

Item:  
**13**



## **Report to Partnership Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Highlands and Islands Health and Transport Action Plan**

##### **Purpose of Report**

To update on progress made to establish a Health and Transport Action Plan for the HITRANS area.

##### **Background**

The opportunities and challenges relating to public health and access to healthcare in the region emerged as key themes when developing HITRANS updated Regional Transport Strategy. The Scottish Government are also developing a transport to health delivery plan to take forward a range of commitments to improve joined up working on transport to health.

HITRANS initially invited the Chairs of the four NHS boards that operate in the HITRANS area (NHS Grampian, NHS Western Isles, NHS Orkney and NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute) to discuss the potential for a establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan for our area and how we can facilitate closer working across public bodies in relation to health and transport.

At the Partnership meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Members approved funding to commission a scoping review for a Highlands and Islands Health and Transport Action Plan that would inform: the key stakeholders required; a preferred governance structure; resourcing for the implementation of the Plan; and its priority areas of work.

Jacobs were subsequently appointed to undertake this commission which was undertaken by staff with experience of developing and implementing Health and Transport Action Plan in North East Scotland and Tayside areas.

In parallel, HITRANS officers are also continuing to engage with the Scottish Government officials who meet regularly with the RTP Lead Officers group to continue engagement on this work and the Governments wider transport to health delivery plan.

##### **Highlands and Islands Health and Transport Action Plan Scoping Review**

A copy of the draft Highlands and Islands Health and Transport Action Plan Scoping Review will be shared with Members as Appendix A to this report when it is finalised early next week.

In developing the scoping report, Jacobs has approached officers from the following organisations for input:

#### Regional Transport Partnerships

- HITRANS
- Nestrans
- ZetTrans

#### Local Authorities

- Moray Council
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- The Highland Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Argyll & Bute Council

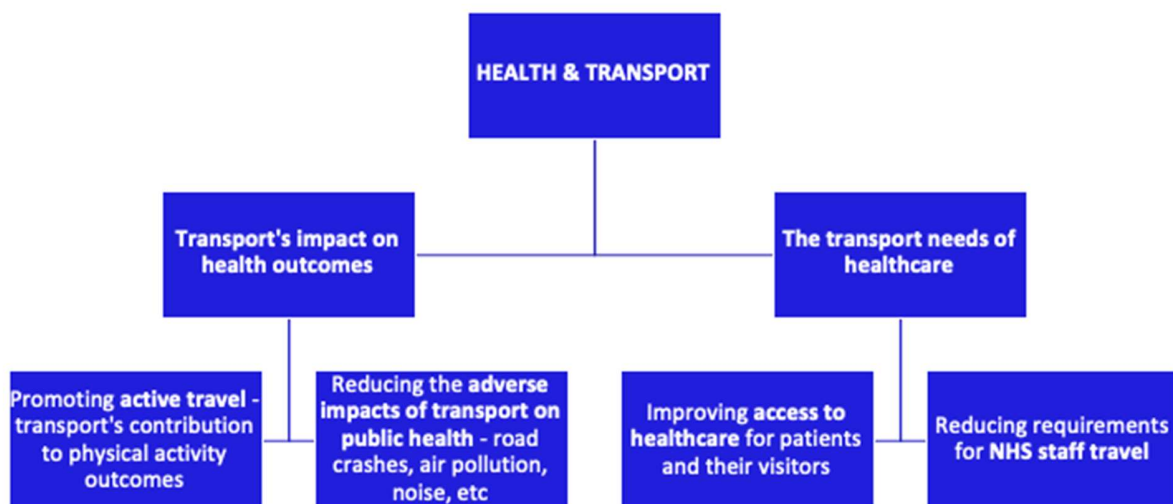
#### Health Boards

- NHS Highland
- NHS Orkney
- NHS Western Isles
- NHS Grampian
- NHS Shetland

#### Other

- Scottish Ambulance Service
- Badenoch & Strathspey Car Scheme

The scoping review has considered the complex interactions between transport and health outcomes under four main topics, that fall under two themes



