

Minute of Meeting held via  
Microsoft Teams on Friday 13  
November 2020 at 9.30am.

PRESENT	<p>Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair) Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council Member Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Board Member Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member</p>
IN ATTENDANCE	<p>Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager Mrs Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer Mrs Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer Ms Kelly Martin, Graduate Project Support Officer Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer Mr Derek Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council Mrs Moya Ingram, Argyll and Bute Council Mr Nicky Sobey, HIE Mr Derek Halden, DHC</p>
APOLOGIES	<p>Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair) Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll &amp; Bute Council</p>
Declaration of Interest	<p>Mr Robert Andrew indicated that he had retired as Stagecoach Scotland Regional Director in June 2020 and was employed on a part time basis as a Board Member of Scottish Citylink.</p>

### MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020	1	It was <b>agreed</b> to approve the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020 with the inclusion of Mr Robert Andrew Non Councillor Member and Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer in the list of those present.
Matters Arising	2	<p>The following updates were provided.</p> <p>Item 20 (a) – Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that HITRANS had made representations to Scottish Ministers in relation to the Programme for Government.</p>

Item 20 (c) – Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that HITRANS had been invited submit comment in respect of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. A copy of the response would be circulated to Members.

**It was agreed to note the updates.**

#### **FINANCE**

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020	3	With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer submitted the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 1 April 2020 to 31 October 2020. The Report stated that the annual budget was approved at the Board Meeting held on 7 February 2020 and had subsequently been amended for the inclusion of the 2019/20 underspend of £7,072. 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 was attached as an Appendix to the Report and detailed the financial position to 31 October 2020 which indicated that in total income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.
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**It was agreed to:**

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) approve the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 October 2020; and**
- (3) note that the Audited Accounts would be circulated by email by the end of November 2020 for electronic sign off.**

#### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

Research/ Strategy Development Programme for 2020/21	4	With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report which provided an update on progress with delivering the Research and Strategy Development Programme and sought approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made, changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2019/20 Business Plan.
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**It was agreed to approve the amendments made to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.**

Far North and Kyle Matters	5	Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report to inform members of progress on Far North and Kyle rail lines infrastructure initially identified under the Points North agenda of 2016. The Report provided information on the following:
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- Fair Exchange
- Lentrane Loop
- Token Control of points
- Press'n'Ride/ Request to Stop
- Level Crossings
- Automatic Train Describers
- Faster Token Exchange

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Mr Robert Andrew declared an interest in the following item as he was employed on a part time basis as a Board Member of Scottish Citylink who were responsible for some routes detailed in the Report.

Transport and Access to Health and Social Care	6	<p>Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on a report which HITRANS had commissioned on behalf of the Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross (SLSWR) Transport and Access Group which was set up as part of the NHS service re-design process considering the provision of Health and Social Care services in the area.</p> <p>Mr Derek Halden gave a presentation in respect of the Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross Transport and Access Plan. Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions of Mr Halden.</p> <p><b>It was agreed to:</b></p> <p><b>(1) note the Report</b></p> <p><b>(2) consider how HITRANS and other partners could best work together to implement the recommendations both in the context of Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross but also elsewhere within the HITRANS area which were experiencing common issues in relation to accessing healthcare.</b></p>
CivTech 5.0	7	<p>With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Ms Kelly Martin, Graduate Project Support Officer submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in the CivTech 5.0 project and feedback was welcomed on additional information that might be helpful to include. The Report stated that HITRANS was currently involved in the CivTech 5.0 programme to address a specified transport challenge, <i>“How can we use technology to create a smart and sustainable travel network in remote and rural areas?”</i> The issue was identified when considering the geography of the Highlands and Islands and the associated challenging transport environment, covering almost 50% of Scotland’s landmass but with only 10% of its population. The Report highlighted that while dispersed settlements were reliant on a good transport network for connectivity and access to key services, the financial sustainability of traditional transport services was a significant challenge. The Report highlighted the importance of understanding the transport available for use within the region (including buses, ferries, trains, car clubs and cycling), and creating a more flexible, demand-responsive system that would meet the needs of users, calculates and understands travel patterns as well as addressing cost efficiencies and long-term viability. The Report stated that the CivTech 5.0 alliance had aided in the navigation of procurement routes and introduced innovative businesses to solve the challenge.</p> <p><b>It was agreed to note the Report.</b></p>
Train for the Future	8	<p>Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report to appraise members of the potential for future rolling stock options in the HITRANS area. The Report stated that Scottish Ministers propose to electrify the Highland Main Line with overhead wires by 2035. The Report indicated that Tain-Inverness-Inverurie would be operated by alternative traction - transition solution (e.g. partial electrification and/or the use of alternative technology) by 2035 prior to electrification by 2045. The Report further indicated that the hydrogen transport cluster in Aberdeen was a key factor in this. Glasgow-Oban-Mallaig and Dingwall-Kyle Tain-Wick would be operated by alternative traction - permanent solution - i.e. the use of battery or an alternative by 2035.</p> <p>The Report stated that battery trains were researched in the Wick Thurso Feasibility (WTF) study. The Vivarail 230 could cover 40-60 miles between charges which made the route an ideal test bed. The current train was limited to 60 mph making it unsuitable for the Far North but perhaps suitable for Dingwall-Kyle, and West Highland services. In relation to hydrogen, the Report indicated that a number of rolling stock owners and train builders were developing new or refurbished hydrogen trains. To date hydrogen was stored within the rail vehicles taking up passenger capacity but underbody solutions were under development. The Report stated that as more hydrogen was required per mile than polluting diesel, infrastructure may be required at termini for fuelling</p>

