



Report to Partnership Meeting 3 February 2017

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Regional Transport Strategy Update.

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on Regional Transport Strategy Refresh and to seek approval for the overarching vision and objectives of the Strategy and also a timetable for the statutory consultation on the final draft document.

Regional Transport Strategy Refresh

A copy of an advanced draft of the RTS is included separately as an appendix to this report. There are still a number of minor changes to be made to the formatting of the document but the purpose of this report is to seek approval of the updated Strategy's overarching vision and the objectives which underpin the Strategy and will help determine the Partnership's priorities for development during the life of the RTS. It is also a final opportunity for members to provide input on the content of the Strategy and proposed Delivery Plan in advance of issuing the draft document for statutory consultation.

Strategy Consultation Timetable

Since the Partnership meeting in November 2016, HIRANS officers have updated the draft Strategy and Delivery Plan through further engagement with HITRANS Advisors and other key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland. Subject to the approval of the recommendations of this report, HITRANS officers plan to meet with each of the partner Local Authorities to help ensure that the priorities of each area are captured appropriately within the document in advance of issuing the final draft Strategy and Delivery plan for consultation in March 2017.

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 highlighted in a report to the last Partnership meeting, the Local Government elections in May mean that it is unlikely that any of our partner local authorities will be able to take a formal response to the consultation before an appropriate committee in advance of the elections. 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.

Regional Transport Strategy Vision and Objectives

The RTS **vision** is:

To deliver connectivity across the Highlands and Islands which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities

The RTS objectives have been refreshed following consultation with stakeholders and input and insight from the HITRANS Board. They have been validated to ensure compatibility with Community Planning Partnership Single Outcome Agreement outcomes and priorities from the five HITRANS local authority areas, as well as the National Transport Strategy.

The high-level objectives for the RTS are to:

- 1. Support sustainable economic growth across the region*
- 2. Reduce barriers to participation in employment, learning, social, leisure, health & cultural activities*

These are the focus of our work with our many partners.

HITRANS' activities can contribute to these high-level objectives by supporting, making the case for, and delivering the following transport objectives:

- 1. Reducing journey times and improving journey reliability & resilience.*
- 2. Improving/maintaining the safety of transport and travel.*
- 3. Tackling capacity constraints across the network.*
- 4. Improving the quality, accessibility, affordability and integration of travel.*

Through delivering these transport objective we will also expect to achieve these nationally significant strategic outcomes:

- 1. Protecting the environment and mitigating adverse impacts of transport and travel.*
- 2. Improving health and wellbeing.*

Recommendation

Members are invited to approve;

1. The Regional Transport Strategy Vision and the Objectives as set out in this report and in the final draft version of the document which is included as appendix to this report.
2. Approve the delegation of responsibility to the Partnership Director and HITRANS Chair to approve any final changes to the document in advance of issuing a draft for public consultation in March 2017.

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 –

Report by: Neil MacRae
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 25th January 2017