

# HITRANS REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY RE-FRESH

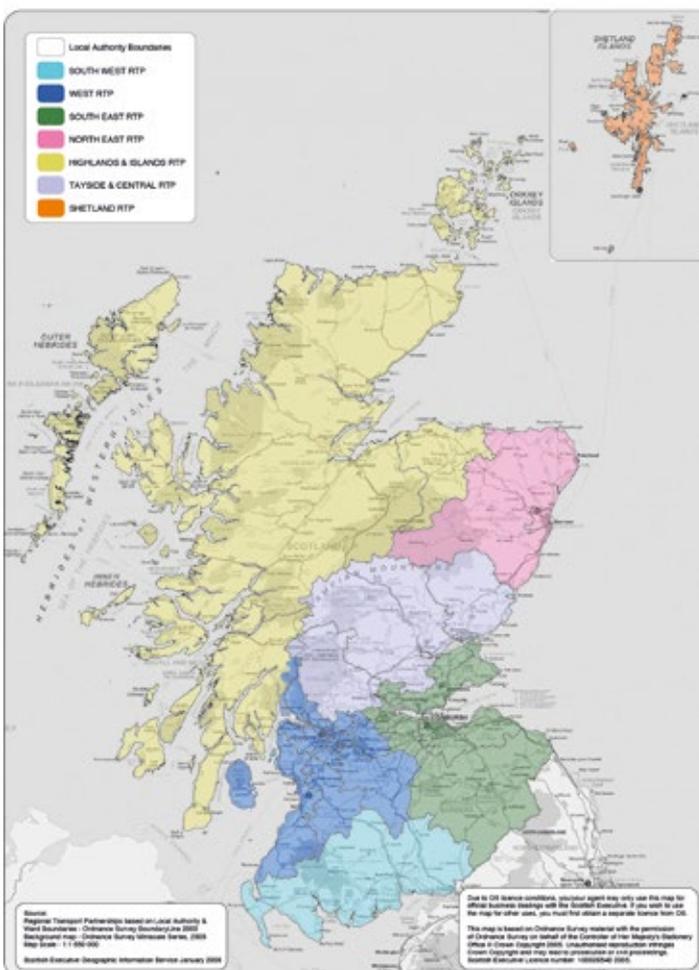
Main Issues Report  
April 2016



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HITRANS' 2008 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is being refreshed to incorporate significant developments in transport policy and to provide strategic direction at a local, regional and national level. The RTS has a statutory basis as set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. This Main Issues Report provides the background to the RTS refresh including setting out some of the key changes that have occurred since 2008, and the wider context in which the refreshed RTS sits.



Policy changes in the last eight years cover a range of national policies. At a local level a new emphasis on Community Planning has been embedded bringing together a multitude of statutory partners, of which HITRANS is one in each of Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray, Orkney and Western Isles areas.

Between 2008 and 2014/15 the RTS monitoring has found mixed results against the indicators for the original RTS main objectives of economy, accessibility, safety and security, environmental impacts and health.

- Regional GVA is at its highest level in the most up-to-date 2013 data than throughout the RTS monitoring period, with an 18.5 per cent increase on the 2006 baseline.
- Mode split on the journey to school and to a lesser extent on the journey to work has shown some decline in use of active travel and public transport modes of travel.
- There has been a 15 per cent decrease in the number of 'Killed or Seriously Injured' (KSIs) on the region's roads in 2014 compared to the number in 2013, and at 182 KSIs in 2014, this is the lowest recorded throughout the period of the RTS, falling from a base of in excess of 400 in 2006.
- Only 14 per cent of people in the region state that public transport in their area is fairly or very inconvenient in 2014, which is down from a peak of 23.4 per cent in 2006.

In terms of the current state of regional connectivity:

- Fewer people are taking public transport and more are choosing to take the car.
- Rail passengers have increased from 3.0 to 3.6 million between 2007/08 and 2013/15.
- There have been reductions in bus service kilometres in the region, falling 16 per cent in the five years to 2014/15, greater than the 12 per cent reducing in Scotland as a whole.
- Availability of Community Transport across the region remains mixed.
- There has been growth in ferry carryings, a Road Equivalent Tariff charging scheme began on some routes from 2008.
- Air passenger numbers have fallen between 2008 and 2014, but are now on an upward trend again, with 3.2 per cent growth in 2015 on the prior year.

The Community Planning approach is a key opportunity for the region, for businesses and communities. The five Community Planning Partnerships across the HITRANS area have similar priorities in terms of the economic and labour market, communities, individuals' independence and participation, safety and good health, and tackling inequalities. The directions from the

Community Planning Partnerships have been used to inform this Main Issues Report.

**Six main issues for HITRANS have been identified;**

these are the economy, connecting communities, lifeline transport, reliability and resilience, roles, relationships and responsibilities, and carbon reduction.

In terms of the economy the challenge for the HITRANS economy remains one of relatively low productivity; implying a need to both attract more higher value added activities to the area and to improve the productivity of existing businesses. There is a need to reduce the journey time-and improve the journey experience-for trips to the main economic centres in Scotland- principally Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Freight and movement of goods requires particular attention. There are high value exports from the region, particularly the food and drink sector. Inverness airport and rail stations are key hubs for business and both facilities require to continue to develop.

It is important to put communities and individuals at the centre of efforts; in keeping with the reducing inequality pillar from Scotland's Economic Strategy and the Community Empowerment (2015) Act. The region has an ageing population; 20-24 per cent of the population in the five local authority areas are aged 65+, compared to 18 per cent in Scotland as a whole. People in the region can be access deprived and this can adversely affect the ability to participate in everyday life. The upshot of this access deprivation can be social isolation and loneliness and then the impact that this has on health and wellbeing. 18-24 per cent of households across the region do not have access to a car; a little more than 43,000 households.

There are issues of declining budgets for bus services in the region, with a high prevalence of subsidised services. There is progress towards a Quality Bus Partnership scheme for Inverness. There is a high uptake of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (free bus pass) in Scotland. Those living in areas of the region without public transport, notably those in remote and island communities, and those unable to access conventional bus services, are not able to benefit from the unlimited free travel afforded to those in areas with good and / or accessible bus provision.

While it is important to have good (transport) access, good broadband and telecommunications are also required to reduce the need to travel, so support home working opportunities for example. There are many 'holes' around the region that do not have such connections.

The region relies on many 'lifeline' transport connections; it is vital that these are strong, resilient and reliable. In some cases, the lifeline network is fragile and requires attention. There is a backlog of maintenance on much of the lifeline network as well as requirements for investment to address deficiencies such as remaining stretches of single track roads and major schemes that were also highlighted in the original RTS, such as the Orkney internal ferry network.

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*Journey reliability and consistency is more of an issue than it was in the original RTS.*

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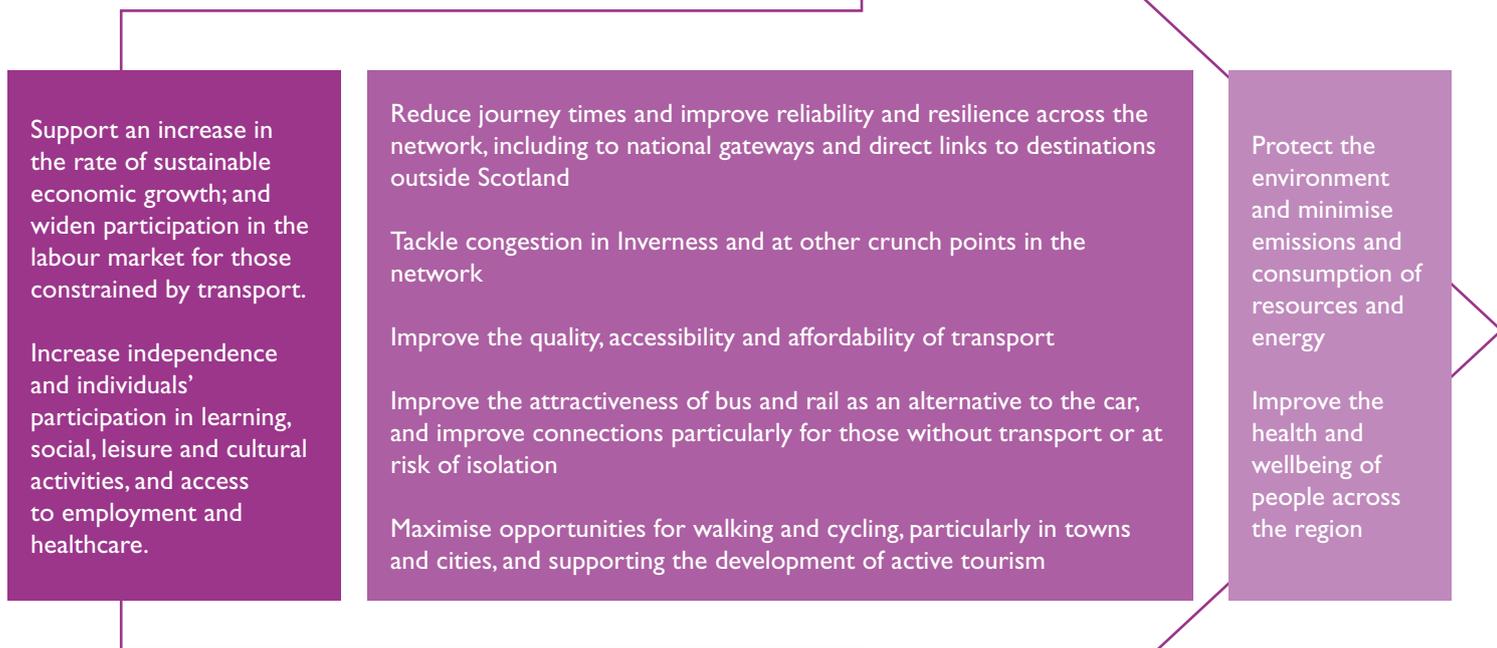
In recent years there has been an increase in weather-related road closures, disruptions to rail services, weather-related ferry cancellations and flight delays and cancellations. Disruptions cause significant negative economic impacts on business confidence and the perceptions of potential visitors and inward investors. Resilience and reliability are undoubtedly reduced by the age of the transport assets; many of which are particularly old across the region. There has been some investment in new assets including 5 new CMAL ferries and 2 Twin Otter aircraft.

The Scottish Government are responsible for the provision of some services in the area, local authorities for others. The Ferries Plan summarised the lack of consistency particularly with regard to the split of responsibilities for the provision of ferry services. The refreshed National Transport Strategy marks the start of a process of joint working with RTPs, Local Authorities and others to clarify roles and expectations across transport modes, locations and organisational hierarchy.

The 2008 Regional Transport Strategy for the HITRANS region did not explicitly address low carbon transport. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives have been implemented at the regional and local level to reduce emissions and to tackle climate change.

Opportunities to reduce the carbon impact of transport in region exist across all means of travel and taking an integrated approach to reducing emissions across all transport modes will require close working with a range of different partners. Much of this will come down to working with organisations to develop compelling business cases for investment and communicating the benefits of low emission transport to individuals, communities and the region as a whole.

Work to date on this Main Issues Report has included a review of the validity, relevance and detail of the original RTS vision and objectives. The refresh process provides the opportunity to refine, develop and re-focus the objectives reflecting the context in the region, the 2015 NTS and the work of the five Community Planning Partnerships. Draft new objectives for HITRANS are shown.



This Main Issue Report has been prepared to provide the background to the RTS refresh; and is being published for consultation. Input and feedback received in respect to the Main Issues Report will be used to steer the RTS and best align HITRANS' work with the issues and therefore transport needs across the region.

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# CONTENTS

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1. Introduction .....	06
2. What has changed? .....	08
3. Transport and travel in the Highlands and Islands 2008-2014.....	14
4. Community planning context .....	21
5. Main Issues - The Economy.....	22
6. Main Issues - Connected communities.....	27
7. Main Issues - Lifeline transport.....	32
8. Main Issues - Network reliance and reliability .....	37
9. Main Issues - Roles, relationships and responsibilities.....	39
10. Main Issues - Carbon reduction .....	44
11. RTS objectives .....	48
12. Questions for partners and stakeholders.....	51

# I. INTRODUCTION

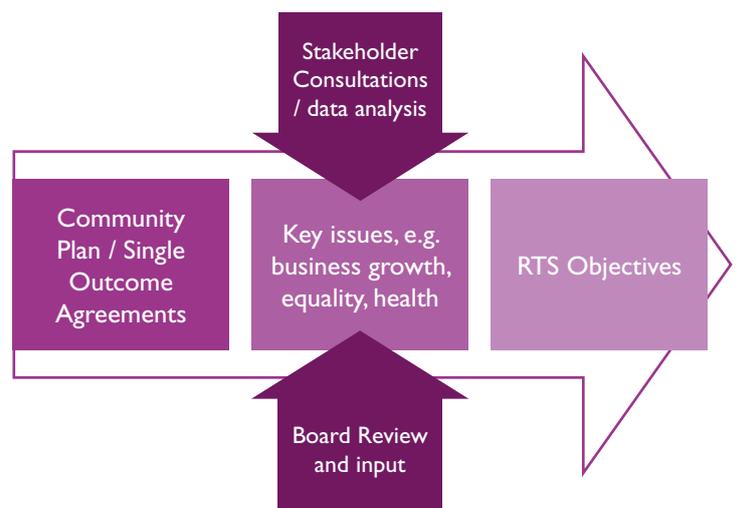
## I.1 INTRODUCTION

- I.1.1 The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was approved by the Scottish Government's Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change in July 2008. The RTS Delivery Plan was then approved as an accompanying document to the RTS.
- I.1.2 A refresh of the RTS is now being undertaken to incorporate significant developments in policy and to better align the RTS with current strategic direction, while also considering the up to date position in terms of the wider context in which transport is operated and used in, to and from the region.
- I.1.3 The RTS has a statutory basis as set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. The Act sets out that Regional Transport Partnerships should keep their strategies under review. The original RTS guidance from Transport Scotland required RTPs to revise and refresh their RTS every four years to coincide with the local government electoral cycle, which was later updated in subsequent guidance to refresh the strategy as appropriate to local needs and circumstances. As documented through this Main Issues Report much has changed in the period since 2008, and so it is appropriate now for HITRANS to progress through the RTS refresh process.
- I.1.4 The core purpose of the RTS remains unchanged, in terms of the partnership's statutory role, functions and duties, and aligning the RTS with the achievement of national and local outcomes, as defined nationally in the National Performance Framework (NPF), and locally through the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) from the Community Planning Partnerships. Helpfully, this RTS Refresh process is following the recent publication of the refreshed National Transport Strategy (NTS) that was published in January 2016.

- I.1.5 This Main Issues Report provides the background to the RTS refresh including setting out some of the key changes that have occurred since 2008, and the wider context in which the refreshed RTS sits. The preparation of the Main Issues Report has been informed particularly by the work of the five Community Planning Partnerships in the region, by the HITRANS Board and their advisors, and by consultation with a wide group of stakeholders.

## I.2 PROCESS TO DETERMINING KEY ISSUES FOR THE RTS REFRESH

- I.2.1 HITRANS and its partners are now operating within a different legislative, policy and regulatory framework compared to 2008. The most relevant changes in landscape are highlighted through the remainder of this report, firstly with key policy changes in the following section.



- 1.2.2 The first stage in identifying the key issues to support a fitting review and refresh of the RTS has been to consider each of the five Community Planning Partnership plans that make up the region. These plans, Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) and LOIPs capture the priorities that have been evidenced and concluded for each area. A summary of these is presented in Section 4.
- 1.2.3 This context has then been considered alongside input from key stakeholders and from the HITRANS Board itself to inform the main issues that are described in Sections 6 through to 11. These main issues then present the foundation for review and consideration of the HITRANS RTS Objectives, which is described in Section 12 and will be the basis for the next steps of the RTS Refresh.

