

Report to Partnership Meeting 26 September 2014

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Scottish Stations Fund Application

Purpose of Report

To advise Members on the detail of HITRANS first submission to the Scottish Stations Fund which has been built upon the budgets approved under the Active Travel and REPUTE project in the Business Plan.

Background

In April 2012, Keith Brown MSP, Minister for Transport & Veterans announced the creation of a Scottish Stations Fund and this fund became operational in April 2014. The aim of the fund is to lever in third party investment to provide new stations and associated facilities. The responsibility to demonstrate the need for a new or improved station will continue to lie with the relevant promoter (Local Authority, Regional Transport Partnerships or developers).

In terms of new station opportunities HITRANS is continuing our development work with a particular focus in the short term being the opportunity to open a new station to serve Inverness Airport, Tornagrain and existing communities and park and ride opportunities from Dalcross in to Inverness or eastbound to Nairn and beyond to Aberdeen.

This report considers the first opportunity identified by the Partnership in terms of enhancing Station facilities. The focus of the project is on improvements to customer information systems and active travel facilities at Stations.

As project promoter HITRANS has followed the guidance set out for the Scottish Stations Fund by discussing the proposal with Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail to understand its impact on:

- the operation of rail passenger services
- customer service
- the fit with branding
- the requirements of SQUIRE

CHRONOS Solar Powered Customer Information Screens:

HITRANS are keen to introduce Solar Powered Customer Information Systems of a similar style to those deployed at 7 locations on the Kyle / Far North Line at the following Stations:

- Dalmally
- Taynuilt
- Loch Awe
- Connel Ferry

The introduction of passenger information displays will improve the quality of information available to passengers waiting for a train at each location. Mobile communication networks in the area do not benefit from 3G coverage so alternative information sources such as mobile apps or smart phone web browsers are less effective in these locations.

The information displays will be solar powered harnessing the energy of the sun rather than the electricity network. This will contribute to the Scottish Government's ambitious environmental targets set out in the Climate Change Delivery Plan particularly the aim for transport to be carbon neutral by 2050 (42% reduction by 2020 on 2006 levels). The absence of an electrical supply means the signs offer a significant whole life saving when compared with traditional electric LED sign units.

The technology has been proven through an earlier partnership project between HITRANS and ScotRail that saw this sign type deployed at stations on the lines north of Inverness.

Capital Cost Estimate: £45,000

Active Travel Improvements at Stations

HITRANS are keen to promote multi modal journeys between settlements in the Highlands as a method of active travel.

Active travel links into the Scottish Governments strategy for physical activity let's make Scotland more active' and the strategic objectives of a healthier, happier, greener Scotland. It is estimated that two thirds of the Scottish population is now at risk from physical inactivity, which has been classed as the 'silent killer of our time.'

Active travel is a very practical method of engaging with people to increase physical activity as part of an everyday routine. The minimum requirement for activity is 2.5hrs moderate exercise per week per adult, and 5hrs for children and young people. Respectively, this is commonly calculated as 30 minutes of activity on 5 days per week, or 1hr of activity 5 days a week. This can easily be split into 2x 15 minutes or 3x20 minutes of exercise, which could be promoted as a reasonable time to walk or cycle to a train station between work, school or home.

Physical activity through travel also helps reduce barriers to exercise. 'Let's make Scotland more active' highlights that the cost, time and transport to activity prevent people from changing behaviours. Whereas active travel to the station is free, doesn't use extra time within a day, and can easily become part of a routine. HITRANS are keen to encourage healthier communities through active travel.

Additionally, evidence shows that people who engage with physical activity are more likely to:

- Live longer
- Have fewer symptoms of depression
- Function better and work and home
- Have a greater sense of wellbeing

Active travel ties into the Centre for Healthy Working Lives awards for workplaces, which could tie into ScotRail's own commitment to employees at local stations.

Encouraging rail passengers to walk and cycle to and from railway stations and other transport interchanges is an important element of HITRANS sustainable travel policy. This follows the hierarchy of encouraging walking, cycling, public transport and car use. This inevitably will help reach CAPS (Cycling Action Plan for Scotland) targets by 2020, will

encourage healthier lifestyles and will help to reduce carbon emissions within the region, linking into localised projects such as Carbon CLEVER in Highland.

The improvements at stations would be:

- Increased cycle parking
- Providing cycle shelters
- Improving signage to and from railway station to encourage active travel
- Links to active travel maps to encourage walking and cycling to stations (HML)

Highland Main Line (HML), active travel improvements:

Several of the Invernet stations link into HITRANS' active travel action plans. These plans have been developed for the main settlements within the region highlighting infrastructure improvements, and active travel corridors within each community to encourage active travel.

The action plans are currently being updated to reflect census data, the CAPS targets for cycling (10% of all journeys to be cycling), and the introduction of the National Walking Strategy. An additional piece of work is currently developing active travel maps for each of these larger settlements, highlighting opportunities for walking and cycling throughout the towns, while highlighting key transport interchanges within each of these communities.

This provides a great opportunity to encourage people to travel actively between their homes, work and education, while utilising the railway.

