

Report to Partnership Meeting 4 September 2015

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

National Transport Strategy, Regional Transport Strategy and Regional Active Travel Strategy Updates

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the status of the National Transport Strategy Refresh, the proposed HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy Refresh and also the Regional Active Travel Strategy which will form part of this refresh but is to be procured separately.

National Transport Strategy Refresh

The National Transport Strategy (NTS) sets the long term vision for Scotland's transport policies. It was published in 2006.

Since 2006 there have been significant updates to transport and planning policy as well as significant changes to the economic and political landscape.

More recent policy published includes the following significant but not exhaustive list of documents; Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR, 2008) for which the original HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy was the principle input into this process; Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2010 and 2013); Climate Change Delivery Plan 2009; Low Carbon Scotland 2010-2022 (2010); Infrastructure Investment Plan (2011) and the 10 year Scottish Ferries Plan (2012). In addition there have been several iterations of the National Planning Framework (currently NPF3, 2014) and other planning guidelines such as Designing Streets (2010).

The Minister for Transport and the Islands has recently announced that the Scottish Government intends to 'refresh' the NTS by the end of December 2015. The exact scope of this work has yet to be formally set out but the indication is that the Refresh will not revisit major investment decisions or the Strategic Outcomes of the original document. Rather the aim of the refresh is to take cognisance to the changes in the strategic context since 2006, clarify governance rather than any root and branch review, update policy to reflect changes since 2006 and develop the coverage of areas such as Intelligent Transport Systems where there has been significant technology advances. Other key areas highlighted recently by the Minister include ensuring a greater focus on Community Planning and the emerging Community Empowerment Bill, consideration of how funding for bus services at a national level could be better utilised, addressing road maintenance issues and a key focus on integration including the smart ticketing, provision of health and social care transport, and specifically better integration relating to modes, operators and across boundaries.

The Minister has decided to reconvene the National Transport Strategy Stakeholder Group and an invitation has been extended to the Regional Transport Partnerships to send 2 representatives to this group. The first meeting of the group will take place on 7 September.

Regional Transport Strategy Refresh

The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy requires to be updated in a similar fashion to the NTS. While a number of central tenets to the RTS remain valid not least it's focus on supporting the economic growth and vitality of the region it is important that it properly reflects the national funding programmes and the funding pressures facing our local and regional partners. The RTS needs to reflect contemporary targets in relation to new national policy including the new carbon emission reduction targets. The RTS needs to support and align with these local and national policies.

Understanding the scale of work required in updating the RTS particularly whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment would be required delayed the process in 2014/15 as 2 other RTPs investigated whether this would be necessary for the refresh process they commenced in 2013/14. In the event this pause proved useful and we can now commence the process in the knowledge that it aligns well with the NTS refresh and that our RTS refresh would be welcomed by the Minister and Transport Scotland.

The scope of the RTS refresh is expected to be similar to that of the NTS refresh and Transport Scotland have offered to review our scope before we commence activity. We would however expect our activity to include the following areas:

- Main Issues Report
- Consultation
- Policy Update – including all travel modes
- Strategic Context
- Roles and Responsibilities – including review of Delivery Plan
- Take cognisance of NTS and Council LTS / other Planning Policy
- Updated baseline and review of transport trends since 2008 RTS
- Review of the RTS monitoring and evaluation

As part of the process to help develop a baseline for carbon emissions for transport in the area, Gemma Cassells, Policy Officer in The Highland Council's Carbon Clever team has been asked to provide a presentation on the transport and travel findings emerging from their Citizens Panel. The Citizens' Panel consists of 2,700 Highland residents which have been carefully selected to be representative of the adult population of the region. A survey of the Citizens' Panel on Carbon CLEVER was undertaken in recent months to help gather views on the initiative.

Regional Active Travel Strategy

Action No 2 of the updated Cycling Action Plan for Scotland requests that 'each local area develop the strategic approach to supporting functional cycling (and active travel more broadly), mapping the appropriate infrastructure improvements required along with supporting promotional work to achieve tangible changes in travel choices' with an implication that future funding may only be provided where such strategic plans are in place.

HITRANS in partnership with its member Local Authorities led the way in developing Active Travel Masterplans for its main settlements with 17 Masterplans commissioned following an initial pilot for Dingwall in 2008. HITRANS Active Travel Officer is currently in the process of finalising updates to these documents to accommodate changes in infrastructure, development plans and updated 2011 census figures.

The list of towns within HITRANS area with Active Travel Masterplans is as follows;

- Alness/Invergordon
- Aviemore
- Campbeltown
- Dingwall
- Dunoon
- Elgin
- Forres, Kinloss and Findhorn
- Fort William
- Inverness
- Kirkwall
- Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig
- Nairn
- Oban (draft)
- Rothesay
- Stornoway
- Thurso
- Wick

The intention is that the Regional Active Travel Strategy will seek to identify both where investment to address the actions in these Masterplans should be prioritised and also set out those parts of the strategic network where walking and cycling facilities need improved and align this with the aspiration for developing a National Cycling and Walking Network in National Planning Framework 3.

An invitation to tender is due to go out to five transport consultants in August/September 2015. It is expected that the work will take up to three months to complete with a draft to be taken to a future Partnership meeting.

Recommendation

1. Members are invited to note the report and provide any comments on the proposed scope of both the Regional Transport Strategy refresh and Regional Active Travel Strategy.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	
Policy	√	
Financial	-	Funding is identified in the 2015/16 Business Plan.
Equality	√	

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