## 2. WHAT HAS CHANGED?

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The main policy changes in the last eight years cover a range of national policies. At a local level a new emphasis on Community Planning has been embedded with a multitude of statutory partners, of which the RTP is one, and each local authority area has an agreed Single Outcome Agreement. Each of the local authorities has also progressed with a cycle of Local Development Plans and the Cairngorms National Park published their Local Development Plan 2015 in March 2015.

2.1.2 The refreshed National Transport Strategy helpfully provides a transport planning framework. It summarises where the RTS sits and captures the legislative, policy and regulatory landscape, at strategic, national, regional and local levels. The table below from the NTS summarises where the RTS sits and captures the legislative, policy and regulatory landscape for the RTS, at strategic, national and local levels.

2.1.3 A range of policy change implications in recent years of particular relevance for the HITRANS RTS refresh include:

Strategic and overarching references	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, EU Transport White Paper, Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, Equality Act 2010, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Scotland's Economic Strategy, Community Planning, National Performance Framework, Single Outcome Agreements													
SG Purpose	To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth													
SG National Outcomes	Transport contributes to 9 National Outcomes: We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe; We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people; We live longer, healthier lives; We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society; We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger; We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need; We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations; We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production; Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.													
SG National Plans, Policies & Strategies	Scotland's Digital Future: a Strategy for Scotland	Ready Scotland Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme	Land Use Strategy and Scottish Biodiversity Strategy	Scotland's International Framework	Scottish Planning Policy	Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland	Public Bodies Climate Change Duties	National Transport Strategy	National Planning Framework	Low Carbon Scotland: Report of Proposals and Policies	SG Delivery Plan 2016-2020 on UNCRPD	Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland	Cleaner Air for Scotland	Regeneration Strategy and Labour Market Strategy (to be published in 2016)
	Infrastructure Investment Plan													
Transport Vision	An accessible Scotland with safe, integrated and reliable transport that supports economic growth, provides opportunities for all and is easy to use; a transport system that meets everyone's needs, respects our environment and contributes to health; services recognised internationally for quality, technology and innovation, and for effective and well-maintained networks; a culture where transport providers and planners respond to the changing needs of businesses, communities and users, and where one ticket will get you anywhere.													
High Level Objectives	Promote economic growth			Promote social inclusion			Protect our environment and improve health			Improve safety of journeys		Improve integration		
Key Strategic Outcomes	Improved journey times and connections				Reduced emissions				Improved quality, accessibility and affordability					
National Transport Plans, Policies & Strategies	An Action Plan for Buses (2006)		Freight Action Plan (2006)		Scotland's Railways (2006)		Strategic Transport Projects Review (2008)		Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020 (2009)			Strategic Road Safety Plan (2007)		
	Carbon Account for Transport (2015)		Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (2013)		National Walking Strategy (2014)		Long Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland (2014)		Switched On Scotland: A Roadmap to Widespread Adoption of Plug-in Vehicles (2013)			Scottish Ferry Services – Ferries Plan (2013-2022) (2012)		
	Roads for All: Good Practice Guide for Roads (2013)		Final Report National Roads Maintenance Review (2012)		Delivery Strategy – Smart & Integrated Ticketing (2012)		Making the Most of Scotland's Canals (2013)		Transportation Noise Action Plan			SG/RTP/COSLA Working Group Report		
Regional Transport Plans, Policies & Strategies	Regional Transport Strategies and Strategic Development Plans													
	Community Planning Partnerships Local Outcomes Improvement Plans													
Local Transport Plans, Policies & Strategies	Local Transport Strategies, Local Transport Plans, Local Development Plans, City Deals													

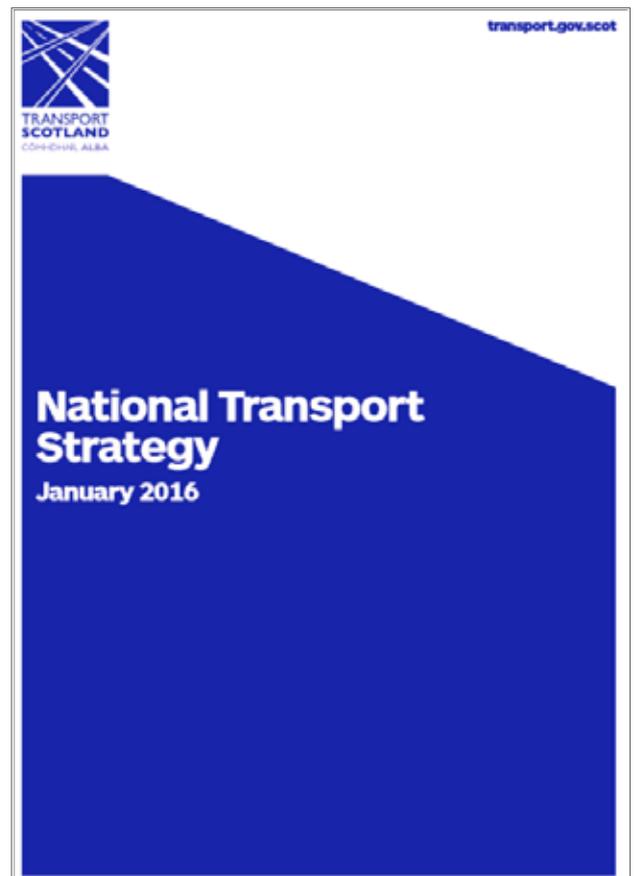
## 2.2 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STRATEGY

2.2.1 The 2015 Scottish Government's Economic Strategy focusses on driving sustainable economic growth and developing a more resilient and adaptable economy. An efficient and reliable transport system is viewed as a key enabler for enhancing productivity and delivering faster and more sustainable growth. There is a focus on Infrastructure Development and Place to "harness the strength and quality of Scotland's cities, towns and rural areas and promote the digital economy". Scotland's Economic Strategy focuses on the two mutually supportive goals of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality and our approach to delivering this is underpinned by four priorities for sustainable growth.



## 2.3 REFRESHED NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

2.3.1 The original NTS was published in December 2006. The national landscape has changed significantly since 2006. The NTS Refresh, published in January 2016, reports that the outcomes set out in the NTS remain valid, highlighting that the changes that have occurred in the interim bring some of them into sharper relief.



2.3.2 Namely, the five High Level Objectives were, and are, to:

- Promote economic growth by building, enhancing managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency.
- Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network.
- Protect our environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy.
- Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff.

- Improve integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport.
- 2.3.3 The three Key Strategic Outcomes were:
- Improved journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and lack of integration and connections in transport.
  - Reduced emissions, to tackle climate change, air quality, health improvement.
  - Improved quality, accessibility and affordability, to give choice of public transport, better quality services and value for money, or alternative to car.
- 2.3.4 The NTS highlights that RTPs set regional transport strategies across all modes and local authority boundaries, work with local authorities and others to deliver specific projects to help deliver those strategies and are statutory partners in Community Planning Partnership to support their consideration of transport issues, including those which span local authority boundaries.
- 2.3.5 The NTS also emphasises that the (RTS) refresh “marks the start of a process of joint working with RTPs, local authorities and others to clarify roles and expectations across transport modes, locations and organisational hierarchy.”

## 2.4 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 2.4.1 The updated Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) was issued by the Scottish Government in 2014. SPP states that by aligning development more closely with transport, planning can improve sustainability and connectivity. Improved connections facilitate accessibility within and between places – within Scotland, to the rest of the UK and internationally – and support economic growth and an inclusive society.
- 2.4.2 In 2014 the Third National Planning Framework (NPF3) was also published, which outlined plans for the development and investment in infrastructure, as well as identifying national developments and other strategically important development opportunities in Scotland.
- 2.4.3 Spatial priorities, which are very relevant to the HITRANS area, include:
- Cities will be better connected and provide a gateway to the rest of the world.

- Rural areas will be more accessible.

- 2.4.4 Specifically, the following spatial programmes for change are cited:
- The Infrastructure Investment Plan makes a commitment to improving rail services and reducing journey times between Inverness and Aberdeen and from Inverness to the Central Belt.
  - Complete the dualling of the trunk roads between cities, with dualling of the A9 from Perth to Inverness complete by 2025 and dualling of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030.
  - Ongoing installation of electric vehicle charging points, and particularly in rural areas.
  - Improvements to the Highland Mainline.
  - Improvements for the A82 to support business and investment in the rural north and west.
  - Ensuring the A95 can accommodate the needs of the flourishing whisky industry.
  - Trunking of the A83 between Kennacraig and Campbeltown, and in the longer term improvements to A85, A87, A830, A835 and A828 to help support expected development in some of the more remote rural and coastal communities.
  - Enhancements to Inverness Airport, as one of the five main Scottish Airports. (In March 2016 airport operator Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd. (HIAL) announced the start of major works to extend and upgrade Inverness Airport, which will include a new standalone international arrivals hall, which will house Border Force and international baggage reclaim facilities, built alongside the main terminal and linked by a covered walkway.)
- 2.4.5 NPF3 also calls for at least one exemplar walking and cycling friendly settlement to be taken forward in each local authority area.

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*One active travel exemplar settlement  
in each local authority*

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## 2.5 CLIMATE CHANGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2009<sup>1</sup>

2.5.1 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009<sup>1</sup> sets world leading emissions reductions targets, including an interim target of a 42 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for 2020, on the way to the ultimate goal of achieving at least an 80 per cent reduction by 2050.

42%  
reduction in  
GHG  
by 2020

2.5.2 The Act is a key commitment of the Scottish Government, and is the most far-reaching environmental legislation considered by the Parliament during the first ten years of devolution. This Act has had and it continues to have a direct influence in the development of transport in the Highlands and Islands region.

## 2.6 A ROADMAP TO WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF PLUG-IN VEHICLES<sup>2</sup>

2.6.1 The Switched on Scotland roadmap<sup>2</sup> to widespread adoption of plug-in vehicles was published in 2013. It sets out a vision that by 2050 Scottish towns, cities and communities will be free from damaging effects of petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles. It also establishes the ambition that, from 2040 almost all new vehicles sold will be near zero emission at the tailpipe, and that by 2030 half of all fossil-fuelled vehicles will be phased-out of urban environments across Scotland.

By 2040 almost all new  
vehicles sold will be near  
zero emission at the  
tailpipe

2.6.2 It is foreseen that electric plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (EVs/PHEVs) will make a substantial contribution to this ambition. This is expected to be motivated by Scotland's world-leading climate change targets and commitments to improve local air quality and noise pollution. The potential economic opportunities and the contribution of plug-in vehicles to Scotland's renewable energy targets are also recognised.

## 2.7 EQUALITY ACT 2010

2.7.1 The UK Government Equality Act 2010 harmonised various pieces of equality legislation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission for Scotland has set out guidance for public authorities in implementing the Act. The duty for HITRANS is to consider equality in all the functions, including decision-making, in the design of policies and in the delivery of services, and for these issues to be kept under review.

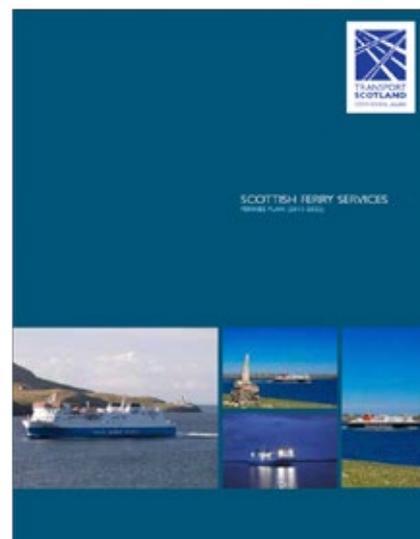
*Consider equality in all functions, including decision-making, design of policy and delivery of services*

## 2.8 SCOTTISH FERRY SERVICES – FERRIES PLAN (2013-2022)

2.8.1 The Ferries Plan was published in December 2012. The stated intention of the Ferries Plan was to “deliver first class sustainable ferry services to communities, stimulating social and economic growth across Scotland”.

2.8.2 The Ferries Plan makes recommendations regarding:

- Where investment should be focussed to make connections better for island and remote rural communities.



<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2009) Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/climatechangeact>

<sup>2</sup> Switched on Scotland: A roadmap to widespread adoption of Plug-in Vehicles: <http://urbanforesight.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Switched-On-Scotland.pdf>

- Improving reliability and journey times.
- Seeking to maximise the opportunities for employment, business, leisure and tourism.
- Promoting social inclusion.

2.8.3 The Ferries Plan does a good job of summarising the lack of consistency across Scotland with regard to the split of responsibilities for the provision of ferry services.

## 2.9 NATIONAL WALKING STRATEGY

2.9.1 “Let’s get Scotland Walking - The National Walking Strategy” (NWS) was published in 2014. The Strategy includes a vision of: “A Scotland where everyone benefits from walking as part of their everyday journeys, enjoys walking in the outdoors and where places are well designed to encourage walking.”

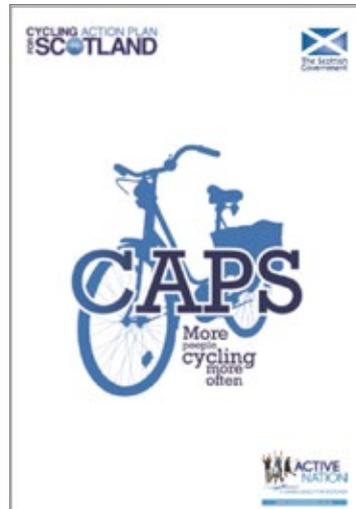
— || —  
*Everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel*  
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2.9.2 And three Strategic Aims:

- Create a culture of walking where everyone walks more often as part of their everyday travel and for recreation and well-being.
- Better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed and managed built and natural spaces for everyone.
- Enable easy, convenient and safe independent mobility for everyone.

2.9.3 The NWS noted that RTPs are important delivery partners in realising the vision of the Strategy.

2.9.4 A list of “Initial Recommendations for Action” is included within the NWS, and an Action Plan is due to be published in the Spring of 2016.



## 2.10 CYCLING ACTION PLAN FOR SCOTLAND

2.10.1 The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) was published in 2010 and refreshed in 2013. A second refresh of CAPS is due to be published in 2016.

2.10.2 At the heart of CAPS is a vision for 10 per cent of everyday journeys in Scotland to be made by bike by 2020. The 2013 refresh Plan includes 19 specific actions, three of which specifically note RTPs as delivery partners:

- Develop for each local authority area the strategic approach to supporting functional cycling (and active travel more broadly), mapping the appropriate infrastructure improvements required along with supporting promotional work.
- Continue to develop and maintain community links.
- Develop better integration with public transport through working in partnership with interests such as rail and bus/coach operators and RTPs.

10% of  
everyday  
journeys by  
bike by 2020

2.10.3 CAPS 2013 also states: “RTPs have a clear strategic role to play in supporting delivery of the CAPS through their RTS and associated Revenue and Capital Delivery Plan programmes. A number of the RTPs have developed cycling action plans which sit within their RTS, and have also funded a range of cycling measures and initiatives, including funding provision of local, regional and national (NCN) cycling facilities and infrastructure, both directly and in partnership with their constituent Councils, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland and others.”

## 2.11 AUDIT SCOTLAND’S REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRANSPORT

2.11.1 Published in 2011, this report by Audit Scotland recognised that transport services for health and social care are fragmented, and that there is a lack of leadership,

ownership and monitoring of the services provided. Joint working in the public sector and with voluntary and private providers was stated as crucial for the successful and sustainable development of transport for health and social care. It was suggested that improved joint planning could lead to more efficient services and that there was scope to save money by better planning and management of services.



*Clarify responsibilities for planning and delivery transport for health and social care*



2.12.3 These objectives are useful to consider in the context of reviewing later the HITRANS RTS objectives.

2.11.2 Among many recommendations, the report focussed on the need for partners (local authorities, NHS Boards, RTPs and the Scottish Ambulance Service) to clarify responsibilities for planning and delivering transport for health and social care and that partners should integrate or share services where this represents more efficient use of resources and better services for users.



