool, by all Local Authorities and Health Boards by April 2010;
- ii. The development of at least two travel plan case studies for each Local Authority and each Health Board within the RTP area per financial year.

The case studies can cover any element of the travel plan process including development, gaining senior management support, implementation of a measure and monitoring or reviewing of the travel plan. The case study should be at least one page in length and contain the following elements:-

- The rationale for the process i.e. why it was done
- The outputs i.e. what was done
- The outcome i.e. what was achieved
- Learning experience i.e. what would be done differently
- Link to National indicators and targets; and
- Signed off by a senior member of the Local Authority or Health Board

At least one case study per organisation should cover the implementation of a travel plan measure that was put into operation within the last 12 months.

- iii. Increase the coverage of the Local Authority and Health Board Travel Plans to cover at least 60% of staff by April 2009, 80% of staff by April 2010. This should exclude teachers and other educational staff working in schools.
- iv. Produce at least one case study of a project which implements the advice contained in SPP17, or PAN76, within the area covered by the RTP by April 2010.
- v. Produce an action plan detailing measurable sustainable and active travel outcomes that the RTP will be implementing. For example this could be increase the number of people using a car sharing database or an increase use of tele / home working.

This is the final year that Scottish Government intends to support this work with direct Grant funding to RTPs.

ALLOCATION OF THE 2009/10 GRANT

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. This success continued into 2008/09 with a further £21,480 awarded to The Moray Council and Highlands & Islands Airports Limited to improve active travel facilities at various workplaces in the region.

With the reduction in the HITRANS budget for travel plan related activities in 2009/10 an allocation of £10,000 has been set aside for this fund. Discussions have taken place with NHS Highland and NHS Grampian concerning the provision of journeyplanning kiosks and real time passenger information systems at NHS sites and this is expected to account for the £10,000 budget with match funding being provided by the NHS, Moray Council and Highland Council.

www.IfYouCareShare.com

HITRANS launched our journey sharing web portal in June 2008 with the simple and easily remembered domain name www.IfYouCareShare.com. This name was selected as the favourite from over 100 very good entries in a competition HITRANS ran in schools throughout the Highlands and Islands. The winning name was the product of some really good thinking on the parts of two S2 pupils at Sgoil Phaibil in North Uist.

HITRANS contract with Jambusters to manage and deliver the site will run to February 2013 giving continuity of access to the portal. A budget of £5,000 has been allocated for promotion of this site.

Active Travel Regional Audit Match Funding

The Active Travel Regional Audits are continuing in 2009/10 and will see more Regional centres audited to identify barriers to active travel in each location, and identify how these might in time be overcome. To support member local authorities to deliver some of the infrastructure works recommended in past and current Active Travel Audits Members agreed to allocate a budget of £45,000 to part fund these works. £20,000 of this funding has been allocated from the travel plans grant while the remaining £25,000 is provided through the Research and Development budget.

Partnership Advisors met in November and a key item discussed was the type of projects that could be funded and whether the intervention rate previously agreed for HITRANS grant funding of 25% was acceptable. It was agreed that a full list of projects would be submitted to HITRANS in advance of the Partnership Meeting on 4th December to enable the Partnership Manager to verbally report on the projects being suggested for implementation. The Partnership Manager will report on this programme in Item 6 which considers Active Travel Regional Audits specifically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson / Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 19th November 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

RAIL

Rail User Group (RUG)

1. The Board agreed at its meeting in June 2008 to establish a Rail User Group for a trial period of a year with invited representatives of Rail User Groups covering the West Highland, Kyle and North Highland Lines (there being, regrettably, no comparable groups in place for the Highland Main and the Inverness-Aberdeen Lines which are our busiest routes).
2. The RUG has been chaired by Robert Samson of Passenger Focus and attended by HITRANS officers and representatives of the individual rail user (Friends) groups.
3. The group has met on a six monthly basis. Agreed issues and action points arising from the meeting have been taken by the chair to the HITRANS Rail Advisory Group.
4. The HITRANS Rail User Groups met at the end of the trial year on 12 November 2009. John Laing and Dave Duthie were also present. After the usual useful sharing of issues around the region and agreement of a number of actions, the usefulness of the trial first year of the group was discussed.
5. There was general agreement by the User Group representatives that the RUG had proved to be a useful forum and allowed Groups with similar interests the opportunity to discuss common issues and agree how these might be, where appropriate, taken to the Rail Advisory Group for consideration.
6. There was a view expressed that a more formal structure and remit would benefit the functioning of the Group but this was not the view of the meeting as a whole. It was explained that HITRANS have successfully established a number of Advisory and Stakeholder forums to assist the Partnership in developing policy and delivering the Regional Transport Strategy without the need for formal structures, given that no decision-making powers have been subordinated by the Board to such groups. The practice was for these groups to discuss issues and for a list of agreed actions with a contextual note where appropriate, to be taken and circulated to group members after the meeting.
7. It was agreed by all present that the group would wish to continue to meet informally, twice yearly, with Passenger Focus in the chair. Passenger Focus will continue, as part of their role at the Rail Advisory Group, to present any actions from the RUG agreed to be taken to that Group, and report back any feedback to a subsequent meeting.

