

Minute of Meeting
held via Microsoft
Teams on Friday 4
February 2022 at
9.30am.

PRESENT

Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair)
Mr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Member
Mr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member
Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member
Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Mr Edward Foster, Partnership Treasurer
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council
Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Jim Buck, Orkney Islands Council
Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council
Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council
Ms Jayne Golding, HITRANS
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
Mr Nicholas Sobey, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Steven G Ferguson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton

APOLOGIES

Mr Grant Campbell, SCDI
Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair)

Declaration of Interest

Mr Robert Andrew indicated that he had retired as Regional Director of Stagecoach Scotland in June 2020 and was employed on a part-time basis as a Director of Scottish Citylink.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2021 1 The Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2021 was **approved**.

Matters Arising 2 Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that there had been no applications submitted for the maternity cover post of Public Transport Information Officer, and that a further recruitment campaign had been launched.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 3 Mr Edward Foster, Acting Partnership Treasurer, submitted a Report setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2021 and the projected year

– 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021

end position. The Report stated that the annual budget was as approved at the Board Meeting held on 5 February 2021, subsequently amended for the inclusion of the 2020/21 General Reserve Fund balance carried forward of £4,014. The budget also included income from Highland Council, as part of the Inverness City Active Travel Network Programme, and income contributions for research and strategy development work. The summary statement showed the financial position to 31 December 2021 and indicated that income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

It was agreed to approve the Report as well as the attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2021.

Revenue Budget 4
Proposal 2022/23

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report detailing the budget that was being recommended for approval for the next financial year covering the Partnership's running costs and research and strategy development programme costs, and the income from Partner Councils, the Scottish Government and other external agencies to cover these costs. The commitments on the 2022/23 budget were detailed within the Report.

It was agreed to approve the Report as well as the Appendix to the Report.

HITRANS Annual 5
Audit Report

Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton, submitted a Report providing an overview of the planned scope and timing of the external audit of Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership(HITRANS) for those charged with governance. The Report indicated that for 2021/22 the planning process had been delayed as a result of Covid-19. The Report summarised the initial risk assessment of significant financial statement risks. The Report indicated that it was anticipated to complete the annual planning procedures by 25 February 2022 with a plan circulated to the Partnership Board by 4 March 2022 and submission to Audit Scotland by 31 March 2022.

It was agreed to note the update.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy 6
Development
Programme

With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2021, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing the Partnership Board with an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development programme and sought approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2021/22 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 23rd April 2021.

It was agreed to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2021/22 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Research, 7
Development and
Delivery Draft
Programme for
2022/23

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report to facilitate discussion on what Research, Development and Delivery activities were to be taken forward by HITRANS in 2022/23. The Report stated that the Partnership agreed to include a provisional 2022/23 Programme within the Business Plan for 2021/22 to enable officers to take action without recourse to the Board for further approval if any project spend was cancelled between Partnership Board meetings allowing items approved within the Business Plan period to be brought forward. It was highlighted that the Report followed on from the programme agreed within the 2021/22 Business Plan and included information prepared by officers on what projects could form the basis of the programme in 2022/23.

The table detailed within the Report provided a provisional programme but there was still scope for further projects to be included and budget allocations to be adjusted. The Report indicated that the Programme would be finalised within the 2022/23 Business

Plan. It was further indicated that a draft version of the Business Plan would be considered by Members at the Partnership meeting in April 2022.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the report;**
- (2) approve the draft programme as proposed in the table;**
- (3) consider projects that could be added to the draft programme; and**
- (4) delegate responsibility to the Chair and Director to finalise the Programme for inclusion in the 2022/23 Business Plan which would be tabled at the April Partnership Board Meeting.**

| | | | |
|---------------|--------|---|--|
| Active Update | Travel | 8 | With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2021, Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager noted that there was an underspend of £130k. It is anticipated that an increased budget of £1.1 would be available for the next financial year, and that this would operate on a rolling programme, with scope to include a variety of projects. |
|---------------|--------|---|--|

It was agreed to note the report and consider opportunities for advancing projects within the Active Travel funding streams which would support HITRANS wider policy objectives and priorities.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------|---|--|
| Evanton Reopening | Station | 9 | Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on Evanton Station feasibility. The Report stated that the re-opening of Evanton Station (formerly Novar) had been under discussion for some years and comes on the back of recent Beauly and Conon Bridge reopenings. The Report indicated that the community of Evanton sought to achieve better low-carbon connectivity to its neighbouring towns, and the city of Inverness, in order to support the population as it travels for work education and leisure. It was highlighted that this would have a positive effect on emissions and fitted well with Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy policy on the hierarchy of transport mode, and with the Rail Decarbonisation Plan. The Report detailed that the station re-opening was included in the Regional Transport Strategy and the Inner Moray Forth Development Plan2 draft. |
|-------------------|---------|---|--|

It was agreed to approve the Report.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|----|--|
| Demand Responsive Transport App | | 10 | Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on work by HITRANS to commission and deploy a demand responsive transport app that would help support the operation, booking and marketing of non-scheduled transport services across the Highlands and Islands. |
|---------------------------------|--|----|--|

The Report stated that HITRANS published an Invitation to Tender following the September Partnership meeting and following an extensive assessment process had awarded Liftango an initial three year contract with the option to extend for up to another three years on a rolling 12 month basis. The Report indicated that following the completion of the procurement process a series of initial meetings with each Local Authority and a number of operators were taking place to establish which services were to be prioritised for deploying the app on. It was highlighted that HITRANS officers were also working with Liftango to develop the branding, marketing and promotion for the new smartphone app.