**2.13 EMPOWERING SCOTLAND'S ISLAND COMMUNITIES**

- 2.13.1 The March 2016 publication of an update on progress made through the Islands Areas Ministerial Working Group highlights:
- Transport Governance: creation of Island Transport Forum. The remit of the forum is to ensure greater involvement of the island councils in the design, commissioning and delivery of transport services.
  - Ferries: the STAG studies of Orkney (and Shetland) internal network is highlighted together with the commitment to the principle of fair funding in the provision of ferries.
  - Aviation: the Scottish Government's commitment to supporting air services through funding of HIAL, ADS and PSOs is re-stated and a Scoping Study from the local authorities on "air service in their totality" is referred to, which is stated to be due soon.

**2.12 FUTURE ISLANDS BILL**

- 2.12.1 The Our Islands Our Future campaign was launched by Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Councils and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in 2013, setting out their vision for a stronger future for Scotland's Island communities in the context of the constitutional debate around the Independence Referendum of 2014.
- 2.12.2 An Island Areas Ministerial Working Group's Group has developed proposals based on three underpinning objectives:
- Promoting islands voice.
  - Harnessing island resources.
  - Enhancing islands wellbeing.

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

I/ Does this section reflect the changes in policy and trends since the publication of the first RTS in 2008?  
 Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state if there are any other policy that will or should influence the delivery of the RTS that need to be considered.

# 3. TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS 2008-2014

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

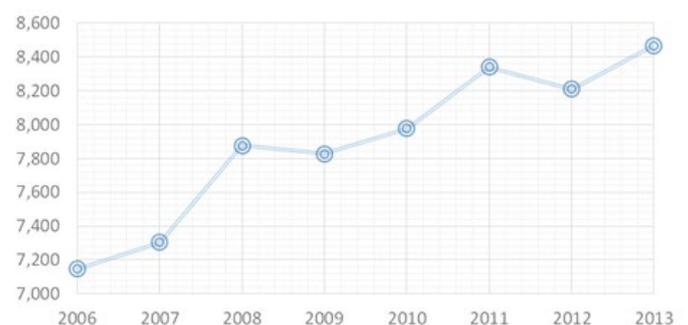
3.1.1 Data used in the preparation of this Main Issues Report have been taken from a number of sources, including the Census and the 2016 publication of Scottish Transport Statistics. In this section first the present RTS Monitoring Framework is described, including the most recent results together with commentary to inform the consideration of the future monitoring approach for the refreshed RTS. This is followed by an overview of a range of data that is useful to set the context for this Main Issues Report. (Further specific data is presented as part of the introductions to each of the Main Issues that have been identified, and which are presented in Sections 5-10.

## 3.2 THE RTS MONITORING FRAMEWORK

### Current position

- 3.2.1 Each year since the original RTS HITRANS has undertaken a monitoring exercise against a series of indicators and markers that were agreed at the outset to inform on each of the five headline RTS objectives.
- 3.2.2 The most recent 2014/15 report found mixed results across the objectives, and evidence of a worsening position in some measures. The RTS monitoring has used a traffic light system of 'green', 'amber' and 'red' to summarise performance.

Workplace-based regional GVA - National Statistics (£m, current basic prices)



### Economy

- 3.2.3 In terms of the **economy** objective a 'green' assessment was based on indicators achieving either 'amber' or in the case of 'economic output' and 'number of new businesses formed' in the most recent data strong 'green' assessments. Notably, the regional GVA is at its highest level in the most up-to-date 2013 data than throughout the RTS monitoring period, with an 18.5 per cent increase on the 2006 baseline. Similarly, despite significant variation over the monitoring period, 'number of new businesses formed' has had its best performing year in the most recent data, and notably with Eilean Siar and Orkney standing out with 30 and 45 net new businesses respectively in the year.



Also, encouragingly in the most recent data for the HITRANS area as a whole, only 14 per cent state that public transport in their area is fairly or very inconvenient, which is down from a peak of 23.4 per cent in 2006. There is however a mixed picture with this indicator across the region, for example Moray has seen an increase from just 9.8 per cent in 2010 to 13 per cent in the most recent data.

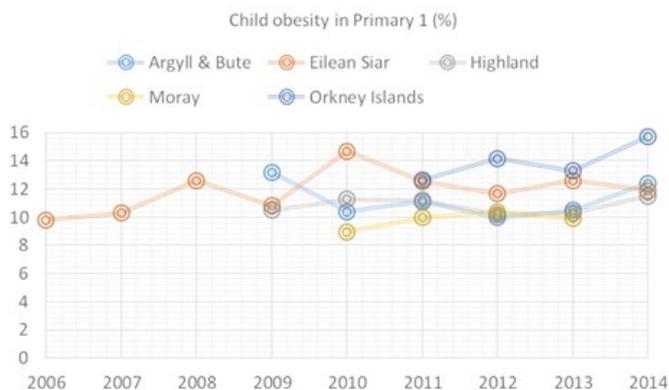
## Health

- 3.2.7 Finally, considering the health objective, this disappointingly is showing as 'red' in 2015, with increasing levels of 'obesity in P1 children' and reduced levels of activity, notably walking for functional travel purposes. One glimmer of hope is that life expectancy continues to be up in all areas compared to the prior year data, with the exception of Orkney where there is a slight fall, albeit set against Orkney having the highest life expectancy across the region.
- 3.2.8 Overall then there are some interesting data trends emerging for the HITRANS area from the most recent monitoring exercise. From the data the economy appears to be performing well, albeit with some variation across the region, and the entrepreneurial spirit is blossoming with a high level of businesses created. The cost of fuel is down across the region, due to the combination of fuel rebate and the global price of oil. Likely related to the above, car use for the region is up, both on the journey to work and the journey to school, which sometimes results in a decline in public transport usage and always active travel use.

The data on levels of activity show a decline in walking for both travel and leisure purposes. At the same time, there is an increase in the number of people that stated that they don't feel safe on public transport; however, accompanied by a reduction in the number stating that public transport in their area is inconvenient. All that said, public transport usage and walking are down, and we also see from the data a continuing increase in the levels of obesity amongst P1 pupils, which are as high as 15.7 per cent in Orkney.

## 3.3 FUTURE RTS MONITORING APPROACH

- 3.3.1 It is worth noting that the HITRANS monitoring over the life of the original RTS has focussed on variation year to year and in the case of some indicators considering variation on a (Local Authority) area by area basis. It is also noted that Local Authority data in the case of Argyll and Bute also includes the Helensburgh and Lomond area, which is in fact not within the HITRANS boundaries, but rather falls within the SPT area; this is the case for data referring to Argyll and Bute through the remainder of this report.
- 3.3.2 In considering the monitoring regime for the refreshed RTS it will be useful to consider performance in the HITRANS area set against the context of performance and trends in the rest of Scotland, which will assist in assessing whether progress (or otherwise) in the region is as a result of particular interventions or rather following wider and probably external trends and patterns. Such an approach would also allow benchmarking with other areas.
- 3.3.3 The monitoring to date has relied upon a subjective assessment using a traffic light approach. Any such approach is subject to differing interpretations of how the assessment should be applied, and so the future monitoring approach through the RTS refresh should consider establishing a more demonstrable and quantifiable basis; perhaps considering specific targets and progress against those targets.
- 3.3.4 Reflecting on the nature of particular interventions, which might be at a local level, further consideration could be given to establishing tailored monitoring and evaluation frameworks on a project-by-project basis, which could sit within a wider RTS monitoring structure.



### 3.4 REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

#### Journey to work

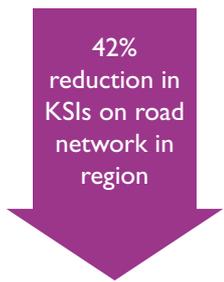
3.4.1 Over the period 2007 to 2014 the mode of travel for journeys to work in the HITRANS area has changed slightly with more people driving and fewer people taking public transport. Interestingly, in the intermediate years there was a trend towards more people walking and cycling and fewer people driving to work, which peaked in 2012, but has overturned since 2012. Over the same period, nationally people driving to work has remained approximately constant in 2014 compared to 2007 (68 per cent), while people walking and cycling has increased by nearly two percentage points to 15.5 per cent, while people taking public transport has fallen by almost two percentage points to 14.4 per cent in 2014.

3.4.2 In 2014, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Orkney all have higher levels of walking and cycling to work, higher than the HITRANS-area average and greater than the Scottish rate of 14 per cent.

3.4.3 Congestion and delay continues to be concentrated at a number of key roads and junctions in and around Inverness particularly, and focussed on peak periods.

#### Road casualties

3.4.4 The region's local authorities and the trunk road network continue to contribute to reducing the number of casualties from road collisions. The numbers across the region have fallen significantly from 430 people killed or seriously injured in 2007 to 182 in 2014.

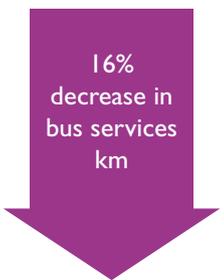


#### Rail travel

3.4.5 The number of passengers travelling through the region's railway stations has increased since 2007/08 from 3.0 million to 3.6 million station entries and exits in 2014/15, representing a growth of 21 per cent; and which compares to the UK as a whole over the same period which has seen growth of 19 per cent through all stations. There is significant variation in the change in traffic at each station in the region, with sometimes smaller stations seeing dramatically differing numbers year to year. That said, notably Nairn has seen a 68 per cent increase over the period, Invergordon 60 per cent, Oban 35 per cent, Elgin 31 per cent, Inverness 25 per cent and Aviemore 24 per cent.

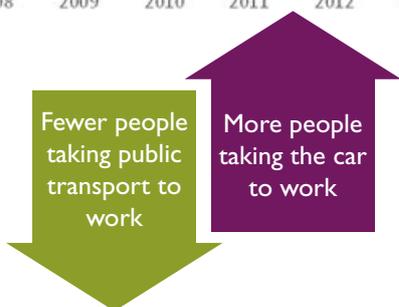
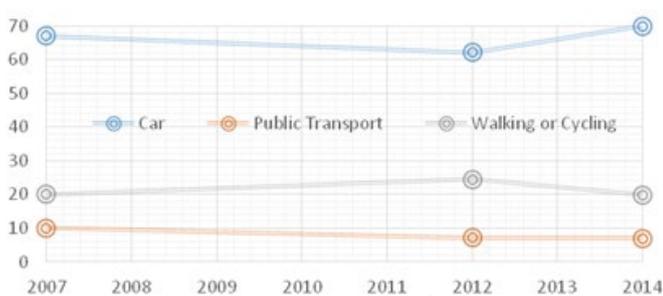
#### Bus services, Demand Responsive Transport and Community Transport

3.4.6 There have been reductions in bus services across the region since 2008, with a 16 per cent decrease in bus service kilometres in the region in the five-year period to 2014/15; this is greater than the 12 per cent decrease in kilometres across Scotland as a whole. The major operators across the region continue to be Stagecoach, D & E Coaches, Scottish Citylink and West Coast Motors, while a number of smaller providers operate in local areas.



3.4.7 The community transport sector remains similar to that in 2008, with some services having been operating for many years, while others have ceased and others have commenced. There are a number of demand responsive transport services provided by social enterprises and also by the private sector with Council financial support. The availability and nature of community transport options remains mixed across the region.

Mode of travel for journeys to work



### Ferry services

3.4.8 There has been some growth between 2008 and 2014 in terms of vehicle and passenger carryings across the region's ferry network. The Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) pilot commenced in 2008 on the Caledonian MacBrayne routes to the Western Isles, Coll and Tiree, and was announced as a permanent feature on these routes in

2011. This was then extended to Islay, Colonsay and Gigha from October 2012, Arran in 2014 and the remaining Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) network in October 2015. RET has been removed from larger freight vehicles in excess of six metres.

	2008 (thousands)	2014 (thousands)
<b>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE</b>		
Cars	1,042	1,096
Commercial / Buses	110	104
Passengers	4,533	4,654
<b>NORTHLINK</b>		
Cars	68	55
Passengers	296	289
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY FERRIES – ORKNEY</b>		
Vehicles	81	84
Passengers	319	320
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY FERRIES – HIGHLAND COUNCIL</b>		
Vehicles	262	259.2
Passengers	/	576
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY FERRIES – ARGYLL AND BUTE</b>		
Vehicles	36.5	32.9
Passengers	141.6	138.2

### Air travel

3.4.9 There has been a five per cent fall in the number of passengers travelling through airports in the HITRANS region between 2008 and 2014, which compares to a one per cent decline across Scotland as a whole. Notably, Wick John O' Groats and Kirkwall have seen increases in this period of 20 and 10 per cent respectively, while Inverness and Benbecula have seen the greatest reductions of nine and eight per cent respectively. In 2012 there was a

reduction of internal flights to / from Benbecula and Barra, while an increase in Barra to Glasgow flights has seen Barra recover from an 18 per cent drop in passengers between 2012 and 2013, to a 22 per cent increase the following year. It is noted that 2007/08 saw the height of the global financial crisis, and flights began falling from a historic high; and more recently are now generally growing year on year, including most recently in 2015 with HIAL gaining an additional 45,000 passengers during the year; an increase of 3.2 per cent on the previous year.

	2008 (thousands)	2014 (thousands)	Change
<b>SCOTLAND – all airports</b>	24,348	24,076	-1%
<b>HITRANS – all airports</b>	1,054	1,004	-5%

Active travel

3.4.10 Cycling Scotland regularly produces an assessment of the work done by Local Authorities to promote cycling; the most recent assessment was published in 2013.

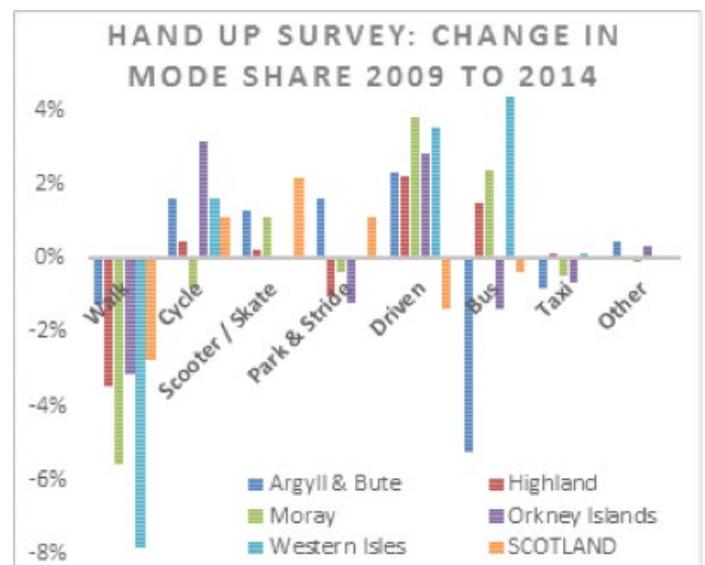
3.4.11 An overview of the findings, along with best practice examples and good news stories cited by Cycling Scotland, is shown in the table below.

3.4.12 The average rating across Scotland is 3 out of 5. The Table shows that Highland Council scored higher than the Scottish average, and Moray Council equal to the Scottish average, with Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar and Orkney below the Scottish average.

3.4.13 From 2008 onwards, HITRANS in partnership with its member Local Authorities developed Active Travel Masterplans for its main settlements (17 in total). On the back of these, progress has continued in the development and delivery of cycle infrastructure and promotion and training activity, and this has seen progress for the HITRANS local authorities in respect to the Cycling Scotland National Assessment of Local Authority Cycling Policy. HITRANS is compiling an up to date Active Travel Strategy, which feeds into the RTS refresh. The Inverness City Active Travel Network is one of three shortlisted projects in the Community Links PLUS design completion being run by Sustrans.

3.4.14 Data from the Scottish Household Survey suggests that walking and cycling to school has fallen from 53 per cent in 2008 to 44 per cent in 2014 across the HITRANS area. Sustrans' Hands Up Survey<sup>3</sup> data corresponds with this showing that walking to school has fallen in all areas between 2009 and 2014, and in all but Argyll and Bute has fallen more than Scotland as a whole. Encouragingly, these data show that cycling is up slightly in all areas with the exception of Moray; while there is also a marked increase in the number of children indicating that they were driven to school.