8. It was noted that HITRANS is unique among RTPs in having a RUG for third sector organisations.
9. RUG members will continue to be invited to attend Rail Stakeholder Group meetings.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

1. note the outcome of the RUG Meeting on 12 November; and
2. agree to continuing with the Rail Users Group as a useful and effective forum for facilitating dialogue between representative Rail Interest Groups with a view to helping improve rail services for users across the Highlands and Islands

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 24th November 200

Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

RAIL

European Joint Working Sustainable Transport in Rural Tourism (STIR)

1. HITRANS and HIE officers have been looking into the opportunity to be gained by joining a consortium to bid for funds from the ERDF Interreg 1VB Northern Periphery Programme (NPP).
2. STIR is currently a NPP Preparatory Project with partners in Sweden and Iceland. The application for the main project must be submitted by Feb 2010, and project would then run from June 2010 for 3 years.
3. The project aims to support the development of new or improved transport services in tourism areas. These could include busy tourist destinations or areas that are trying to encourage more tourism. Transport services could be targeted at tourists, but also benefit residents working in the industry. In addition actions and interventions that makes a tourist destination more attractive, for example by removing congestion, could be considered.
4. Interventions might include 'hard' measures such as new long-distance or local coach/bus services or improvements in integration between these, or 'soft' measures such as improved transport information for tourists, encouraging packaging of transport with other tourism goods such as accommodation.
5. If successful, the NPP will potentially provide 60% of project funding, and HIE may be able to add additional value through participation in promoting this important economic sector in the Highlands and Islands. Whilst 'new' project ideas are welcome, funding could be used to add additional value to initiatives currently being promoted through Councils for planned investment in transport that would have significant benefits for tourism in the area. The total project value could be up to 1.5m euro over 3 years across all partner countries, with a proportion of this funding coming to each partner area.
6. Constituent Councils have been involved in development of this project and officers are currently evaluating potential opportunities for co-funding of initiatives across the region and within their individual areas. Formal commitment to participate in the bid is not required until February. A further report will be provided to the Board seeking a decision as to whether to participate in the Bid, once further details of the nature of any bid as it might benefit our area are available.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note this position and agree for further work to be undertaken to establish the viability and benefits from participating in the bid for funding of the STIR Project.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 22nd November 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

RAIL

Railway Round Up

1. Rail Freight Policy Development

Transport Scotland is consulting on the development of a rail freight policy, noting that *'policy which supports and encourages increased modal shift to rail from less sustainable modes of transport will contribute to our target to achieve a reduction in emissions by 80% by 2050.'* A draft HITRANS response is being produced and will be tabled at the Board meeting having been considered by the Permanent Advisors. The deadline for responses is 23 December 2009.

2. East Coast

The DfT are now running the former National Express East Coast service, branded East Coast. While the possible termination of Glasgow east coast main line services has been proposed, north of Edinburgh services to Inverness and Aberdeen remain as before. HITRANS will continue to press for the retention of the Inverness London service when DfT refranchises the East Coast services.

3. Highland Main Line Upgrade

Network Rail has been instructed by Transport Scotland to take the project to GRIP 3 (option selection) for delivery of hourly, faster services in 2011/12.

4. Inverness-Aberdeen

Network Rail is soon to commence feasibility work on hourly, faster services for delivery post 2016.

5. Oban 5

The case for 5 trains per day has been submitted to Transport Scotland for evaluation.

6. Inverness-Aberdeen Sundays

The case for additional Sunday services on this route has been put to Transport Scotland, along with an offer of £50k towards Year1 costs jointly from Nestrans and HITRANS.