(currently fuelling for rural routes was carried out in city depots). This may lead to sharing of facilities with the hydrogen fuelled ferries of the future.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Active Travel 9 Update With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel officer submitted a Report providing an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. The Report stated that a total of £187k was available for projects in 2020/21 through the Regional Active Travel Fund (Transport Scotland) under the following headings:

- Bikes on Buses
- Cycle Parking at Transport Interchanges
- Active Travel Masterplan Small Interventions
- Active Travel Project Design

The Report indicated that within the £100k Sustrans Partnership Fund, the following projects are being taken forward:

- Wick and Thurso Active Travel Masterplan updates – final reports received.
- Elgin Active Travel Map – due to be printed in November.
- Inner Moray Firth Active Travel Masterplans – update active travel audits for towns within the IMF Development Plan area, including links between settlements. This may be spread across two financial years.
- Rural Spaces – funding for space and place-making interventions in rural settlements not covered by Highland Council’s Spaces for People programme. Expression of interest received from Carrbridge Community Council which is being followed up with Highland Council.

The Report also provided an update on the following projects:

- *Inverness eBike Share Scheme – HIBIKE*
- *Black Parks Active Travel Route, Fort William*
- *Fort William Wayfinding Strategy*
- *Strategic Transport Integration*
- *Implementation of 2019/20 Projects*
- *Rural eBikes*

**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.**

Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan 10 Mr Neil MacRae submitted a Report detailing a summary of the Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland. Members were invited to consider the public consultation questions relating to the Report so as to inform the preparation of a HITRANS response. The Infrastructure Investment Plan outlines that the Scottish Government’s focus was on adopting and building on the recommendations of the Commission in its Phase 1 Report by setting out the long term vision for Scottish infrastructure, how it would choose future investments, and set out a 5 year programme of further improvements for their approach.

**It was agreed to authorise the Partnership Director and Chair to prepare a response to the Key Findings Report on behalf of the Partnership taking on board the comments of Members.**

MaaS Project Status Update 11 With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Ms Marelise Hamar, MaaS Project Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on the HITRANS Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Project. The Report stated that the MaaS project was now well underway and was tracking consistently against the previously reported COVID

adjusted milestone dates. The pilot project was planned to run for a total period of 12 months and would deliver a new unified MaaS platform (website and app) with a range of functions including journey planning, booking and payment for public transport services. A summary of project status was presented herein with respect to each of the three workstreams:

- Research and Evaluation
- Marketing
- Technical

The Report stated that it had been previously reported that as a result of the impact of COVID-19, Ticketer, who bought the benefit of existing API links with regional bus operators, would no longer be able to support the project due to a lack of available resourcing. To address this issue and to maximize output value of the project various options for reallocation of funds previously assigned to Ticketer had been investigated. The Report indicated that in collaboration with Transport Scotland efforts were being made to engage Ticketer to some acceptable degree, this activity remained in progress.

The Report further indicated that HiTRANS were currently compiling an application for the round 2 funding from Transport Scotland's MaaS investment fund for submission in January 2021. If successful, this would enable extension of the current program in terms of both duration and service offering.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Smarter Choices 12  
Smarter Places  
Projects Update

Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel officer submitted a Report providing an update on projects in which HiTRANS were currently involved under the Smarter Choices Smarter Places Fund. The Report stated that the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places was a grant programme designed to support travel behaviour change. The programme is funded from Transport Scotland's sustainable and active travel budget and was managed by Paths for All. The Report highlighted that Smarter Choices, Smarter Places aimed to increase levels of walking and cycling; encourage uptake of sustainable transport, such as buses, trains, or car-share; and reduce single-passenger car journeys undertaken in Scotland.