It was agreed to note the Report.

| | | | |
|------------------|--|----|---|
| Fastline Faslane | | 11 | With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on progress in the Faslane |
|------------------|--|----|---|

project. The Report stated that HITRANS was recently successful in obtaining Local Rail Development Funding from government funding to explore transport issues in and around the Faslane Naval Base, and in particular, consider the case for provision of a rail link. The Report indicated that to this end, the client group had commissioned Stantec to undertake a Sustainable Transport Options Study in line with the Scottish Governments appraisal guidance (STAG) focused on access options to the area.

The Report stated that the Case for Change was submitted to Transport Scotland in March 2021, and feedback was received in January 2022. There were a number of issues highlighted in the feedback that were being resolved by consultants in order to make a clear and comprehensive case for change in the study area. It was highlighted that once the report was finalised, the next stage in the process would be the Options Appraisal, already funded by LRDF2.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

Hydroban Hub 12

Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report informing the Board of possible hydrogen developments around Oban. The Report stated that in September 2021 Greenpower unveiled plans to create hydrogen at their Loch Awe windfarm. Off takers could include ferry, rail, bus, the SGN independent gas network, aquaculture, and other processes. The Report indicated that HITRANS was keen to assist ABC to engage with stakeholders in order to maximise the transport, environmental and economic benefits that could accrue to the area as a result of a green Levelling Up Fund bid, including:

- CMAL
- Calmac
- ScotRail
- Network Rail
- West Coast Motors
- Transport Scotland
- Oban Airport
- Haulage operators

The Report further indicated that a roundtable meeting was to be held in late January at which Greenpower would discuss their hydrogen supply proposals and operators would be able to outline their own alternative fuel plans.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

CONSULTATION

Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 13

Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report introducing the Scottish Government consultation on the draft second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) for Scotland. The review would inform Scottish Ministers decisions on transport investment in Scotland for the next 20 years (2022-2042).

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) review the STPR2 report and consultation;**
- (3) consider those priorities for HITRANS in responding to the Consultation;**
- (4) approve the preparation of a draft response by Officers for Members to comment upon; and**

(5) delegate responsibility for submitting HITRANS final response to the HITRANS Chair and Partnership Director.

Scottish Government Consultations 14 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an overview on a number of live consultations from the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland. These included the 20% reduction in Car Km Route Map, National Planning Framework 4 and NHS Scotland Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy 2022-2026.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the report;**
- (2) consider those priorities for HITRANS to identify in responding to the consultations on the National Planning Framework 4, 20% reduction in Car Km Route Map and NHS Scotland Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy 2022-2026;**
- (3) approve the preparation of draft responses by Officers for Members to comment upon; and**
- (4) delegate responsibility for submitting HITRANS final responses to the HITRANS Chair and Partnership Director.**

Scottish Aviation Strategy Consultation 15 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report detailing HITRANS response to a Scottish Government consultation to inform the development of a Scottish Aviation Strategy. The Report stated that following discussion at the last Partnership Meeting and engagement with local and regional stakeholders, HITRANS had developed a joint response to the Consultation in partnership with Highlands and Islands Airports (HIAL). The Report indicated that the joint response to the consultation was submitted prior to the meeting in order to meet the deadline with Members consulted on a final draft prior to submission.

It was agreed to note the Report.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Consolidated Funding Update 16 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2021, Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included programmes Interreg North Sea Region, Interreg Northern Periphery & Arctic, Interreg VA Cross Border, Interreg North West Europe and European Commission Connect 2020. Feedback was welcomed on additional information that might be helpful to include in the projects log.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PAV Inverness Campus Pilot 17 Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in the Interreg North Sea Region Project Planning for Autonomous Vehicles (PAV). The project commenced in September 2019 and would run to March 2023, with a total budget of just over €4million and HITRANS allocation of €1,027,339.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PARTNERSHIP

Regional Transport Strategy Update 18 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing a proposed timeline and approach for updating the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy. The Report stated that following a report to the Partnership meeting in September 2021 which considered the scope and priorities for an updated Regional Transport Strategy, HITRANS officers

had sought a proposal from transport consultants to support the Partnership develop a refreshed Strategy which would set out the vision and transport priorities for the area up to 2040.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the proposal and approach to updating the HITRANS Regional Strategy set out in the report.**

Staffing

19 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report seeking approval for the recruitment of three Project Officers to support delivery and reporting processes for projects that had secured external funding. The roles were:

- Project Officer – Smart Mobility
- Project Officer – Digital and Demand Responsive Transport
- Project Officer – Sustainable Aviation Test Environment

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) approve the recruitment of the Project Officer (Smart Mobility) as set out in the Report and in Appendix 1 to the Report;**
- (3) approve the recruitment of the Project Officer (Digital and Demand Responsive Transport) as set out in the Report and in Appendix 2 to the Report; and**
- (4) approve the recruitment of the Project Officer (SATE 2) as set out in the Report and in Appendix 3 to the Report.**