The draft recommendations of the scoping review are outlined below:

- Recommendation 1: There is, subject to certain prerequisites outlined below, potential for an HTAP to add value to shared objectives and improved outcomes in the Highlands & Islands, so it is recommended that HITRANS leads the exploration of the opportunity in more detail in conjunction with potential partners;

- Recommendation 2: As both ZetTrans and NHS Shetland are interested and there are many common issues, there is merit in expanding the scope of a Highlands & Islands HTAP to cover Shetland;
- Recommendation 3: An HTAP should take improving access to healthcare as its dominant theme, but this should take a broad-ranging view of the topic, covering access to primary, secondary and tertiary care, a full range of transport modes, and all communities across the region before determining priorities for action. It should then initially focus efforts on a realising an achievable number of specific interventions, rather than seeking to address all identified problems from the outset;
- Recommendation 4: It is also worth considering whether an HTAP could add value to efforts to promote active travel, and to reduce the requirements for NHS staff travel;
- Recommendation 5: It is unlikely that an HTAP would add value to efforts to reduce the adverse impacts of transport on public health, so this should not be expected to be a core topic;
- Recommendation 6: Work to collate a stronger evidence base of the outcome problems relating to access to healthcare in the region and their root causes should be a key priority action of any HTAP;
- Recommendation 7: As it may be difficult to secure commitment to the HTAP from all potential regional partners (all Local Authorities, NHS Boards and others) in the short term, an HTAP could be developed initially just for those parts of the region where there is partner interest. However, it should be progressed only in geographic areas in which there is commitment from both the NHS and Local Authority (e.g. The Highland Council and NHS Highland, CnES and NHSWI).

**It is recommended that the following are prerequisites for an HTAP, and that efforts to develop a plan are not pursued if they cannot be met:**

- Prerequisite 1: Progress only with partners where there is committed senior level buy-in, an appointed internal champion that can coordinate activities, and a commitment from partners to report progress and outcomes to their respective boards;
- Prerequisite 2: Progress only if there is to be some staff resource dedicated to the HTAP in order to, as a minimum, coordinate partners' actions. It is suggested that each partner organisation should make a commitment of financial investment or of staff time to facilitate this;
- Prerequisite 3: If an HTAP is to be developed, it should have a recognised leadership team drawn from all partner organisations, which should have clearly defined responsibilities for plan development, implementation and progress monitoring.

**Additionally, it is suggested that HITRANS:**

- Request Scottish Government assistance with an HTAP, especially with respect to encouraging potential partners to participate and with match funding for financial input;
- Work with Nestrans to share lessons and build a wider body of evidence of the benefits of joint planning of transport and health delivery, and also determine whether other RTPs are interested in supporting joint working.

## Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Note this report
2. Consider the recommendations set out in Section 4 of the draft Health and Transport Scoping Review contained in Appendix A to this report
3. Approve the draft Health and Transport Action Plan Scoping Review

## RISK REGISTER

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan was one of the key actions in the draft Delivery Plan for the updated Regional Transport Strategy.

### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports a number of National Transport Strategy priorities in particular *Improving our Health and Wellbeing* and policies within our updated Regional Transport Strategy including “facilitating access to public and personal services such as health, education, retail and banking. Access to healthcare facilities is particularly important in this respect given the pressure on, and challenges in, the delivery of patient transport” and Policy ST1i:

- **Policy ST1i:** The RTS supports the local delivery of public services, including health and education, and other day-to-day retail and personal services (e.g., banking) which minimise the need to travel.

### Financial

Impact –

Comment – up to £10,000 has been identified in the HITRANS Business Plan for 2024/25 to support the initial scoping work required to help establish a Health and Transport Action Plan for the HITRANS area.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – By Establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan, we will help facilitate closer and more cohesive working across public bodies in relation to transport for medical purposes. Access to healthcare is most challenging in the remote, rural and island areas of the HITRANS region.

This is exacerbated by the fact that the aging demographics within many of these areas have the highest demand for health and social care.

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**Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024