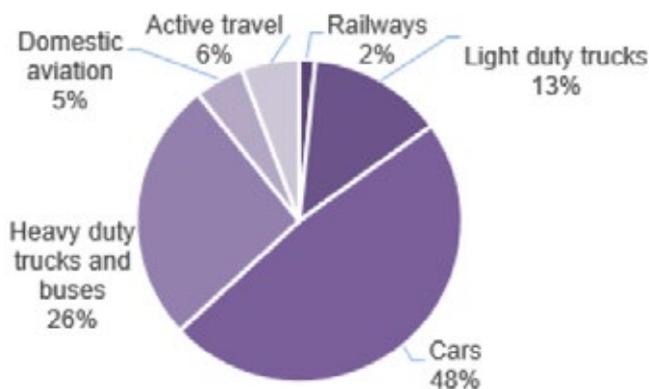
Area	Rating (out of 5)	Best Practice Example	Good News Story
Argyll and Bute	2.5*	External Funding and Partnership Working	Appin path and bridge improvements with community engagement
Eilean Siar	1*	Hebridean Way walking and cycling feasibility	HGV and cycle safety initiative
Highland	3.5*	Active Travel Audit and Masterplans	Cycle/Footbridge link to University
Moray	3*	Urban Freedom sustainable travel promotion	Bike Week Activities
Orkney	2.5*	Cycle Trainer and Cycle Training Assistance	Kick Start Kirkwall (Smarter Choices Smarter Places)



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/schools-and-universities/hands-scotland>

### 3.5 AIR QUALITY AND CARBON EMISSIONS

3.5.1 Transport is a major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and air pollution. It accounted for 21 per cent of Scotland's total GHG emissions in 2013, with nearly 90 per cent of emissions resulting from road transport. In 2010, fine particulate matter was associated with approximately 2,000 premature deaths and around 22,500 lost life-years across the Scottish population<sup>4</sup>. In the HITRANS region specifically, an air quality management area (AQMA) was declared in 2014 as national annual average air quality standards were exceeded<sup>5</sup>.



3.5.2 While modal shift to active travel will continue to have an important role in reducing emissions in the HITRANS region, efforts are also required to reduce emissions from motorised transport, which is expected to continue to represent the overwhelming majority of journeys. Sixty-eight per cent of everyday journeys in 2014 were undertaken by motorised transport in the HITRANS region<sup>6</sup>.

#### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

2/ Does this section fairly reflect the changes in trends since the publication of the first RTS in 2008?

Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any other trends that will or should be reflected in the delivery of the RTS that need to be considered.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Government (2015) Cleaner Air for Scotland: The Road to a Healthier Future: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00488493.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Air Quality News (2014) Air Quality Management Area declared in Inverness: <http://www.airqualitynews.com/2014/09/03/air-quality-management-area-declared-in-inverness/>

<sup>6</sup> Including bus and car transport modes.

# 4. COMMUNITY PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1.1 The Community Planning and associated Single Outcome Agreements process was established following the Scottish Government and Local Government Concordat concluded in 2007. The first SOAs were produced for each local authority area in 2008/9, which have been superseded by a new round of SOAs in 2013. SOAs are based on National Outcomes and local outcomes from Community Plans taking account of local priorities.

4.1.2 The statutory framework for Community Planning is set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The Act places duties on:

- **Local authorities** - to initiate, facilitate and maintain Community Planning, including consulting and cooperating with communities;
- **Core partners** - Health Boards, the Enterprise Networks, Police, Fire and Regional Transport Partnerships - to participate in Community Planning; and
- **Scottish Ministers** - to promote and encourage Community Planning.

4.1.3 Community Planning is delivered by local Community Planning Partnerships. HITRANS is a partner in each of the five local authority Community Planning Partnerships and SOAs in the HITRANS region.

4.1.4 A review of these Community Plans and SOAs has guided the main issues described in Sections 5 to 10 of this report, and the priorities and intended outcomes from each partnership are summarised in the table below:

4.1.5 A read across the five plans highlights that key and common priorities and outcomes are:

- The economy and labour market.
- Communities, and individuals' independence, participation and connections.
- Safer and healthier individuals and communities.
- Tackling inequalities and protecting the most vulnerable in society.

4.1.6 The RTS refresh can be guided by these common priority directions, and particularly in determining the main issues for consideration and in reviewing and refreshing the RTS objectives.

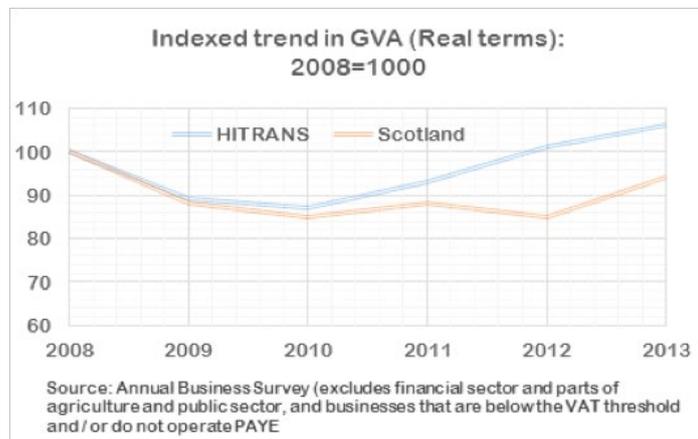
Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership: Forward Together	Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership	Orkney Community Planning Partnership: working together for a better Orkney	Moray Community Planning Partnership	Highland Community Planning Partnership
Sustainable <b>economic</b> growth	<b>Economy</b> is diverse and thriving	Broad range of community-based <b>employment</b> opportunities	A growing, diverse and sustainable <b>economy</b>	Widen participation in the <b>labour market</b>
Participation and <b>independence</b> ; <b>connected</b> (broadband, travel and renewables)	<b>Independent</b> lives	Live <b>independently</b> , <b>participating</b> positively	Ensure older peoples' needs are met to sustain <b>active lives</b> in the community	For older people to be geographically and socially <b>connected</b> and for them not to become isolated
<b>Safer and healthier</b>	Active, <b>healthier</b> , <b>safer</b> and stronger communities	People enabled to take responsibility for their long terms <b>health</b> and <b>well-being</b>	<b>Healthier</b> citizens; <b>safer</b> communities	Reduce <b>health</b> inequalities
Improved standard of living through addressing poverty and <b>inequalities</b>	Improve how we identify and implement action to address <b>inequalities</b>	People participate in community activities that improve access, build inclusiveness and reduce <b>inequalities</b>	Do more to protect those most <b>vulnerable</b> and at risk	Improve access to service for hard to reach and disadvantaged groups; reduce <b>inequalities</b> in early years

## 5. MAIN ISSUES – THE ECONOMY

### 5.1 CONTEXT

5.1.1 Public sector interventions to support business growth will continue to focus on sectors where Scotland has a distinct comparative advantage. Scotland's Economic Strategy specifically refers to Food and Drink, Financial and Business Services, Life Sciences, Energy, Tourism and Creative Industries, all of which are key growth areas for the HITRANS region.

5.1.2 As elsewhere, the HITRANS economy (defined here as the economies of the five local authority areas represented in HITRANS) suffered a decrease in economic activity during the recession. However, the chart shows that the impact was less severe than for Scotland as a whole.



5.1.3 The area's GVA fell during 2009 and 2010 such that it was 87 per cent of the 2008 level (allowing for inflation). It then rose in each of the following three years, with GVA in 2013 6 per cent higher than back in 2008. In contrast, the Scottish figure fell more sharply in the years to 2010. This was followed by a slower recovery such that in 2013 GVA was six percentage points lower than the 2008 figure.

5.1.4 However, the challenge facing the HITRANS economy remains one of relatively low productivity. Based on 2013 Annual Business Survey data, the area had a GVA per job of around £42,700. That compares to a Scottish figure of more than £54,000.

*GVA per job of £43k compared to £54k for whole of Scotland*

5.1.5 Thus, the productivity of the HITRANS economy is only 78 per cent of that of Scotland as a whole. This is despite the relatively high GVA per job figure for Moray due to its whisky sector. This implies a need to both attract more higher value added activities to the area and to improve the productivity of existing businesses.

### 5.2 CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

5.2.1 The creative industries sector contains a lot of small businesses/individuals who tend to collaborate with others on a project-by-project basis. That places an emphasis on passenger travel. However, despite the growing importance of digital connectivity, some parts of the sector still make physical products that have to be distributed to customers. The growth in the number and size of festivals can place high demand for transport around weekends which can present challenges for rail and ferry capacity.

### 5.3 FOOD AND DRINK

5.3.1 The movement of goods (particularly outwards) remains a key issue for the food and drink sector. Meeting customer requirements places an emphasis on the reliability of transport links, while freight transport costs are an issue for competitiveness. Transport links to meet the needs of food and drink businesses, especially for island producers in terms of ferry services and connections could be improved.

## 5.4 LIFE SCIENCES

5.4.1 The international nature of much of the life sciences sector means that good air connectivity is vital. This means a demand for more/better timed direct international flights from the HITRANS area and continued growth in international services from Edinburgh in particular. Within the UK, London and Cambridge are key destinations. For the life sciences cluster around Oban, sleeper services to London and the development of Oban-central belt flights with onward connections are seen as important developments.

## 5.5 FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS SERVICES

- 5.5.1 In contrast, travel by financial and business services is much more UK-focused. Edinburgh, London, Leeds, and Manchester are key destinations.
- 5.5.2 The issue of business travel costs is particularly the case for travel from the islands. Even with RET ferry travel was not seen as particularly cheap. The removal of ADS for business travel means that air fares are expensive and potentially limits the ability of business to compete with mainland-based businesses and for staff to participate in learning and training opportunities.

## 5.6 ENERGY SECTOR

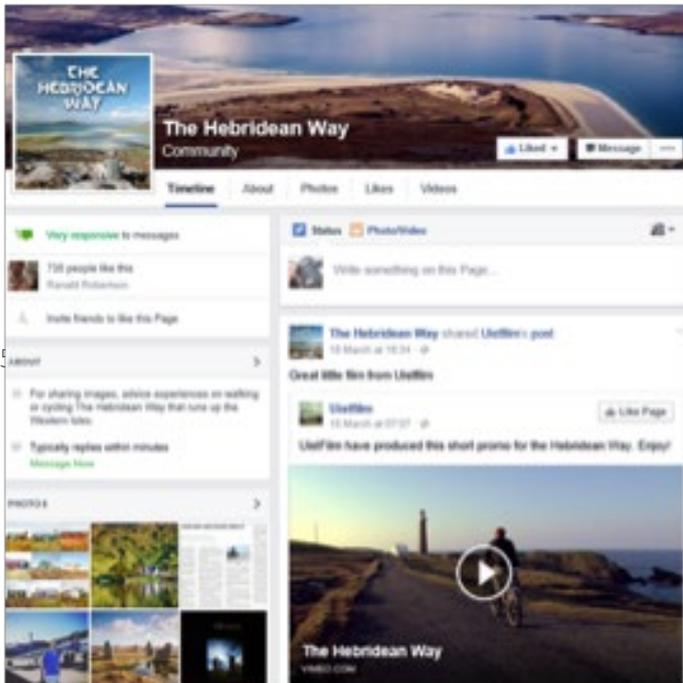
5.6.1 In the energy sector despite the downturn in oil and gas activity there is still the requirement to move personnel to/from the HITRANS area by air. There is some shift in geographical focus with the development of north west Atlantic fields, and this has meant increased use of Wick Airport. It could also lead to the long term development of supply bases in the north of the HITRANS area to service these fields, which would mean increased road freight movements to the selected port(s).

## 5.7 RENEWABLES

5.7.1 For renewables there are issues are around port capacity to accommodate large/heavy loads and for roads from the ports to be able to cope with outsize loads. Growing interest in innovative energy projects in Orkney has led to a growing number of international visitors. Many of them arrive by charter rather than scheduled air services.

## 5.8 TOURISM

- 5.8.1 Issues for tourism include the visitors; expectation that the quality of public transport will be at least as good as is available elsewhere. In particular, this relates to the quality of vehicles and the availability of Wi-Fi. The latter is still a challenge.
- 5.8.2 There is potential to further promote transport routes as attractions in themselves. Online connectivity is a key part of this-e.g. the ability to point your phone out of the train window and tell you what you are looking at.
- 5.8.3 There is significant room for improvement in terms of joint ticketing across transport operators on a Scotland wide basis, both in terms of tickets themselves but also looking at smarter ways to pay for and undertake multiple journeys-e.g. using contactless technology.
- 5.8.4 There is also growing visitor expectation that public transport will be available to key visitor sites even when these are in remote areas. This is part of a wider issue of managing vehicle traffic to these key hotspots. Local roads can become heavily congested and cars abandoned on verges as visitors to look at/walk to the site, such as in areas of Ben Nevis, and Fairy Pools and Storr on Skye. Not addressing these issues threatens the visitor experience and in time could lead to a decline in visitors.
- 5.8.5 Air connectivity is key for tourism-both direct flights to Inverness and international services into Glasgow and Edinburgh. The numbers arriving into key transport hubs is likely to increase with further growth, for example as more visitors arrive into:
  - Central Belt airports, aided by the reduction in Air Passenger Duty in the short term.
  - Inverness rail station when new/enhanced rolling stock is introduced on the sleeper and daytime services from the south.
- 5.8.6 The cost of air travel depresses demand from visitors, particularly to the isles, although many of them will still opt to travel by ferry rather than air. The cost of air travel is particularly constraining for the lucrative short stay market.
- 5.8.7 An issue is the effectiveness of the dispersal of these visitors to other parts of the HITRANS area.



5.8.9 Integration between public transport modes is an ongoing challenge (e.g. connecting between rail and ferry services). It also includes the need for physical integration-e.g. easier interchange between the rail and bus stations in Inverness, and also integration between rail and bike in Inverness – the poor facilities for Inverness commuters to complete their journey by bike due to the poor station facilities.

5.8.10 Lower, RET-based fares, have increased visitor car traffic on those ferry routes. However, growth in visitor traffic can mean quite severe peak capacity constraints on some routes, which will cap visitor numbers and also make travel more difficult for residents. RET fares have not been introduced on Orkney's external ferry services, which is inequitable and results in a potential loss of visitors to islands where cheaper (i.e. RET-based) fares have been introduced.

## 5.9 JOURNEY TIMES

5.9.1 There is a need to reduce the journey time-and improve the journey experience-for trips to main economic centres in Scotland-principally Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. This includes road improvements on trunk roads that connect to other parts of Scotland, and on roads (e.g. A95, A9 north of Inverness) that act as feeders for the longer distance trips beyond HITRANS' boundaries.

5.9.2 From HITRANS' own records collected through monitoring of the RTS, between 2009 and 2015 the journey time had fallen by on the following selection of road routes:

- Inverness-Perth: by 17 minutes.  
Although journey time analysis between 2013 and 2015 show a 9% increase in journey time. ([www.a9road.info](http://www.a9road.info))
- Inverness-Thurso: by four minutes.
- Elgin-Perth (via A95): by 20 minutes.

5.9.3 However, the journey time had increased by on the following routes:

- Fort William-Glasgow: by one minute.
- Fort William-Inverness: by 14 minutes.
- Inverness-Elgin: by four minutes.
- Elgin-Aberdeen: by seven minutes.
- Campbeltown-Tarbet (A83/A82 Junction): by three minutes.
- Oban - Tyndrum (A85/A82 junction): by eight minutes.

5.9.4 Between 2007-2008 and 2015-2016 the average (median) weekday journey time by rail had fallen by on the following routes:

- Oban-Glasgow: by five minutes.
- Inverness-Glasgow: between one and two minutes.
- Glasgow-Fort William: one minute.