The Report indicated that there were 2 Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Grant programs. The largest pot was the £5 million Local Authority fund which was now in its 5th year. The second was an Open Fund aimed at community, third and public sector organisations, which offered £2 million in total and was in its second year. The Report provided information of both the Local Authority Fund and the SCSP Open Fund.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

**CONSULTATION**

A83 Rest and Be 13  
Thankful

Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on HiTRANS input to the A83 consultation launched by Transport Scotland following the Scottish Government commitment to look at options which provided a permanent alternative solution to the current route at the Rest and Be Thankful. The Report stated that following further landslips earlier this year on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity confirmed that the response needed to move beyond the current landscape mitigation strategy. The Scottish Government had now committed to looking at options which provided an alternative solution. In September 2020 Transport Scotland published 11 options, inviting public feedback. The Report provided a short review of those options and invited Members to formally support HiTRANS response outlined in the report and which was circulated to our Chair and local Members in advance of the 30th October deadline for submitting responses to the consultation.

**It was agreed to support HITRANS response to Transport Scotland's route corridor consultation on alternative solutions to the current A83 at Rest and Be Thankful, noting in particular HITRANS support of Argyll and Bute Councils call for a permanent solution to be delivered within the term of the next Scottish Parliament.**

Strategic Projects  
Transport Review 2

14 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) 2 which would inform the Scottish Government's transport investment programme in Scotland over the next 20 years. The Report stated that following the redeployment of much of Transport Scotland's staff to the Covid response, the option sifting element of the STPR assessment had continued to be progressed. However, a revised two phase approach to STPR2 had been agreed with the Cabinet Secretary.

Mr MacRae indicated that a meeting would be held with partners to co-ordinate a response. Members indicated that a number of options which were excluded would impact upon the Highlands and Islands and the STPR had a central belt focus.

**It was agreed to:**

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) consider how HITRANS and other Regional Transport Working Group Members engage with Transport Scotland to advance strategic transport priorities through STPR2 Phases 1 and 2.**

#### **EUROPEAN PROJECTS**

EU Funding  
Consolidated  
Update

15 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 September 2020, Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included programmes Horizon 2020, Interreg North Sea Region (NSR) and Interreg VA Cross Border Programme and feedback was welcomed on additional information that might be helpful to include in the projects log.

The Report indicated that HITRANS was currently involved in eight European projects. The Appendix to the Report provided details on all projects including current status, timelines, description of main activities, a Gantt Chart showing involvement into 2023 and a consolidated budgets table. The Report stated that amounts had been converted into GBP using the European Commission's official monthly exchange rate and that as of November 2020, HITRANS total budget for European projects was £4,661,902.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

FASTER Project  
Update

16 Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer submitted a Report providing an update on the development of the FASTER project funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project was initially approved early 2020, but there were delays receiving the Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer had now been received and the project formally launched in October.

The Report highlighted that the key objective of FASTER (Facilitating A Sustainable Transition to EVs in the Regions) was to install 73 rapid charge points in the INTERREG VA region by 2023 to assist with the development and expansion of the cross-border electric vehicle public charging network. The project had a total budget of €6.4m, with HITRANS budget almost €1.7m. The Report indicated that The FASTER Project is a joint proposal across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems. The project partnership comprised the following organisations:

- East Border Region (Lead Partner)

- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
- South West College
- HITRANS
- Ulster University
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- University of Strathclyde

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

#### **PARTNERSHIP**

Risk Management: 17  
 Risk Register  
 Update –  
 November 2020

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report for the Partnership Board to review the Strategic, Management/Operational and Financial Risks faced by the Partnership and through doing so ensure significant risks were identified, evaluated and controlled. The Report stated that the Partnership first introduced a Risk Management Strategy in 2011 to support a proactive effort to manage risk across the project and strategy portfolio. The Report indicated that the HITRANS Risk Register was subject to annual review, the latest of which was undertaken in November 2019. The revised list of Risk Management Controls was included in the Appendix to the report and approval of this Register, which covers Strategic, Management and Operational, and Financial Risks faced by the Partnership, was sought. The Report further stated that the risks faced by the Partnership as reflected in the Risk Register would continue to be monitored by HITRANS Officers and Advisors, and subsequently presented to the Partnership for monitoring and approval on at least an annual basis.

**It was agreed to approve adoption of the HITRANS Risk Register November 2020 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.**