

# **HITRANS REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

## **Outline Equality Impact Assessment**

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**Prepared for:**

HITRANS

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### **Outline Equality Impact Assessment of the HITRANS Local Transport Strategy**

- 1.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that Regional Transport Partnerships include provision about how transport will be provided, developed, improved and operated so as to, amongst other things, encourage equal opportunities and, in particular, the observance of the equal opportunities requirements i.e. the existing law.
- 1.2 HITRANS, the Highlands and Islands Regional Transport Partnership, is a statutory body and has a duty to prepare a statutory Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands region. HITRANS covers the local authority areas of Highland, Argyll and Bute, Moray, Orkney and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The objectives of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (hereafter referred to as “the Strategy”) were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

#### ***The objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy***

- 1.3 The objectives of the HITRANS Strategy were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.
- 1.4 The transport objectives set out the direction for investment in transport in the HITRANS area over the next fifteen years. The objectives are strongly influenced by transport objectives at national and local level and the objectives of various cross-sector plans such as those pertaining to land use planning, health improvement and accessibility, economic development and environmental sustainability.
- 1.5 The key themes addressed by these objectives are:
- Environment;
  - Safety;
  - Economic growth;
  - Social inclusion; and
  - Integration.

- 1.6 The objectives of the Strategy can be found in Chapter 4 of the main Strategy document.

#### ***Who is intended to benefit from the Strategy?***

- 1.7 The Strategy sets HITRANS’s priorities and actions for investment in transport in the Highlands and Islands over the next fifteen years and it is intended that the policies and interventions outlined in the Strategy will benefit everyone who lives, works and travels within the HITRANS area. Through implementation of the Strategy there is the potential to improve transport for the young, elderly and those with disabilities, particularly through improved access to the transport network and improved safety whilst travelling on the transport network.
- 1.8 Due to the nature of the Strategy, that is, a strategic transport policy document, it has

been judged as unlikely to have any specific impacts on nature of transport policy and initiatives, it was not believed that the strategy will have any specific negative impacts on the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgender community, or those with specific Religion and Belief interests.

**Information collation and consultation**

- 1.9 The first stage in developing the Strategy involved detailed research into the socio-demographic profile of the area. Accessibility, in terms of geographic accessibility (the availability of public transport, access to hospitals/GPs) was examined, and information on levels of car ownership was gathered, together with information on Deprivation across the region. Furthermore, in the Review of the previous voluntary Strategy, representatives of each NHS board across the region were surveyed to gather their views on the opportunities and challenges a new Strategy should address. This Review work fed directly into the new statutory Strategy.
- 1.10 Consultation to ascertain the views of the public and a wide range of stakeholders played a large role in informing the direction and priorities for the strategy. Consultation was carried out in two stages during the development of the Strategy and is reported upon in the Consultation Report which accompanies the HITRANS Strategy. The first stage involved targeted stakeholder consultation through workshops and meetings. The second stage involved wider consultation with the general public, and the document was actively sent to a range of stakeholders (shown below), as well as being publicly available through various means. Large print versions of the material was available upon request, although no such requests were made.
- 1.11 To ensure that the consultation process was fair and equitable, the draft Strategy was sent to the following bodies:
- Age Concern
  - Disability Rights Commission
  - Disability Rights Commission – Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS)
  - Disability Rights Commission - Enable
  - Equality Network - Sexual Orientation
  - Royal National Institute for the Blind Scotland
  - Royal National Institute for Deaf People Scotland
  - Scottish Association of Mental Health - SAMH
  - Scottish Association of Mental Health - Sense Scotland
  - Scottish Women’s Rural Institute (SWRI)
  - Argyll Communities
  - Highlands & Islands Equality Forum
  - Moray Action for Communities
  - Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay
  - Voluntary Action Lewis
  - Voluntary Action Orkney

- 1.12 Responses to the Strategy were received from the Orkney Disability Forum, and MACS.

**Actions**

- 1.13 All comments received on the Draft Strategy during the consultation period were considered, fed back into the development of the Strategy and the final Strategy was amended accordingly where appropriate.
- 1.14 No adverse impacts of the Strategy were identified, however some amendments were made in order to maximise the benefits of the Strategy for as many people as possible.
- 1.15 Specifically, responses received from Orkney Disability Forum related to reducing rail journey times on the Far North Line, and querying a statement in the draft Strategy to provide funding to taxi firms to upgrade to accessible vehicles. In the final Strategy, an additional proposal to invest in enhancing journey times on the Far North Line has been included, as this was a major theme throughout the consultation. With regards funding for accessible vehicles for taxi firms, this is an option to be explored throughout the lifetime of the Strategy and does not suggest a commitment to this course of action.
- 1.16 A further specific response from MACS stated a desire to work with HITRANS to develop a comprehensive understanding of the transport needs of people with disabilities. HITRANS endorses this potential for partnership working with MACS.
- 1.17 Furthermore, an additional measure to improve the accessibility of the transport network for people with disabilities was introduced to the final Strategy as a result of the consultation process – specifically, under H33c in the Strategy, a commitment is made to improving the standards of passenger transport infrastructure across the region, including for people with disabilities.

**Monitoring**

- 1.18 A draft monitoring strategy is contained within Section 5 of the Strategy. However, HITRANS commits to developing a monitoring strategy for the Regional Transport Strategy in its first year of action. Indicators and targets will be developed to measure progress towards achieving each of the Strategy objectives. The Strategy will be monitored on an annual basis.

**Publishing of the strategy**

- 1.19 The Strategy has been available to view at key stages of its development on HITRANS's website – at the consultation stage, and between March-June 2007 as Ministerial approval was being sought. Following Ministerial approval in June 2007, the Strategy will be available on HITRANS's website and copies distributed to all stakeholders involved in the consultation. Hard copies of the document will also be available on request. Large print copies of the Strategy will be available upon request, and an audio version may be made available if it is required.



**CONTROL SHEET**

Project/Proposal Name: HITRANS REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

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**ISSUE HISTORY**

Issue No.	Date	Details
1	30.03.07	Final Strategy submitted for Ministerial approval.
2	25.06.07	Final EqIA presented as separate note upon Ministerial approval of main RTS.

**REVIEW**

Originator: DEA

Other Contributors: KKM

Review By: Print: Greg Hartshorn (Project Director)

Sign: Reviewed electronically

**DISTRIBUTION**

HITRANS, Scottish Executive

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