7. Level Crossings Study

Consultants Scott Wilson are finalising the study into journey time savings on Inverness-Wick level crossings. The results will identify a hierarchy of crossings based on the greatest time saved for the lowest spend.

8. Switch and Crossing Study on RETB Lines

Consultants are finalising the report which identifies a technical solution to the problem of interfacing with the RETB signalling system on the West Highland and North Highland lines.

9. Freight Capability

The HITRANS study into the capability of the Highland routes can now be let, following the issue of the Transport Scotland Freight Policy Development Consultation. The Study will focus on loading gauge; structure gauge; pathing; and access, ownership and capacity of terminals. The intention is to identify the ultimate capacity of the current rail network in the region to carry freight.

10. Timber by Rail

Feasibility work for provision of a side loading facility at Borrobol on the Far North Line has now been completed, in association with Scottish Woodlands and HIE. Options have been designed for the Altnabreac terminal for further ongoing timber extraction, and discussions will follow with private sector operators and Network Rail.

Recommendation

The Board are asked to note the above.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 23rd November 2009

Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Concessionary Travel Schemes – Report

SUMMARY

The Report provides an update of the current position with regard to the provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area following the recent completion of the Review of the National Bus Concessionary Travel Scheme by the Scottish Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to

1. Note the current arrangements for provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area.
2. Consider supporting the case for extension of eligibility in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme to cover all local ferry travel by passengers, and journeys using Community and Demand Responsive Transport in areas where minimum levels of bus services are not available.

DETAIL

The Partnership at its meeting of 6 June asked for a report to its next Meeting updating the Partnership on any changes to the Concessionary Travel Schemes following the recent review of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme by the Scottish Government.

The application of Concessionary Travel Schemes across the HITRANS area is delivered and funded by both Scottish Government and Councils depending on the mode and nature of travel involved. The current schemes, the funding party, and benefits are summarised in the appendix to the report.

The review of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCT) concluded

1. First the Review acknowledged the overriding commitment to retaining the scheme, in its present format, and considered that this was a significant undertaking by the Scottish Government, most particularly given the current economic uncertainties.
2. The Review concluded that, from a strict measurement point of view, there was insufficient evidence to determine the precise extent to which the NCT scheme had directly contributed to the promotion of social inclusion. At the same time, in terms of take up and usage, the NCT scheme had been a clear success.

3. The Review looked in some detail at a number of factors that could potentially impact on the long term sustainability of the scheme, including the issues of funding. While the scheme is 'free' to eligible passengers, there is a substantial cost to government and the taxpayer, which means that issues around the financial sustainability of the scheme should always be kept under review

4. The Review recognised the implications of the Scottish Government's aspiration towards modal shift from car to bus. There is some evidence to suggest that NCT has contributed to around 12 per cent 'full modal shift' and around 47 per cent 'partial modal shift'.

5. The Review recognised the many benefits that a further extension of concessionary fares to other disadvantaged groups could bring, including positive accessibility benefits and wider economic benefits. However, costs have increased significantly and - given the demographics and how that may translate into concessionary fares - could continue to do so in the future. This was taken into account when looking at any potential extension to eligibility to the scheme.

6. One particular issue considered by the Review is the evidence around social exclusion and older persons (in this context 60 plus). Recent legislative developments and changing socio-economic factors suggest - other things being equal - that a greater proportion of the 'older' generation will be working longer. While recognising that economic factors can change, as is apparent in recent months, this could result in such people being economically 'better off' than their counterparts a decade or so ago. The Review noted that it might be appropriate to examine the current eligibility criteria based on age. The Review considered that such an approach would not be inconsistent with the wider aspirations of the scheme and that it would also be reflective of changing social factors.

7. The Review considered current eligibility and examined in detail various calls for extending eligibility. In view of the cost of the scheme, it has not recommended substantial increases in eligibility, beyond the inclusion of seriously injured ex HM Forces veterans from 1 April 2011.

8. The Review has not considered any immediate change in eligibility but has concluded that the objectives of NCT should properly be kept under review and that the continued emphasis should be on achieving the objectives of the scheme and obtaining value for money. In addition, given the importance of having robust evidence in determining compensation to the bus industry, it will be necessary to take steps to improve the specific information requirements around NCT compensation.

While it is clear that the scheme in its current form is proving difficult to manage within existing funding constraints the Partnership may wish to consider two particular areas where changes in eligibility could for very limited cost have delivered substantial improvements of equity of access opportunity across Scotland and particularly for those living in remote mainland and island areas.