5.9.5 However, the average journey time had increased on the following routes:

- Inverness-Edinburgh: by two minutes.
- Inverness-Aberdeen: two minutes.
- Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh: around four minutes.
- Inverness-Wick: six minutes.

5.9.6 Thus, there were no significant improvements in rail journey times over the eight-year period of the RTS, while a number of journeys now, on average, take longer. The journey time issue is exacerbated for rail travel from Moray given its greater distance and the lack of through rail services to the central belt.

5.9.7 The current level of transport infrastructure, public transport frequencies and journey times have a negative impact on inward investor perceptions.

## 5.10 FREIGHT

- 5.10.1 Freight and the movement of goods requires particular attention. This reflects the high value of some exports (e.g. whisky, salmon) and the time critical nature of some movements (e.g. shellfish).
- 5.10.2 Moving goods in terms of supplies inbound and goods outbound is expensive due to distances, thin routes and supply chains and often the need for a ferry journey as part of the route. The cost for parcels and packages inbound to premises can be particularly expensive; and also compounded by excessive delivery times.
- 5.10.3 There are barriers switching more freight to rail. For example, the lack of pre-0600 access to the Highland Mainline is a constraint to developing the rail movement of retail goods into Inverness.
- 5.10.4 There is a welcome improvement plan for the Inverness-Perth and Inverness-Aberdeen corridors, but insufficient attention being paid to improvements in the west, notably in respect to the A82.

## 5.11 INTERNATIONALISATION

- 5.11.1 Cross-border air passenger numbers at Inverness in 2015 (604,000) were very similar to those seen in 2008 (587,000)<sup>7</sup>. However, this masks significant changes in composition, that is:
- International services' passenger numbers increasing from 8,000 to 59,000.
  - London services, falling from 353,000 to 305,000 passengers.
  - Other UK services rising slightly from 226,000 to 239,000 passengers.
- 5.11.2 The recent announcement of an increase in flights to a global hub airport from Inverness (to Amsterdam and Heathrow) is welcomed. Such developments support exporting, attract inward investment and can support growth in the important overseas tourist market<sup>8</sup>. This is in a context where 289,000 international flights per year have an origin/destination in Inverness Airport's catchment area but are made from an airport other than Inverness<sup>9</sup>.

5.11.3 Furthermore, there is also scope to:

- Improve service timings to/from London, allowing a reasonable length of day trip for business visitors from the south.
- Increase frequency and have more suitable timings on the Amsterdam and Heathrow services.
- See direct scheduled flights from Germany and France. These countries are key overseas visitor markets for the HITRANS area.

## 5.12 TRANSPORT HUBS

- 5.12.1 Given the large geographical area covered by HITRANS no transport hub can be of equal importance to all parts of it. However, Inverness Airport and Inverness rail station are both key to the region. Both facilities require to continue to develop, ensuring they are of an appropriate quality and capacity, and meeting the expectations of visitors and potential inward investors.
- 5.12.2 Inverness Airport and Rail Station also both require improvements in physical linkages, including between Inverness Rail and Bus Stations. Interestingly, and worthy of credit is that the use of bus / coach as the surface access mode to Inverness Airport has increased from 9.1 per cent in 2009 to 17.1 per cent in 2013; and which is accompanied by a six percentage point reduction in private car and a 10 percentage point reduction in hire car.

## 5.13 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF

- 5.13.1 Transport to major employment locations-business parks and industrial estates in some areas could be improved to increase the labour pool and improve access to employment opportunities. Invernet has been a success, and using that approach to facilitate/enhance rail commuting into Inverness from the east, and into Fort William would merit consideration.

<sup>7</sup> CAA Airport Data

<sup>8</sup> Visit Scotland data show that in 2014 overseas visitors accounted of 23% of overnight visitors to the HITRANS area compared to 18% for Scotland as a whole

<sup>9</sup> Based on 2013 CAA Passenger Survey data

5.13.2 In the HIE Young People and the Highlands and Islands: Attitudes and Aspirations Research<sup>10</sup> observed that some young people commented on the distance that sometimes needs to be travelled for them to access employment opportunities, depending on their location in the region. Also highlighting that this can be exacerbated by issues around public transport provision, particularly in some parts of the region, making access to one's own vehicle more important (with generally lower levels of access to one's own car amongst young people).

5.13.3 General connectivity of the region has an impact on the attractiveness of the region to work and call home. Attracting staff to the area will be easier if there are good connections to other parts of Scotland and beyond for leisure trips. That includes more direct flights to "sunshine destinations".

## 5.14 TRANSPORT SECTOR

5.14.1 Finally, there are some challenges facing the transport sector itself. In 2013 8,500 people were employed in Transport and Storage<sup>11</sup> in the HITRANS area. That represents six per cent of total employment in the area (compared to a figure of five per cent for Scotland as a whole). Thus, transport is an important source of employment in itself as well as allowing the rest of the economy to function.

5.14.2 There can be challenges with staff recruitment and retention. That is both at the more skilled levels (e.g. engineers) and in operations (notably bus and goods vehicle drivers). The average age of drivers is increasing due to the difficulty of attracting suitable young people.

5.14.3 It can also be difficult to retain drivers where demand is quite seasonal. Thus, they are either underemployed in the winter, or they are not retained in the hope that they can be rehired in the following spring.

## 5.15 IMPLICATIONS FOR RTS

5.15.1 Key aspects for the RTS from the economic issues include:

- Static or increasing journey times on strategic transport links and the need to reduce these journey times on trips to main economic centres.
- Relatively low productivity in the region and the need to both attract more higher value added activities and to improve productivity.
- Higher expectations of the quality of public transport and the need for greater ambition in what is proposed for transport more generally to support growth.
- Importance of air connectivity and an emphasis on internationalisation.
- Growth in cycling-based tourism.
- Economy of the east stronger than the west.
- Barrier of travel cost for those in the isles particularly, and the discrepancy in application of RET.

### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS



3/ Do the main issues highlighted in this section in relation to the economy reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region's economy in respect to transport?

Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately, please describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you, your business and / or your family?

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/young-people-and-the-highlands-and-islands--attitudes-and-aspirations-research.html>

<sup>11</sup> Annual Business Survey 2013. Numbers exclude those in businesses that are below the VAT threshold and/or do not operate PAYE

## 6. MAIN ISSUES - CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

### 6.1 CONTEXT

- 6.1.1 It is important to put communities and individuals at the centre of efforts. This is in keeping with the reducing inequality pillar from Scotland's Economic Strategy and the Community Empowerment (2015) Act.
- 6.1.2 As highlighted in the original HITRANS RTS the region is a diverse one, with a mixture of rural and remote rural and island communities, as well as several key urban centres. A large proportion of the region's people are located in remote and rural areas; in the islands and the west and north mainland, with significant implications for access to amenities and jobs. On the other hand, significant population numbers reside in the region's more urban areas including in and around Inverness, Oban, Stornoway, Kirkwall, Fort William and Elgin.
- 6.1.3 From the *Mid-2014 Population Estimates Scotland*<sup>12</sup> it is seen that since mid-2004 to mid-2014 Scotland's population has increased by 5.2 per cent. Over this period in the HITRANS local authority areas only Argyll and Bute saw a decrease (-3.2 per cent), while Eilean Siar saw a small increase of 2.3 per cent, and Moray (6.0 per cent), Highland (8.6 per cent) and Orkney (8.9 per cent) all saw an increase greater than the Scotland level.
- 6.1.4 More recently, between mid-2013 and mid-2014 Scotland's population increased by 0.4 per cent, representing an increase of 19,900 people; mostly driven by migration. In year, Eilean Siar (-0.5 per cent) and Argyll and Bute (-0.4 per cent) were amongst only nine local authority areas in Scotland that experienced a reduction in population. The change is generally the result of migration; while in Argyll and Bute the population decline is mainly attributable to more deaths than births.
- 6.1.5 Scotland's Population 2014<sup>13</sup> reports that the ageing of the population is evident in the rises in the older age groups (+13 per cent in the 45-59 age group and +17 per cent in both the 60-74 and 75 and over age groups) and the falls in some of the younger age groups (minus three per cent in the under 16 age group and -11 per cent in the 30 to 44 age group). From Mid-2014 Population Estimates Scotland all HITRANS local authorities rank in the top 12 of local authorities with a higher percentage of people aged 65+. This ranges from Argyll & Bute (ranks 1) with 24 per cent aged 65+ to Moray (ranks 12th) with 20 per cent aged 65+. And this compares to Scotland as a whole with 18 per cent of the population aged 65+.

Ageing population: 20-24% aged 65+

- 6.1.6 Health features prominently in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF3)<sup>14</sup>. Relevant National Indicators include: to improve mental wellbeing; increase physical activity; improve self-assessed general health; and increase the proportion of healthy weight children. From the *Scottish Health Survey*<sup>15</sup> in 2014, 74 per cent of adults identified their health as 'good' or 'very good'; eight per cent said it was 'bad' or 'very bad'. At a health board-level, for the most recent available period of 2008-2011, Orkney had the highest levels of people reporting 'good' or 'very good' health at 83 per cent, while this was 77 per cent in Highland and as low as 75 per cent in Eilean Siar.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-estimates/midyear-2014/14mid-year-pe-cahb-publication-correction.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/nrs-visual/rgar-infographic-report.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/933/0124202.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485587.pdf>

6.1.7 Between 2008-2011 38 per cent of people in Scotland met physical activity recommendations. For Eilean Siar the level was slightly lower at 37 per cent, while in Orkney and for Highland health board areas slightly more adults met the recommendations, at 39 per cent and 41 per cent respectively.

## 6.2 ACCESS DEPRIVATION

6.2.1 People can be access deprived and this can adversely affect the ability to participate in everyday life; particularly to access learning opportunities, employment, shops, primary and secondary health care, and social and cultural opportunities. Those groups experiencing particular barriers include:

- Younger people as they are seeking to be more independent. Highlands and Islands *Enterprise Young people and the Highlands and Islands: Attitudes and aspirations research*<sup>16</sup> reported that there remain issues associated with transport availability and costs for young people. Availability and affordability of bus and ferry services were rated more highly than train and air services. The introduction of RET on ferry routes was appearing to be impacting positively on attitudes towards cost in those areas benefitting. Public transport timetabling was a frustration: timetabling and travel logistics were considered poor – many young people found it easier to travel to other parts of Scotland than to elsewhere in the Highlands and Islands, and the lack of joined-up service timetabling was cited by many.
- People who are older and looking to maintain their independence.
- People with a disability; and recognising this encompasses a wide range of characteristics and needs.
- People living in particular geographical communities; which might include areas with limited or no public transport or community transport provision, and will particularly affect those without access to a car, or for example households with a single car, but with multiple people in the household.

6.2.2 The upshot of this access deprivation can be social isolation and loneliness and the impact this has on health and wellbeing, and in turn later reducing independence and increasing dependence on health and care services should not be overlooked in planning for transport and other services.

6.2.3 There is currently no overarching policy or Government document reaching across modes on transport accessibility issues. However, work is in progress to produce Scotland's first Accessible Travel Framework. The RTS and HITRANS has the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Accessible Travel Framework, and HITRANS is a member of the Steering Group.

## 6.3 CAR AVAILABILITY

6.3.1 Across the HITRANS local authorities, between 18 per cent (Orkney) and 23 per cent (Argyll and Bute and Eilean Siar) of

|||  
18-24% of households do  
NOT have a car;  
43,000 households

households do not have a car available; that is a little more than 43,000 households in the region that do not have a car available. Nationally car ownership sits at around 31 per cent of households not having a car available; and while this is lower in more remote and rural settings, this still leaves a significant number of households that do not have a car available to get about.<sup>17</sup>

## 6.4 BUS SERVICES

6.4.1 Reductions in bus passenger numbers were described in the National Transport Strategy<sup>18</sup>; bus passenger journeys have declined by 14 per cent in the five-year period to 2014-15 for much of the HITRANS area (data includes Shetland) to 12 million passenger journeys. This is set in the context that over the same period local bus service kilometres have declined by 16 per cent in the area. This compares to Scotland, which has seen a reduction in

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.hie.co.uk/regional-information/economic-reports-and-research/archive/young-people-and-the-highlands-and-islands--attitudes-and-aspirations-research.html>

<sup>17</sup> Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 34, 2015 Edition: [http://www.transport.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/rtd\\_reports/uploaded\\_reports/j415388/j415388.pdf](http://www.transport.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/rtd_reports/uploaded_reports/j415388/j415388.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.transport.gov.scot/system/files/documents/reports/Main%20doc%20-%20Transport%20Scotland%20-%20National%20Transport%20Strategy%20-%20January%202020%20-%20final%20online.pdf>

passengers in all regions with the exception of the South East. Scotland as a whole has seen passengers reduce by 10 per cent; and kilometres reduce by 12 per cent over the period.

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*Bus journeys fallen by 14% (09/10-14/15)*

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- 6.4.2 There are issues of declining budgets for bus services in a region with a high prevalence of subsidised services. Across all services the wider, global economic context is putting more pressure on operators and authorities to cut under-performing services. Perhaps radical ideas are needed to keep communities connected.
- 6.4.3 Progress in developing a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme for Inverness supports a focussed approach on towns; and addressing the congestion problems associated with Inverness particularly, making the bus a more reliable and therefore attractive option.

## 6.5 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

- 6.5.1 There are a variety of community transport provisions across the region; some well-established, others newer and indeed some that have not endured since or through the period since the original RTS. Community Transport can be a vital service for people in areas without, or with poor, public transport provision. At the first Scottish Rural Parliament in June 2015 an 18-month Action Plan<sup>19</sup> was produced and 'effective and affordable transport' is a key ask within it. The Action plan currently highlights two objectives in relation to transport infrastructure and requires partnership working:
- Improved communication between transport operators and communities regarding transport developments and efforts to integrate timetables, with opportunities for communities to challenge change to services.
  - Improved support for community transport initiatives.

6.5.2 Loneliness and isolation is a growing challenge for Scotland. Nearly one third of older people and half of over-80s say that they are sometimes lonely. Loneliness can lead to depression, anxiety and mental decline, as well as increased levels of drinking and smoking. Lonely and isolated people need more support from health and social care services, as well as family members. This problem is going to get worse as the region's population ages.

6.5.3 Community transport (as well as well-designed public transport) can mitigate the cost of loneliness and isolation through providing older people and people with disabilities with access to health and other services, and to social opportunities. Recognising the often piecemeal community transport landscape across the region, there is the opportunity to make great strides in this area, addressing inequalities and targeting public sector-wide, but probably medium- to long-term efficiencies and cost-savings. Community Planning Partnerships, (local) community empowerment and the delivery of Health and Social Care integration across the region perhaps offers better opportunities than ever before to progress in this area.

## 6.6 COST OF TRAVEL

6.6.1 The cost and affordability of transport is a challenge for households; while the cost of motoring has been declining in recent years (2015 fuel prices at the pump down 12 to 16 per cent around the region compared to 2014<sup>20</sup>) the cost of public transport fares continues to rise (up 18 per cent over the last five years at current prices). For communities, cost is an issue on a day to day basis in terms of travel to work, to learning and education, and for all manner of other trip purposes. Where there is public transport network 'gaps', in both urban and rural settings, people without access to a car will often have to rely on a more expensive taxi option to travel to do their shopping or attend a hospital appointment for example.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/SRP\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Final\\_04.pdf](http://www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/SRP_Action_Plan_Final_04.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation 2014/15, December 2015

## 6.7 ACCESS TO HEALTH

6.7.1 The Highlands and Islands Patient Travel Scheme continues to be operated by each of the Health Boards. Work is progressing to standardise the travel policies across Orkney, Highland and Western Isles (and Shetland) Health Boards. While achieving consistency of approach in support for access to hospital, opportunities to reduce the need to travel or to reduce the need to travel as far, such as with telemedicine, should be advanced in partnership between health, transport and with other, possibly UHI or third sector partners.

