

Report to Partnership Meeting 25 November 2016

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Regional Transport Strategy Update.

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on Regional Transport Strategy Refresh.

Regional Transport Strategy Refresh

The Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) prepared by HITRANS in partnership with the five partner Councils and key stakeholders was approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008. It was informed and guided by widespread public and stakeholder consultation. The RTS, associated horizontal themes and our RTS Delivery Plan set out the key policies and proposals required to deliver our Vision to: “enhance the region’s viability”.

Since 2008 there have been various changes to the policy, economic and community contexts within which the Partnership operates and which the RTS refresh needs to reflect. These include a stronger emphasis on the role of Community Planning; the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; the integration of health and social care and introduction of locality planning.

A report was taken to the last HITRANS Partnership meeting in September 2016 that provided a summary of the responses received following the consultation of the Main Issues Report **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

that was prepared to help inform the Strategy update. At this meeting a Members / Advisors workshop was also held to discuss the long list of projects, policies and interventions which were emerging from the Main Issues Report consultation

https://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Corporate_Documents/Strategy

HITRANS officers with the support of transport consultant Elyan Skyn have been developing a draft of the full Strategy document which will go out to statutory consultation.

Strategy Consultation Timetable

In August 2016, the Scottish Government confirmed that they would be undertaking a full review of both the National Transport Strategy and the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) over the course of the next two years. The refresh of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy is therefore timely in that there is an opportunity for this work to feed into and help shape the emerging National Transport Strategy.

It is proposed that a final version of the draft Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan be brought to HITRANS Partnership meeting in February 2017 after which the intention is to issue the draft for statutory consultation.

Only HITRANS constituent councils and health boards within the area are statutory consultees but the draft strategy will be made available for comment to any interested party and the intention is to promote it as widely as possible with key stakeholders and in particular community planning partners.

As a result of the Local Government elections in May next year it is likely that a number of our partner local authorities may be unable to take a formal response to an appropriate committee before purdah commences in advance of the election. It is therefore proposed that the period for consultation be extended until the first Committee cycle following the Local Government elections. This will provide an opportunity for new members at both a Local Authority and HITRANS board level to input into the Strategy before it is finalised and will enable officers to reflect on any potential impacts from emerging planning reform and the start of the National Transport Strategy Refresh process.

The finalised Regional Transport Strategy along with any supporting documents including consultation responses must then be submitted to Scottish Ministers for their approval. Ministers aim to approve or return a submitted RTS within three months.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report and approve the proposed timetable for updating the Regional Transport Strategy

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The work to refresh the Regional Transport Strategy seeks to update the Delivery Plan

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – This work helps set new policies and objectives for HITRANS that are relevant to the framework within which the Partnership now sits.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – An initial allocation of £20,000 for updating the Regional Transport Strategy was identified in the HITRANS Business Plan.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – refreshed Strategy will capture changes in policy relevant to equality, and for example reflects the publication of the new Accessible Travel Framework for Scotland.

Report by: Neil MacRae
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Date: 21st November 2016