The level of accessibility for those entitled to participate in Concessionary Travel Schemes varies considerably across the HITRANS area, and when compared with that enjoyed in the rest of Scotland. Whereas free travel by the least expensive form of public transport (by bus) is available for entitled mainland residents to all other parts of the Scottish mainland, this level of access provision is not currently available to those entitled Scottish residents living on islands or remote peninsulas (by ferry) or to those wishing to visit these areas.

The level of access to health and social services, shops and other facilities available through the scheme in remote parts of Scotland is significantly less than that enjoyed in the areas of the country with frequent bus services. The great majority of the cost of the scheme is incurred in providing compensation for travel in urban and suburban areas. With the continuing and increasing pressures on Council budgets this situation in remote areas will inevitably be further challenged. When local bus services cannot be supported by Councils, the expectation falls on

the Community Transport Sector to meet the transport needs of the most vulnerable sections of the community, including those eligible for free bus travel in terms of the Scheme. The Scottish Government funds eligible travel on a bus service, but does not fund the cost of the Community Transport Operators providing a comparable journey where the bus services do not exist. Many communities are already involved in providing transport to fill the gaps in local public transport provision. For the most part these services are funded through grants and service level agreements along with the local fund raising initiatives by the local community. These grants are now supplied through local authorities and will increasingly be under pressure within individual Council's spending reviews in the years ahead. The Scottish Government is now encouraging the voluntary sector to move away from reliance on grants and to become more enterprising creating sustainable solutions. Including Community Transport Services within the scheme as with other operators on a nonprofit basis would have provided a clear opportunity for this sector to meet the Governments wishes in a way that supports the Scottish Government achieving its overall Purpose.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 15th September 2009

Appendix to item 10 - Current Concessionary Travel Provision

Mode	area	Benefit	Funding source
Bus	Whole area	<p>Free bus travel within Scotland by bus with the following eligibility –</p> <p>Older People - over 60 years of age and live in Scotland</p> <p>Disabled People Eligible disabled people who meet the criteria on the following categories – people who</p> <p>receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance</p> <p>receive the higher/middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance</p> <p>receive Attendance Allowance</p> <p>live in a care or residential home or hospital and require 24 hour supervision</p> <p>hold a Disabled Persons Parking Badge (Blue Badge)</p> <p>are profoundly or severely deaf</p> <p>have been told not to drive on medical grounds or would have a licence application refused on the grounds of physical fitness whether 17 years old or not</p> <p>suffer from a mental illness, learning disability or personality disorder</p> <p>are terminally ill</p> <p>suffer from a progressively degenerative disorder</p> <p>have suffered a loss of limbs</p> <p>are visually impaired</p> <p>Companion Entitlement</p>	<p>Scottish Government, managed by Transport Scotland</p>

		If a person's mobility is such that they require to be accompanied when travelling, their companion is entitled to travel free of charge with them for the same journey	
Rail	General	Within Scotland visually impaired travel free With a Senior Citizen and Disabled Rail Card (£24 annually) those eligible for concessionary bus travel obtain a 34% discount on fares.	Scottish Government
	Argyll and Bute	Travel within the West of Scotland Concessionary Travel area for those West of Scotland residents eligible as for the bus concessions at a rate of 40p for the first 10 miles then 50% discount beyond. In addition the flat fare zone card allows travel between Oban and Helensburgh Upper for a 80p single fare.	12 Councils in West of Scotland
	Highland	50% discount on standard class rail travel within the Highland area for those eligible for concessionary bus travel.	The Highland Council
Ferry	Argyll and Bute	Free passenger travel for island and peninsular residents on their local ferry service for those registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	12 Councils in West of Scotland
	Western Isles	2 return passenger trips per annum to the mainland for Western Isles residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	Scottish Government
	Orkney	2 return passenger trips per annum to the mainland for Orkney residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	Scottish Government
		12 free return trips to Orkney Mainland annually for local non Orkney Mainland residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	The Orkney Islands Council
	Highland	Free passenger travel for Highland concessionary card holders on all ferry services within the Council area. 50% discount on passenger travel for all Highland concessionary card holders on Oban Craignure	The Highland Council
Air	Orkney	12 free return trips to Kirkwall for residents of Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	The Orkney Islands Council
taxi	Highland	Subsidised Taxi travel on some specific routes for concessionary card holders	The Highland Council