## 6.8 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

6.8.1 There has been a high uptake of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Nationally, 1.3 million people have National Concessionary Travel Scheme Cards in Scotland. And, 1 in 3 journeys by bus in 2014/15 were made under the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Those living in areas without public bus services, notably remote and island communities, are not able to benefit from free travel; and consequently make much fewer trips and access fewer health, social and leisure opportunities having a consequential adverse impact on health and wellbeing.

6.8.2 The scheme however is not available for use on Community Transport and on local ferry and air services, which are considered to be the rural / island equivalent of local bus services in a town or city setting. Local Authorities have some local concessionary travel schemes in place, but these often offer limited journeys and so are not on a par with the free, unlimited use national scheme; and it is suggested represents a disparity and inequality for people in rural and island localities. Furthermore, a lack of (public/community) transport to access local ferry and air services acts as a further barrier.

## 6.9 ACTIVE TRAVEL

6.9.1 The Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS)<sup>21</sup> stated a vision that “by 2020, 10 per cent of all journeys taken in Scotland will be by bike”. From the 2013 CAPS

refresh, new CAPS initiatives now include for each local area, a strategic approach to supporting functional cycling (and active travel more broadly), mapping the appropriate infrastructure improvements required along with supporting promotional work to achieve tangible changes in travel choices; all of which is in keeping with the HITRANS approach and indeed an approach to focus efforts on those areas where journeys are most likely to be swappable from car (or public transport) to more walking and cycling on a regular basis. The health benefits of such a shift is well documented and is important to highlight for both children, where a troubling growth in obesity levels across the region has been seen, and for adults in terms of physical and mental health and wellbeing.

## 6.10 DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

6.10.1 While the importance of good (transport) access has been described, reducing the need to travel is also an important tool in tackling particularly climate change. Broadband and information and communications technology are crucial for flexible working practices such as home working or working remotely. That said, it is vital to highlight the many ‘holes’ around the region that do not have mobile and / or good broadband speeds. Superfast connections are planned for 95 per cent of the UK by late 2017, but half of rural areas struggle to get standard broadband. Research has highlighted that only 52 per cent of rural areas have good broadband speeds (10 Mbps), compared to 96 per cent of urban areas<sup>22</sup>. As part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 the Rural Development: Broadband Scheme is able to support communities to establish and grow the demand for superfast broadband services in areas that are unlikely to be served by the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband Programme; and support community projects that create, improve and extend superfast broadband infrastructure in remote and rural Scotland<sup>23</sup>.

6.10.2 The digital revolution has potentially significant transport impacts. Working from home and flexible working patterns are reducing commuting in the regular peaks, however, they create demand for travel at other times and also alter where people chose to live in relation to their

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/report/j0002-00.htm>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/ng-interactive/2016/feb/23/forget-superfast-missing-basic-broadband-infographic-economic-impact?CMP=ema-1705&CMP=>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.hie.co.uk/community-support/community-broadband-scotland/rural-development-broadband-scheme/default.html>

workplace; prospectively increasing the amount of travel required to other destinations.



*People expect better, quicker information about transport*



6.10.3 People expect better, quicker information about transport and they want it often in the palm of their hands, as for example Traveline use Apps and social media to actively inform people of changes or disruptions. More important than ever is the accuracy of travel information, ensuring people have confidence and so can rely on the information and services themselves. Technology is also enabling Traveline to provide an app for people who are visually impaired; essentially a speaking journey planner that also speaks on the bus telling the passenger which stop they are approaching etc. and is being developed further to provide details of the journey to the bus stop.

6.10.4 Public transport users also want to stay connected while travelling. Expectations are for free Wi-Fi on long distance coaches and on rail services, and for plug-in charge points for all the devices that are carried across the rail network.

6.10.5 Increased online shopping means a high level of individual deliveries; people may not be travelling to the shops themselves as frequently, but different transport demands are increasing around freight and distribution, down to the local level of van and courier deliveries to peoples' doors.

**6.1.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR RTS**

6.1.1.1 The quality of the travelling experience is of great importance; having good infrastructure and environments to encourage people to use services and to present a gateway for example that those visiting the region can be impressed at, and those living and travelling around the region can be proud of. Inverness Airport and Inverness Rail Station have been highlighted as gateways that require attention.

6.1.1.2 From the analysis key points in terms of community connectivity include:

- Access deprivation exists across the region, with particular barriers for younger people, people who are older, people who have a disability and those living in particular localities.

- High levels of car ownership, but still significant numbers of people in households without access to a car.
- Reduction in bus service kilometres by 16 per cent compared to 12 per cent in Scotland as a whole.
- Mixed picture of community transport provision across the region.
- Cost and affordability of transport a frequent concern.
- Opportunities for highlighting health benefits of walking and cycling and as alternative mode in and around main towns.
- Greater emphasis on links between transport, accessibility and health and wellbeing; and the service delivery and financial costs of poor connectivity.
- Poor broadband and mobile connections in rural localities.

6.1.1.3 There are further opportunities for HITRANS and partners to improve access opportunities particularly through the Community Planning Partnerships and Health and Social Care Integration arrangements in each of the local authority areas.

6.1.1.4 There has been limited progress in respect to Community Transport, and consideration of the whole public transport landscape (local bus, coach, rail, community transport) is required to challenge the decline of bus service patronage.

6.1.1.5 The whole journey experience should be considered, from planning and information, through cost, accessibility and the quality of the journey experience, including interchange between legs in the journey.

6.1.1.6 There is a significant opportunity to adopt a locality-based planning approach; routed in local communities themselves to assess access, and plan solutions.

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

4/ Do the main issues highlighted in this section in relation to connected communities and accessibility reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region's people in respect to transport?  
 Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately; describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you / your business and/or your community?

# 7. MAIN ISSUES - LIFELINE TRANSPORT

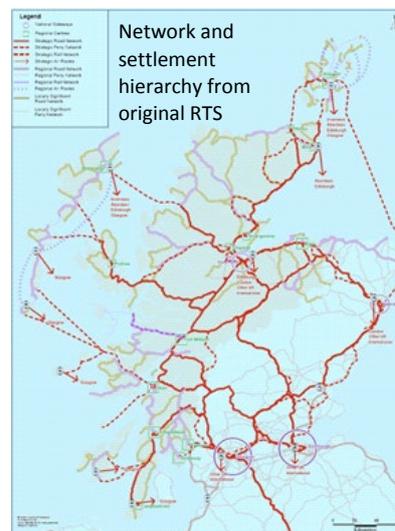
## 7.1 CONTEXT

- 7.1.1 There is a need to strengthen the prominence and efforts in relation to the region's 'lifeline' transport network; this in the context of how vital a strong, resilient and reliable network is to the attractiveness and competitiveness of the region. The original RTS reports that lifeline transport is essential to maintain island and remote communities.
- 7.1.2 Many of the links within the region, road, public transport, ferry and air, are 'lifeline' in that they are vital to the region being able to compete economically and to addressing inequalities across the region and in comparison to the rest of Scotland.
- 7.1.3 The NPF3 reflects aspirations to make travel times by public transport between cities faster than by car, and also emphasises the importance of lifeline links to and from rural areas. Reference to "lifeline" in the NTS includes the need to "maintain and improve the accessibility of rural and remote areas: integrating freight considerations into the provision of lifeline ferry and air services."

## 7.2 LIFELINE ROADS

- 7.2.1 The region's road network comprises a mix of trunk and local roads. The majority of the network is winding single carriageway roads, with limited passing places. This results in longer journey times, particularly in summer when traffic levels increase due to the volume of tourists visiting the region. The lack of suitable diversionary routes can be exacerbated by weather and topographical factors.

## What is Lifeline Transport?



Lifeline transport in the Highlands and Islands is often a single route, be it road, ferry or air, that connects a community with key destinations, such as a GP surgery, onwards to hospital, to work, shopping and leisure opportunities. If a lifeline route is unavailable, that community will often be cut off, or in some cases have a long diversionary route. For those without access to private transport, public transport can be a lifeline service, bus, community transport and local ferries and air services provide lifeline connections between communities and where they need to travel to.

7.2.2 There are 56k kilometres of roads in Scotland, 3,570 are trunk roads and 52,417 are local authority roads. There is 33,454km, which is 60 per cent, of Scotland's road length within the HITRANS region; that is 38 per cent of all trunk roads and 59 per cent of local authority roads in Scotland.

7.2.3 Of the local authority roads, just under half (49 per cent) are unclassified, while just 13 per cent are A-roads, 13 per cent B-roads and 17 per cent C-roads.

7.2.4 In terms of condition, the 2014-15 National Road Condition Indicator (RCI)<sup>24</sup> showed 29 per cent of the local authority A road network in Scotland may, following more detailed examination, require some kind of maintenance. For the whole of the local authority network, about 37 per cent may similarly require some kind of maintenance.

7.2.5 The table below shows that significant portions of the region's local network may require some kind of maintenance, with as much as 17 per cent of all local roads in Argyll and Bute scoring 'red'<sup>25</sup> compared to the Scotland as a whole level of just 8 per cent of local authority roads.

7.2.6 In the original RTS emphasis was given to the problems associated with a backlog of maintenance on the region's roads; this situation has worsened and intensified due to austerity measures. It is highlighted that these are likely to be affecting routes in the most remote areas, with poorer roads slowing journeys and increasing wear and tear on vehicles.

60% of all of Scotland's road length in HITRANS area

7.2.7 There is also an issue around the existing sections of single-track roads significantly slows journey times and journey consistency for those communities connected via a single-track route; setting them at a disadvantage compared to other rural areas.

### 7.3 LIFELINE FERRY SERVICES

7.3.1 Ferry services for both mainland to island and inter-island services provide lifeline links for the populations of the islands and peninsulas. There is a marked increase in network coverage and the frequency of sailings during the summer months to cope with the tourist trade. Communities benefit from increased summer schedules buoyed by tourist demand, but this then leaves deficiencies in service in the winter periods.

7.3.2 The selection process for the next Scottish Government procured Clyde and Hebridean Ferry Service (CHFS) is underway; the contract should be awarded at the end of May 2016 for the provision of services from October 2016. The contract for the Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) runs (from July 2012) to April 2018. A STAG study including public consultation is underway to inform the next contract process.

	A Roads Condition		B Roads Condition		C Roads Condition		Unclassified Condition		All roads Condition	
	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber
Argyll and Bute	11	35	21	43	20	41	15	38	17	39
Eilean Siar	10	32	11	33	9	45	9	39	9	37
Highland	3	22	7	28	12	30	10	29	9	28
Moray	2	18	1	17	3	20	5	28	4	23
Orkney Islands	2	16	2	17	2	12	4	21	3	18
Scotland	5	24	7	29	9	29	9	30	8	29

<sup>24</sup> Extracted from Scottish Transport Statistics No. 34: <http://www.transport.gov.scot/report/scottish-transport-statistics-no-34-datasets-8914>

<sup>25</sup> A 'red' is a score of 100 or greater – the road has deteriorated to the point at which repairs are likely to be required to prolong its future life. An 'amber' is a score of 40 or greater but less than 100 – further investigation should be taken to establish if treatment is required.

- 7.3.3 The original RTS identified that there is poor integration, in terms of information, ticketing and timetabling, with other public transport. This is again highlighted as an area where there is significant room for improvement. The disconnect within booking and ticketing and timetabling for example is an aspect that reinforces the message that the region's transport network is challenging to negotiate, which puts people of visiting the area or indeed living or growing business in the area.
- 7.3.4 Road Equivalent Tariff fares are not available on the ferry services to Orkney, neither on the mainland services or the internal network. With the significant differences in rates not reflecting the very similar lifeline nature of the routes; it is stressed that a discrepancy is thought to be leading to displacement of visitors and doesn't reflect the nature and aim of national emphasis around removing inequality across Scotland.
- 7.3.5 An ageing ferry fleet is leading to poorer service reliability, and perhaps coupled with changing weather patterns. There is a need to best match vessels to the nature and conditions of a route to minimise service disruption; equally harbour infrastructure is key and poor maintenance can have a devastating impact on communities, for example poor maintenance of slips which are known to be reducing the resilience of services, with one particular example being Colintrave.
- 7.3.6 There are points in the ferry network, such as the Orkney internal ferry services which also have particular problems. The original RTS reported that the Orkney internal ferry network was the least adequate of all the links on the regional network. While small improvements have been made in the network, the principal problem remains the same with ageing vessels and infrastructure, and gaps in service as identified through the Routes and Services Methodology Approach used in the Scottish Ferries Services - Ferry Plan.
- 7.3.7 In December 2014 HITRANS, Orkney Islands Council, Transport Scotland, Shetland Islands Council and Zetrans agreed a Joint Statement Establishing Partnership Commitments to jointly addressing ferry replacement issues in Orkney and Shetland; the agreement linked to the Empowering Scotland's Islands Communities Prospectus.

Similarly, in 2014 a Statement of Common Objectives was agreed in respect of the 2018 Northern Isles Ferry Services Contract.

- 7.3.8 The 2015 *Orkney Outer North Isles STAG Study STAG Pre-Appraisal & Part I Report*<sup>26</sup> identified that "the principal 'problems' stem from a combination of challenging operational conditions; ageing assets; service frequency and capacity issues, and worsening demographics in a number of the island communities. Whilst the problems are significant, there are nonetheless important opportunities in terms of the potential role of e.g. Transport Scotland in supporting ferry services and technological developments in the air industry." Further work is currently underway to complete the STAG reporting and provide a ferry replacement programme for discussion with Scottish Government.

## 7.4 LIFELINE AIR SERVICES

- 7.4.1 Lifeline air services are a crucial part of the transport network. The network is comprised of a combination of commercial and subsidised services (supported by Public Service Obligation), serving both internal routes and destinations external to the region.
- 7.4.2 Fare levels on these routes are considered to be high compared to other domestic routes; and they are holding back the economic and social development of Scotland's peripheral regions.
- 7.4.3 The Air Discount Scheme is an important element of the lifeline air services; it offers a now 50 per cent discount on air fares. The scheme now also covers those travelling as volunteers or staff of third sector organisations. The exclusion of business travel for those based in the targeted 'peripheral parts' of the region does not reflect the lifeline nature of the routes, and acts as a barrier to economic sustainability and reinforces inequalities.
- 7.4.4 Two new Twin Otter aircraft operate on the Scottish Government Public Service Obligation routes from Glasgow to Barra, Campbeltown and Tiree. There are concerns with regards the reliability of the island to mainland connections; and concerns around the long term

<sup>26</sup> Orkney Outer North Isles STAG Study STAG Pre-Appraisal & Part I Report, prepared by Peter Brett Associates for Orkney Islands Council, March 2015

resilience of the Saab aircraft which Loganair deploys on these routes.

7.4.5 The existing RTS highlighted Skye and surrounding area as being most distant, in terms of journey time, from one of the key National Gateways, and without a connecting air service to provide a much quicker journey option. The most recent HITRANS RTS Monitoring Report states a car drive time of five hours between Portree and Glasgow, and an average public transport journey time of six hours and 55 minutes over the route.

7.4.6 The small airstrips that connect the outer north isles in Orkney to Kirkwall and connect Coll and Colonsay to Oban equally require to be kept up to date with routine maintenance. Services operate under Local Authority PSOs, and the airfields can experience manning issues, particularly given the ageing population of the islands. The airfields (and services) are provided by (or tendered by in the case of the services) the local authorities. The internal air service in Orkney is part of the consideration of the STAG work referred to at 7.3.6. There is considered to be a funding gap for the provision of maintenance of these services similar to that of internal ferry services.

## 7.5 LIFELINE RAIL SERVICES

7.5.1 Inverness is the main hub of the region's rail network, with the north-south route (Thurso/Wick to Glasgow/Edinburgh) and east-west route (Aberdeen to Kyle of Lochalsh) passing through the city.

7.5.2 The rural nature of routes to Oban, Mallaig, Kyle and Wick connect many people across a dispersed area to neighbouring areas and to the key regional centres and national gateways. These are not traditional branch lines, rather providing a full mix of interurban, suburban, intercity and rural. For some places rail provides connections for communities otherwise unconnected by public transport.