The following Invernet stations link into the action plans, and would benefit from improved cycling facilities including cycle shelters:

- Tain
- Invergordon
- Alness
- Dingwall
- Inverness
- Aviemore
- Kingussie

Cost estimate: £60K

West Highland Line Active Travel Improvements:

Argyll and Bute Council were recently successful in obtaining Sustrans Community Links funds for several of the railway stations on the line between Crianlarich to Oban, to coincide with the increased provision of trains, and to link into the school children utilising the route to reach Oban High.

The increase in train frequency and the improvements to several of the stations will inevitably see a rise in people using the stations/. With car parking pressures it is important to ensure that active travel is a viable method of transport for travel to and from the Station. HITRANS would like to focus on the remaining infrastructure at train stations, which was not incorporated into the Community Links package:

Cycle shelters at:

- Oban

- Taynuilt
- Loch Awe
- Dalmally

The detailed cycle provision at each of the above locations has been audited by Argyll and Bute Council after HITRANS requested this information following discussions with Network Rail after submission of our expression of interest to the Scottish Stations Fund. Details of provision and photographs are provided below.

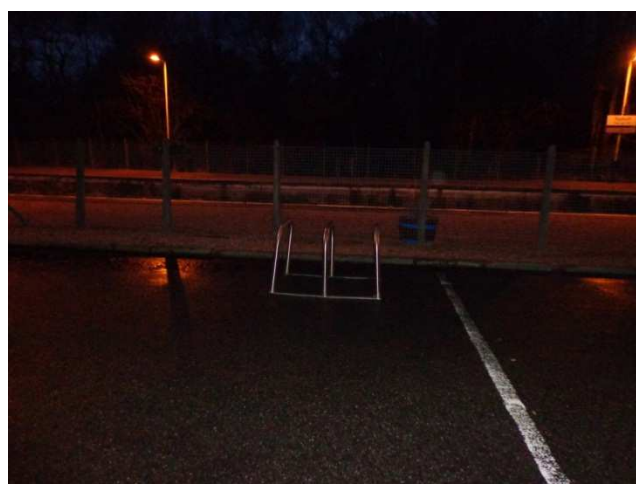
Oban

Oban would benefit from improved cycle facilities as it is part of an integrated transport hub in the town. The cycle parking is currently at the front of the train station, but it is not sheltered and is open to the elements. Cycle parking is also poor at the adjacent ferry terminal, which leads to bikes being tied up around the town by both local people, and cycle tourists visiting the area.

Taynuilt

Provided below is an image of Taynuilt station which provides an overview of the current cycle parking. It is currently not in an ideal location within the station – at the furthest point away from the platform, which is likely to discourage usage. HITRANS, along with partners have recently improve waiting facilities at the station, and it is felt that also improving the cycle facilities will encourage active travel as a viable mode of transport between the community and the train line.

The current provision (see photo below) is a rack placed out in the open with no protection from the elements and represents an unattractive option in terms of encouraging people to cycle and ride from the Station.



Loch Awe

Argyll and Bute council are currently looking at options for improving the access and lighting to this station. The station has very poor cycle facilities as evidenced in the photograph below. Improvements would encourage both locals and tourists to think about multi modal journeys. The current provision is a rack placed out in the open with no protection from the elements and represents an unattractive option in terms of encouraging people to cycle and ride from the Station.



Dalmally

Again, an image of this station is provided below. Dalmally has recently been successful in gaining Community Links funding to improve active travel links to and from the station. It is felt that having a prominent cycle storage area at the station will encourage a modal shift towards active travel as a viable transport option.

The current provision is a rack placed out in the open with no protection from the elements and represents an unattractive option in terms of encouraging people to cycle and ride from the Station.





Summary of Proposed Project Costs

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
CHRONOS CIS Displays	Install CHRONOS Solar CIS displays at Dalmally, Taynuilt, Loch Awe and Connel Ferry Stations	£45,000
Improved Cycle Facilities	Provide enhanced cycle facilities including shelters at the following Stations – Tain, Invergordon, Alness, Dingwall, Inverness, Aviemore and Kingussie	£60,000
Cycle Shelters / Facilities – Oban Line	Install Cycle shelters at Oban, Taynuilt, Loch Awe and Dalmally stations.	£25,000
		£130,000

The total project cost projection is £130,000. Against this budget projection HITRANS have identified match funding of £50,000. The bid to the Scottish Stations Fund is to make up the remainder of the cost which would total **£80,000**.

Recommendations

Members are asked to :-

- (i) Note the report.

Risk	impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	The project supports HITRANS RTS themes on Active Travel and Passenger Information.
Policy	√	The item supports HITRANS planned Passenger Information Strategy and national policy including the CAP.
Financial	√	The project will have a positive financial impact as it seeks to draw down additional funding with HITRANS own contribution coming from an ERDF project, Sustrans funding and a contribution identified in the Business Plan.
Equality	-	The Customer Information Signs will have a positive Equalities Impact as they will provide information to all including using audio facilities for the provision of information to partially sighted passengers.

Report by:
Designation:
Date:

Fiona McNally
Active Travel Officer
5th September 2014