HI ▷ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 11 September 2020

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

SHARED SERVICES UPDATE - PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION PROVISON

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the shared service approach for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area.

Background

Since 2014, HITRANS has developed a shared services approach in respect of public transport information in partnership with Local Authority colleagues in each partner Council. The Public Transport Information Officer came into post in 2015 with the responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area and in so doing improve the quantity and quality of public transport information available to the travelling public. The postholder also manages the public transport real-time database and asset contract which includes over 100 electronic information displays across the HITRANS area at key transport interchanges and busy bus stops.

Four out of five local authorities within the HITRANS area are using the public transport database with the last local authority having recently agreed for HITRAN to take full responsibility for data migration to overcome staff pressures at the local level. Downstream data is provided to both Traveline Scotland and Real time suppliers from the database. The database also produces automated static at stop information throughout the HITRANS area.

Below are the number of bus stops where at stop publicity is now produced in each local authority:

- Highland Council 850 stops
- Moray Council 800 stops
- Orkney isles Council 50 stops
- Argyll & Bute Council 340 stops
- Western isles Council – data migration underway with 100 stops to be covered in 2020.

Work to improve the source information received from operators is being done in collaboration with the operators themselves and each local authority. This improvement is on an ongoing basis to ensure the output information received by the public is continually improving.

In March 2020 the database supplier (Trapeze) informed HITRANS they would only seek to take up the final year extension allowed under the contract if they were able to significantly increase the annual maintenance cost from the rate agreed in the contract.
This left HITRANS with no option but to retender the contract a year earlier than we had expected.

The Database contract was put out to public tender on Public Contracts Scotland website in April but no compliant bid was received. HITRANS officers then approached several suppliers directly to provide a priced proposal on the basis of a reduced contract length but still within the annual budget included in the Public Contracts Scotland tender. A new supplier MENTZ (who provide the database for Transport for London) were awarded the contract in July 2020. The MENTZ system is being delivered to HITRANS by one of Mentz's existing clients' National Public Transport Information (NPTI) on a sub net basis of their system which has enabled HITRANS to continue to provide a database within the current budget.

Development work on at stop templates has just been completed and testing will commence once the data migration and testing of the system is complete. A project implementation plan including local authority training will be discussed and circulated to all Local Authorities once the data migration and accuracy phase is complete and the HITRANS system training has been completed.

Smarter Choices Smarter Places

HITRANS officers have also applied for Smarter Choices Smart Places (SCSP) funding through the programme Open Fund which would not only secure the continuation of the database provision but will also enable the recommissioning of currently redundant signs in the Moray Council area.

Utilising the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar SCSP funding allocation, which HITRANS manage on behalf of the Comhairle, HITRANS are in the process of recruiting a Western Isles based temporary member of staff to assist with the migration of public transport data and prepare / distribute roadside information through the new system. There is also provision within the SCSP budget for enabling the real-time module on all the ticket machines of approximately 50 public service buses in the Western Isles. This will provide the opportunity for passengers to be able to access real-time information on local bus services via a smartphone app for the first time. HITRANS will look to procure the app service either though the ETM supplier or through a separate procurement exercise.

Real-Time Information Contract

Real time information throughout the HITRANS area is being further enhanced with the implementation of the new RTPI contract and infrastructure upgrades and configurations commence in September with new battery powered displays being installed at key stops in Skye and Lochalsh and Badenoch and Strathpey.

Listed below are the contributions from each local authority for the provision of the shared service approach in respect of public transport information:

Local Authority	Annual Contribution
Argyll & Bute Council	£7,500
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£5,000
The Highland Council	£10,000
Moray Council	£7,500
Orkney Islands Council	£5,000

Budget is also allocated by HITRANS from our core grant through the Research and Strategy Delivery Programem and this with the Council contributions has allowed additional

funding to be secured though SCSP and EU funding. This underlines the added value that can be delivered through good collaborative efforts fom HITRANS and our partner Councils.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive
Comment – This work supports RTS objectives and the monitoring of their Implementation.

Policy

Impact – Positive
Comment – This work supports the development of our Passenger Transport Policies (H33) in particular H33B to 'Develop high quality passenger transport user information and mapping'

Financial
Impact – Positive
Budget line and value – Cost savings as a direct result of this shared service approach and
retaining existing budget.

Equality
Impact – Positive
Comment – HITRANS support for improving public transport helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers

RECOMMENDATIONS

 Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: **Julie Cromarty**
Designation: **Public Transport Information Officer**
Date: **1st September 2020**