7.5.3 Concerns exist around the long journey times and slow average speeds on the local service routes, and also around service reliability; with some stakeholders suggesting that, in the same way as there is a backlog growing in terms of maintenance on local roads, the same

is the case around the rail network, with consequently more incidences of trees falling onto lines etc. disrupting services on a more regular basis.

7.5.4 Furthermore, poor integration on routes, for example between ferries at Scrabster and rail in Thurso is poor.

## 7.6 LIFELINE BUS SERVICES

7.6.1 Subsidised and lifeline bus services make up a large proportion of the local bus network in the region. Many places are served by local services and the long distance coach routes, yet limited frequencies away from all but the main routes severely limit opportunities for commuting and travelling to other time sensitive destinations. Local transport services tend to consist of radial bus services out of the main built up areas, such as Inverness, Elgin, Oban, Fort William, Thurso, Kirkwall and Stornoway.

7.6.2 The greater the distance these services are from built up areas the less the frequency and many of these services will be at most hourly on six days per week. Furthermore, many places have only three or four buses per day and significant areas will be without access to a local bus service to connect to their nearest town or centre.

7.6.3 As reported in Section 6 there have been reductions in bus services across most of the region since 2008, with a 16 per cent decrease in bus service kilometres in the region overall in the five-year period to 2014/15. Provision on many key bus routes has diminished, pushing people into using their car (if they have one available) and in a context of overall declining bus patronage. The lack of bus services fuels inequality.

7.6.4 The diminishment of the Bus Investment Fund is a concern. The adverse effect of the poor quality of local roads on the tyres and suspensions of buses; as well as resulting in a poor ride quality for passengers are also issues in the region.

## 7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RTS

- 7.7.1 The lifeline network across the region comprises all means of transport, the road network and bus services that operate on it, as well as rail, ferry and air services. Integration of provision, information and services is key, but there is still ground to be covered in maximising integration and meeting the public's expectations.
- 7.7.2 There is a well acknowledged backlog in maintenance across the lifeline network, which touches on all means of transport.
- 7.7.3 Given the challenges described, including financial austerity, the best opportunity is to look to some transformational opportunities of sustaining, and more so, enhancing the lifeline network of the region.



### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

5/ Do you agree with the definition of lifeline transport at the start of this section?

Yes  No

The definition should read / include / exclude:

6/ Do the main issues highlighted this section in relation to lifeline transport reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region's people and businesses in respect to transport?

Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately; describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you / your business and/or your community.

# 8. MAIN ISSUES - NETWORK RELIANCE AND RELIABILITY

## 8.1 CONTEXT

8.1.1 Journey reliability and consistency is more of an issue than it was when the first HITRANS RTS was published. In recent years there has been an increasing amount of:

- Weather-related road closures.
- Number of disruptions to train services, notably due to high winds.
- Weather-related cancellations of ferry services.
- Most recently, flight delays and cancellations on air routes due to airline operational issues.

8.1.2 This is in a context where, as the refreshed NTS notes, “we have ever-higher expectations of disruption and discomfort being minimised and ‘normal service’ being maintained but raising standards has implications for resilience”.

8.1.3 In the HITRANS area where there is transport disruption there is often a lack of an alternative/reasonable alternative route. Many communities are served by a single road or have an alternative route that is lengthy. Many smaller islands have only a single ferry route.

8.1.4 In addition, some trips to main centres (e.g. from Orkney's north isles to Edinburgh) are multi-legged. Thus, they are more vulnerable to the weather and transport operators' performance than a trip involving a single leg. Disruption or cancellation of just one leg of a multi-legged trip can lead to the whole trip being abandoned.

8.1.5 In much of the HITRANS area public transport is provided by a single transport operator. That encompasses bus, rail, ferry and air services. Thus, there is a high dependence on the reliability and resilience of a single operator, with in most cases no alternative provider that can be used instead. This raises the wider issue of the resilience of the transport network where the decisions and financial performance of a single operator (e.g. an airline) could potentially lead to the almost immediate loss of some transport services to an individual community.

8.1.6 The lack of mobile phone signal coverage in some parts of the HITRANS area means that alerting people to problems can be challenging. For example, where a road is blocked it is less easy for drivers to be alerted to this, and in turn, for them to alert others (e.g. business meeting attendees) that they are delayed or, in the case of an accident, unhurt.

## 8.2 ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF DISRUPTIONS

8.2.1 Disruptions can cause significant negative economic impacts. The uncertainty around ongoing disruptions can have negative impacts on business confidence and the perceptions of potential visitors and inward investors. Notably disruptions in the air network are commonly cited as well as road routes and areas reliant of an ageing ferry fleet.

*Disruptions can cause significant negative economic impacts.*

8.2.2 It will also result in higher business costs where extra travel time is included in case of disruptions or cancellations. For example, business travellers flying to a destination the day before a meeting to ensure that they can attend with the attendant cost of overnight accommodation and additional time away from their business. Indeed, the scale of not attending meetings, training or seeking business opportunities due to these risks (as well as the cost of travel) is unknown.

- 8.2.3 This is in a context where a significant number of HITRANS residents work well beyond the area (e.g. in oil and gas, merchant shipping) but retain their home here. The ability to maintain this depends on reliable transport services. In addition, a number of the area's ferry routes are used for daily commuting to work which again requires a high continuity of service to be feasible.
- 8.2.4 Road closures also affect bus operators. They result in higher operating costs (due to lengthy diversions in some cases) and lost patronage due to a perceived unreliability of the bus service in question.
- 8.2.5 Flight and rail disruptions, ferry cancellations and road closures are all considered to be more prevalent than at the time of the original RTS. There is an issue of monitoring of disruptions and cancellations. There are no apparent consolidated data sources covering the number and duration of road closures for example. Information is available on service disruptions and cancellations on the Northlink and CalMac ferry networks. However, the published data do not readily disaggregate their causes—e.g. differentiating between weather-related impacts and other types. Further, published performance data are at a quite high level. Figures for periods of up to 12 months may mask significant concentrations of cancelled sailings in a small number of days. Clearly, that would have a much bigger negative impact than if cancellations were spread evenly across the year.

### 8.3 AGE OF TRANSPORT ASSETS

- 8.3.1 Resilience and reliability are undoubtedly reduced by the age of transport assets. The increasing age of the internal Orkney ferry service's fleet, the advanced age of the Saab 340 aircraft which are used on many Highlands & Islands routes, with no new planes of that size (i.e. around 30 seats) currently being built. Concerns exist around reliability of air services in the region, reinforced by a recent survey by SCDI and HITRANS. A paper is to be presented at the next Islands Area Ministerial Transport Working Group on the subject.
- 8.3.2 Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) own the 32 vessels that are used on the CalMac routes. Most (18) of them are more than 20 years old, with six more than 30 years old. Five new vessels have been built since 2008.

A number of vessels are in excess of 30 and even 40 years old across the network. Further, changes in legislation have meant that some older vessels have a smaller vehicle deck capacity than when they were first built, reducing their usefulness.

- 8.3.3 It can be expected that older vessels will be more prone to breakdown and lengthier dry dock periods, affecting the resilience of the overall fleet.



#### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

7/ Do the main issues highlighted in this section in relation to network reliability and resilience reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region?

Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately; please describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you, your business and / or your community?

# 9. MAIN ISSUES - ROLES, RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## 9.1 CONTEXT

9.1.1 The information in the table below is taken from the NTS Refresh document. It shows the main functions of the three tiers of Scottish Government, RTP and local authority.

9.1.2 HITRANS was established by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 - and came into existence - on 1st December, 2005. HITRANS members consist of a total of five councillor members from the constituent councils, The Highland Council, Moray Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; and Orkney Islands Council. The Partnership has a full quota of five councillor members and currently has three other (non-councillor) members.

Tier	Summary of Main Role and Responsibilities	
Scottish Government/Transport Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation</li> <li>• National Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Research and analysis in collaboration with local authorities, RTPs and others</li> <li>• Strategic infrastructure investment</li> <li>• National concessionary travel schemes</li> <li>• Sustainable and active travel policy and investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus strategy and support</li> <li>• Support for lifeline air and ferry services</li> <li>• Rail: policy, infrastructure investment, awardee of and support for ScotRail and Caledonian sleeper franchises, specification and funding of Network Rail outputs</li> <li>• Blue Badge Scheme</li> <li>• Trunk roads: policy, design, construction and maintenance</li> <li>• Traveline Scotland</li> </ul>
Regional Transport Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Can receive functions transferred to them from local authorities or SG</li> <li>• Project development/delivery/funding</li> <li>• Key agency in development planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory role in Community planning</li> <li>• Regional promoter of economic development, sustainable and active travel, behaviour change and modal shift</li> <li>• Regional modelling</li> <li>• Operation of bus and other transport services</li> </ul>
Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local roads maintenance</li> <li>• Funding local and regional infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Subsidising socially-necessary bus services</li> <li>• Influencing or managing local bus service provision</li> <li>• Local concessionary travel schemes</li> <li>• Preparation and delivery of local transport strategies, having regard to the RTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local transport infrastructure provision</li> <li>• Operating council-owned bus stations, airports, ports and harbours</li> <li>• Funding voluntary sector transport work</li> <li>• Local road safety</li> <li>• Funding and provision of internal ferry and air services</li> <li>• Transport demand management initiatives and measures</li> <li>• Health and social care transport</li> <li>• Schools transport</li> </ul>

9.1.3 The Act placed a statutory duty on the seven RTPs in Scotland to produce a RTS for their area. The RTS is intended to influence all of the future plans and activities of HITRANS and informs future national and local transport strategies.

9.1.4 The legislative framework setting up HITRANS recognises that transport functions are currently carried out by other bodies and makes provision for transfer of some or all of these functions in certain circumstances should HITRANS, its constituent Councils and Scottish Ministers consider this is appropriate.

9.1.5 In 2014/2015 HITRANS received Grant-in-aid from Scottish Government/Transport Scotland of £522,750 to fund revenue expenditure to support implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy.

9.1.6 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 requires the constituent councils of each Regional Transport Partnership to fund its net expenses, after allowing for any income, including any grants from the Scottish Government. In 2014/2015 HITRANS constituent Councils contributed £200,000 towards the Partnership's net expenses. This represents match funding to complement the Scottish Government's revenue Grant-in-aid contribution towards nominal Core Funding.

9.1.7 HITRANS is also able to secure additional funding from sources such as Transport Scotland, Sustrans and European funding initiatives.

## 9.2 LOCAL AUTHORITIES

9.2.1 Transport spend has been under pressure in recent years, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. The following table shows the change in transport spend by the five HITRANS local authorities since 2008.

**18% reduction in revenue expenditure on roads and transport (Scotland 9%)**

9.2.2 Across the five HITRANS local authority areas the cash value of local authority net revenue expenditure on roads and transport fell from around £79 million in 2008-09 to c£72 million in 2013-14. Once inflation is factored in the real terms reduction between the two years is over £14 million (18 per cent). There was also a real terms fall in Scotland as a whole. However, this was less (9 per cent) than in the HITRANS area.

### LOCAL AUTHORITY EXPENDITURE ON TRANSPORT (£,000)<sup>28</sup>

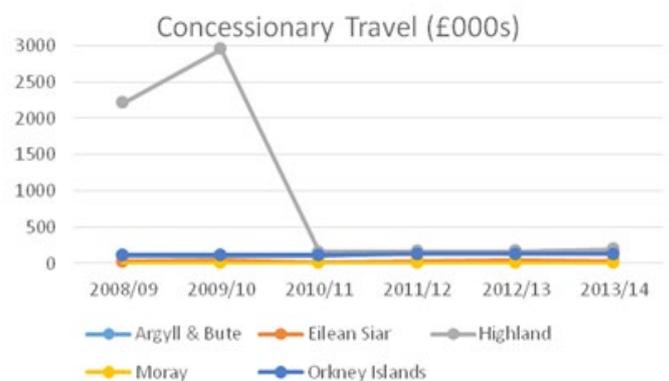
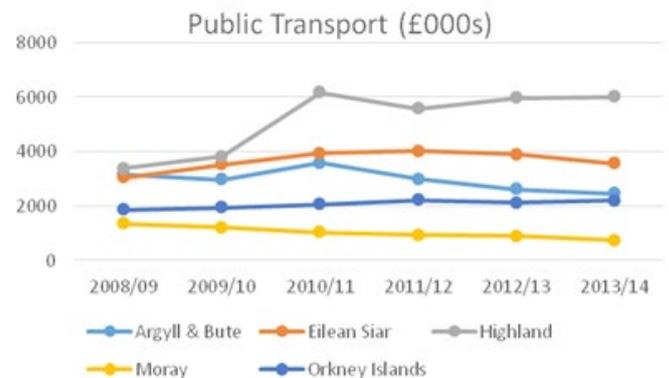
Local authority net revenue expenditure on roads and transport (excluding loan charges)-excluding network management		
Area/Cash Expenditure	2008-09	2013-14
Five HITRANS Local Authorities (ABC, OIC, THC, MC, CNES)	78,811	71,907
Scotland	422,364	428,440
Area/Real Terms Expenditure*	2008-09	2013-14
Five HITRANS Local Authorities (ABC, OIC, THC, MC, CNES)	78,811	64,598
Scotland	422,364	384,891
<b>Change in Real Terms Expenditure</b>	<b>HITRANS -18%</b>	<b>Scotland- 9%</b>
Gross capital account expenditure on local authority roads and transport by Councils and Boards		
Area/Cash Expenditure	2008-09	2014-15
Five HITRANS Local Authorities (ABC, OIC, THC, MC, CNES)	62,802	43,638
Scotland	493,787	433,369
Area/Real Terms Expenditure*	2008-09	2014-15
Five HITRANS Local Authorities (ABC, OIC, THC, MC, CNES)	62,802	38,618
Scotland	493,787	383,519
<b>Change in Real Terms Expenditure</b>	<b>HITRANS -39%</b>	<b>Scotland -22%</b>

<sup>28</sup> Source: Scottish Transport Statistics \*In 2008-09 prices

9.2.3 In 2008-09 there was gross capital account expenditure of over £62 million across the five HITRANS local authorities. The 2014-15 figure was lower-at around £43 million. Once inflation is factored in the reduction in spend between the two years was over £24 million (39 per cent). Again, there was also a real terms fall in this expenditure in Scotland but to a lesser extent (22 per cent).

9.2.4 Financial pressures have led, in most cases, to a reduction in Council's spend on both road investment and maintenance, and revenue support for public transport (notably bus service contracts).

9.2.5 The table in Section 7.2 above provided information on the condition of non-trunk roads, which supports this conclusion. So, in 2014-15 three of the five HITRANS local authority areas had roads that were in a worse condition than the average across all Scottish local authorities. The largest difference was in Argyll and Bute where the proportion of "Red" roads was more than twice the Scottish average. In four of the five Council areas the proportion of roads that were either "Red" or "Amber" had increased since 2008-09. (The exception was Eilean Siar).

