

## **Report to Partnership Board Meeting 2 February 2024**

### **EUROPEAN PROJECTS**

#### **FASTER Project Update**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the development of the FASTER project funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project launched in October 2020.

#### **OVERVIEW**

The FASTER Project (Facilitating A Sustainable Transition to EVs in the Regions) is a joint proposal between seven Partners across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems.

The key objective of FASTER is to install 73 interoperable rapid charge points (50KW capacity) in the INTERREG VA region by June 2023, ensuring that the availability of charging stations is not a major obstacle to EV market penetration. It will also provide an additional supportive, enabling environment for suppliers and consumers, providing increased confidence and reassurance in regional commitment to the emerging EV market.

HITRANS will lead the technical work package on procurement, and will install 24 rapid charge points (or more if budget allows) across the three local authority areas covered within the programme area: Argyll & Bute (excluding Helensburgh), Western Isles, and Skye, Lochalsh & Lochaber areas of The Highland Council.

#### **UPDATE**

The FASTER Project official ended on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, yet the project has been allowed a 6 month period to fully complete, although all claims were to be finalised by 31<sup>st</sup> December. Progress is summarised below.

In the Western Isles, 8 chargers have been mechanically fitted across the 4 sites and the new electrical connections created. There is a technical earthing issue at Lochboisdale to be resolved before the 2 chargers their can completed and commissioned. The other 3 sites (6 chargers) are scheduled to be commissioned w/c 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2024.

In Argyll and Bute, all 5 sites have had their chargers (8 in total) installed and commissioned and are available for use by the public. There is an issue with one of the chargers at Dunoon, which means it is temporarily unavailable. This is being addressed post-haste.

In the Highlands, 7 chargers have been mechanically fitted across the 3 sites, of which Portree has had the 2 chargers installed there fully commissioned and are operational to the public.

The remaining 2 sites at Strontian and Ballachulish are currently pending the installation of electricity meters by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party IMServ. This is a current source of concern as it is very difficult to get installation dates from them. This has been escalated within the Highland Council.

## **PROJECT BUDGET**

HITRANS has a significant budget in the FASTER project totalling €1,675,703, allowing for the installation of at least 24 rapid charge points.

## **RISK REGISTER**

### RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – The FASTER project supports several RTS objectives, particularly in the field of low carbon transport and support for EV uptake.

### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – FASTER is supporting broader policy work by conducting research on the procurement and installation of a rapid charging network and how this complements existing infrastructure.

### Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – The project attracts a reimbursement rate of 85%.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – FASTER aims to increase the number of publicly accessible charge points to encourage more EV drivers in the region.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are asked to note the report.

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**Designation:** Project Manager - FASTER  
**Date:** 24th January 2024