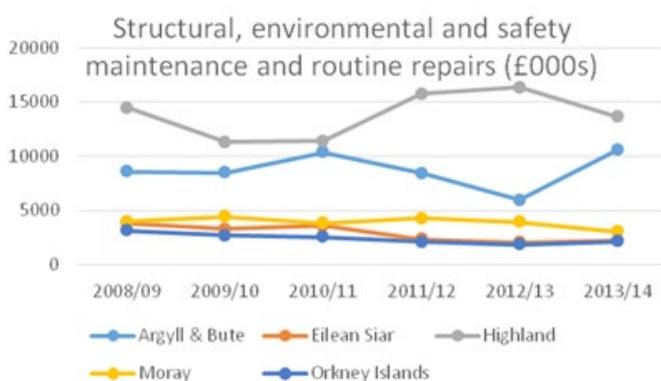
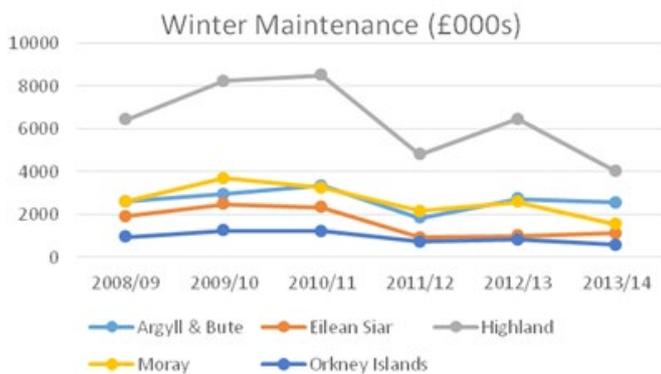


9.2.6 Some Council funding and operational issues could be addressed by the transfer of responsibilities to national level organisations. That could include Transport Scotland assuming responsibility for ferry services currently run and funded by local authorities. It might also encompass CMAL adopting piers and running them on a Council's behalf and charging them accordingly. It is important that any changes still provide a level of local accountability for the transport network and services in these communities.

9.2.7 There is potential for greater cooperation/shared services between local authorities and HITRANS-and between the five local authorities themselves; offering the potential to provide efficiencies and cost savings.

9.2.8 The deterioration in the quality of the roads leads to higher bus and goods vehicle operating costs; increased windscreen cracks and increased wear and tear on brakes, tyres and vehicle suspensions. Less frequent clearing of ditches and gulleys can lead to an increased risk of road flooding.

9.2.9 The reduction in funding for subsidised bus services could have a knock on effect on other, commercially operated services; where a subsidised contract accounts for some of the fixed costs of bus operations and can enable non-supported services to be operated around the contracted



9.2.10 There is a lack of understanding of transport bodies' roles and responsibilities. That is among both the general public and transport operators. This can for example create additional work for local authorities as they tend to be a first port of call for the public's transport queries/ complaints even where the responsibility lies elsewhere.

### 9.3 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PROVISION

9.3.1 Recognising Scottish Government provision of a number of services and functions there is an issue around balancing needs and wants with budget constraints and across the whole of Scotland. Notably, Transport Scotland is responsible for:

- Air Services in Scotland: PSO services between Glasgow and Barra, Campbeltown and Tiree, sponsorship of HIAL and ADS.
- (National) Concessionary Fares and bus services policy, BSOG.
- Ferry Services: notably the CHFS and NIFS.
- Motorways and trunk roads.
- Rail services.

9.3.2 Delays in project progress cause frustrations around the region. This is most typically where major investment is required but it is not seen as clear how far that is the responsibility of national rather than local/regional organisations. This includes the replacement of Council ferries, and major road projects (e.g. A890 Strome ferry).

### 9.4 EU FUNDING

9.4.1 EU funding was previously used to undertake road improvements in the HITRANS area. There is a major reduction in EU funding available for transport projects. This view reflects that "the 2014 (EU) Programmes have introduced a major shift towards global competitiveness and innovation, both in Commission and nationally managed funds. This is reflected in the arrangements of the Structural Funds in Scotland... (and)... the ability to make major investments in roads, harbours... is highly unlikely to return"<sup>29</sup>

9.4.2 Furthermore, the projects stipulated under ERDF, for example Active Travel Hubs, are very fixed and provide local authorities with limited opportunity to match local needs.

### 9.5 RTP ROLE

9.5.1 A Working Group consisting of RTP Lead Officers, Transport Scotland and CoSLA was tasked by the Minister for Transport and Veterans and the chairs of the RTPs to examine how RTPs can further assist the Scottish Government in delivering the National Transport Strategy and Government's wider Strategic Objectives, and to maximise the role of RTPs in delivery their Regional Transport Strategies.

9.5.2 Some of the key recommendations from the Report of Scottish Government / Regional Transport Partnerships / CoSLA Working Group include to:

- *"Strengthen and ensure more consistent liaison arrangements between Scottish Government/Transport Scotland, CoSLA and the RTPs, building on the existing Lead Officers' and Chairs' meetings."*
- *Transport delivery mechanisms, prioritisation and funding to be addressed through proposed Scottish Government/Transport Scotland/RTP/CoSLA liaison arrangements, liaison with private sector partners, Community Planning Partnerships and the travelling public, and regional action as appropriate.*

9.5.3 The 2015 National Transport Strategy recognises that "the landscape in transport is complex" and that "responsibility for transport provision and its governance rests with a number of organisations, depending on factors such as mode, location, purpose and type of intervention."

9.5.4 The NTS highlights that "RTPs set regional transport strategies across modes and local authority boundaries, work with local authorities and others to deliver specific projects to help deliver those strategies and are statutory partners in Community Planning Partnerships to support their consideration of transport issues, including those which span local authority boundaries."

<sup>29</sup> "EU FUNDS POST 2020" paper to the Convention of the Highlands and Islands March 2016

9.5.5 The Community Empowerment Act strengthens community planning to give communities more of a say in how public services are to be planned and provided, and gives new rights enabling communities to identify needs and issues and request action to be taken on these. The Community Planning approach is evolving in each of the local authority areas, responding to requirements from the Scottish Government and local challenges and opportunities, including the roll out of health and care integration arrangements. HITRANS is an active participant in the Community Planning Partnerships across the area; and the Community Planning approach might be a vehicle to consider the local-level strategic planning of transport, or the application of the RTS at a local authority level. Thus recognising the wide-ranging, multi-sector challenges that transport interventions are aiming to address, and the opportunities that transport can make enhancements to other services and sectors; and notwithstanding the financial challenges that are facing all services.



However; it has become clear through our stakeholder engagement process for the refresh of the NTS that more needs to be done to clarify roles and responsibilities in transport, and that this cannot simply be done in this strategic document.

This NTS describes roles and responsibilities at the high level, but more needs to be done to clarify them in transport across modes and layers of governance.

This refreshed strategy marks the start of a process of joint working with RTPs, local authorities and others to clarify roles and expectations across transport modes, locations and organisational hierarchy.

Future transport sub-policies, strategies and guidance will include a specific focus on roles and responsibilities - in brief, who will be responsible for doing what in order to deliver one or more NTS key strategic outcomes.

In parallel, Transport Scotland will review existing guidance on regional and local transport strategies, to ensure that it reflects an updated understanding of how transport is organised in Scotland and the challenges which it now faces. Transport Scotland will also review how these complement guidance for spatial planning and forthcoming statutory guidance on community planning under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. This includes guidance how community planning partners, including local authorities and RTPs, can and should support local outcomes which CPPs identify as priorities in their new local outcome improvement plans and towards the achievement of which transport can contribute.

**National Transport Strategy, January 2016**

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS



8/ Do the main issues highlighted in this section in relation to roles, relationships and responsibilities reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region?  
 Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately; describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you, your business and / or your community

# 10. MAIN ISSUES - CARBON REDUCTION

## 10.1 CONTEXT

10.1.1 The 2008 Regional Transport Strategy for the HITRANS region did not explicitly address low carbon transport. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives have been implemented at the regional and local level to reduce emissions and to tackle climate change.

10.1.2 All HITRANS councils have procured plug-in vehicles and installed charging infrastructure. Argyll and Bute funded their programme in 2010/11 with grants from the Scottish Government Low Carbon Vehicle Procurement Support Scheme (LCVPS). Installation of EV charging points have been taking place by councils since 2010 up until 2015, with most councils including Argyll and Bute<sup>32</sup>, Highlands<sup>33</sup>, Moray<sup>34</sup> and Orkney Islands Council<sup>35</sup>, installing rapid chargers.

	Argyll and Bute	Highland	Moray	Orkney Islands	Eilean Siar
Plug-in vehicles procurement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Installation of EV charging points	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hydrogen vehicle procurement				✓	✓
low carbon buses/greener fuels in public transport		✓		✓	✓
Use of greener fuels for aviation					
Low carbon ferry related initiatives				✓	✓
Low Carbon Car Clubs	✓	✓			✓
Low carbon transport related awareness/training initiatives		✓		✓	✓
Hybrid rail/rail electrification initiatives		✓			
Incentives for low carbon vehicle users	✓				
Local low carbon transport policy/plans/strategies		✓		✓	
Other low carbon vehicle initiatives		✓			

<sup>30</sup> Plug-in vehicles refer to battery EV, series plug-in hybrids and parallel plug-in hybrids.

<sup>31</sup> Including conventional and rapid chargers.

<sup>32</sup> Argyll and Bute Council (2013) Proposed Response to Scotland's third national planning framework (NPF3) Main Issues Report and Draft Framework: <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00431929.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> The Highland Council (2015) Communities Called to ACTION for Green Transport Project: [http://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/8878/communities\\_called\\_to\\_action\\_for\\_green\\_transport\\_project](http://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/8878/communities_called_to_action_for_green_transport_project)

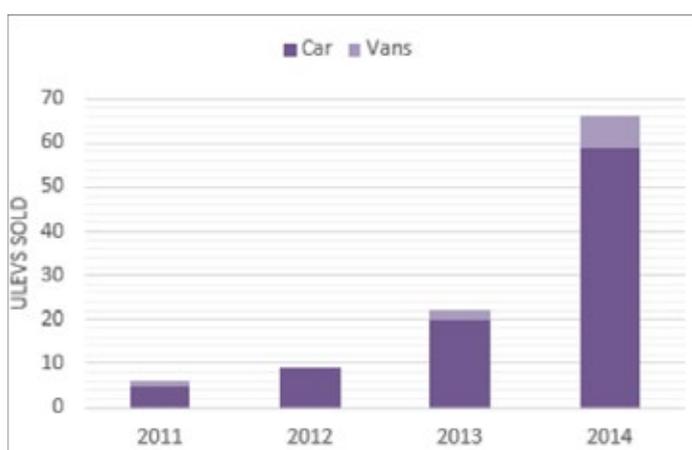
<sup>34</sup> Moray Council (2013) Update on plugged in places programme – provision of electric car chargers: <http://www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/DC20130625/Item%2011%20-%20Update%20on%20Plugged%20in%20Places%20Programme.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Orkney Islands Council (2015) Step aboard Orkney's first electric bus: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/OIC-News/Step-aboard-Orkneys-first-electric-bus.htm>

## 10.2 LIGHT DUTY VEHICLES

10.2.1 Light duty vehicles, including cars and vans, are becoming more efficient year on year. Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Scotland for new car registrations have fallen by 24 per cent over the last ten years and by 3.6 per cent in the last year<sup>36</sup>. A shift to more efficient diesel and petrol engines has been critical for this improvement. Despite this improvement, light duty vehicles represented 40 per cent of 2012 Scottish GHG emissions.

10.2.2 In 2014, the number of ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) sold in the HITRANS region tripled from those sold in 2013. At the end of 2014, the Orkney Islands had the ninth highest ratio of ULEVs to all registered vehicles out of 232 local authorities in the UK<sup>37</sup>. Nonetheless, ULEVs currently account for only 0.07 per cent of the total number of cars and vans in the HITRANS region<sup>38</sup>.



10.2.3 The Uptake of ULEVs is expected to continue to grow nationally. According to an outlook prepared by Transport Scotland in the Switched on Scotland Roadmap<sup>39</sup> by 2030,

65 per cent of new car and van sales will be low emission vehicles. Importantly this outlook also explains that a mix of ultra low emission technologies will play a role in contributing to this.

10.2.4 An important area of activity is to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is deployed to support the operation of these vehicles. A total of 42 rapid chargers and 123 standard charge points have been installed across the region since 2010<sup>40</sup>. Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles (HFCEVs) may also provide a low emission solution to the HITRANS rural communities in the longer-term<sup>41</sup>. However, this will require substantial investments in hydrogen refuelling infrastructure<sup>42</sup>.

## 10.3 HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

10.3.1 The region's geography and the limitations of other modes of transport make heavy good vehicles (HGVs) crucially important in the distribution and delivery of goods. HGVs are the second largest emitter of Scotland's transport GHGs, accounting for 28 per cent in 2012 and reporting an increase of 4 per cent from 2011 levels<sup>43</sup>, despite HGVs becoming more fuel efficient.

10.3.2 Innovations such as stop-start systems and vehicle light weighting could improve efficiency by around 30 per cent compared to today's levels by 2030<sup>44</sup>. Reducing aerodynamic drag and rolling resistance of tires through enhanced design and proper inflation<sup>45</sup> will also play a part<sup>46</sup>. Alternative fuels such as biomethane and natural gas will also help to reduce carbon emissions from freight operations<sup>47</sup>, with the potential to cut haulage emissions by almost two thirds, according to consultants Ricardo-AEA<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Transport Scotland (2014) Chapter 13: Environment and Emissions: <http://www.transport.gov.scot/statistics/j357783-16.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Department for Transport, Vehicle Licensing Statistics

<sup>38</sup> Calculated using the Department for Transport Statistics 2014

<sup>39</sup> Switched on Scotland: A roadmap to widespread adoption of Plug-in Vehicles: <http://urbanforesight.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Switched-On-Scotland.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Data obtained from the National Charge Point Registry (NCR) 2016: <http://www.national-charge-point-registry.uk/> and from ZapMap (2016): <https://www.zap-map.com/>

<sup>41</sup> Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles (HFCEVs) have a far greater range than most of today's pure battery EVs, they can also refuel in a similar amount of time as petrol or diesel vehicles. Hydrogen can also be used in especially converted petrol and diesel engines, producing mainly water vapour as their emissions.

<sup>42</sup> Transport Scotland (2016) Low Carbon Vehicles: <http://www.transport.gov.scot/environment/low-carbon-vehicles>

<sup>43</sup> Transport Scotland (2014) Chapter 13: Environment and Emissions: <http://www.transport.gov.scot/statistics/j357783-16.htm>

<sup>44</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2015) CfSRF for CCC – An assessment of potential for demand-side fuel savings in the HGV sector: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/cfsrf-an-assessment-of-the-potential-for-demand-side-fuel-savings-in-the-hgv-sector/>

<sup>45</sup> This could yield a fuel saving of 1-5% for long-haul operations, reducing GHG emissions.

<sup>46</sup> icct (2013) Trailer Technologies for increased heavy-duty vehicle efficiency: [http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/ICCT\\_HDVtrailerTechs\\_20130702.pdf](http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/ICCT_HDVtrailerTechs_20130702.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> UK Government (2014) Low Emission HGV Task Force Recommendations on the use of methane and biomethane in HGVs: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/287528/taskforce-recommendations.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287528/taskforce-recommendations.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> gasrec (2012) Biogas transport fuel could cut HGV emissions by 65%: <http://gasrec.co.uk/biogas-transport-fuel-could-cut-hgv-emissions-by-65/>

10.3.3 Work is being undertaken by both the Scottish and UK Governments to establish the incentives, policy, infrastructure and necessary trials and pilots to create markets for low emission HGVs<sup>49</sup>. The EU has also set a target of 30 per cent of all >300km freight movements to be by sustainable mode by 2030, and 50 per cent by 2050<sup>50</sup>.

## 10.4 BUSES AND COACHES

10.4.1 Low carbon buses are more fuel efficient than conventional ones and are defined as those which produce 30 per cent less GHG emissions<sup>51</sup>. Low carbon buses and coaches can include fully electric, hybrid and biofuel powered vehicles.

10.4.2 Low carbon bus initiatives have been launched in three councils within the HITRANS region: including Argyll and Bute, Orkney Islands, and Highland Council. In 2014 as part of the East Inverness Bus Investment fund project<sup>52</sup> and with funding from HITRANS, Stagecoach Highlands introduced 15 hybrid buses in Inverness<sup>53</sup>, whilst Orkney introduced its first fully electric bus in 2015<sup>54</sup>.

## 10.5 FERRIES

10.5.1 Low carbon ferries include fuel efficient vessels, ferries which can operate on biofuels such as liquid natural gas (LNG) and innovative diesel-electric hybrid ferries. These are all options which will contribute towards the decarbonisation of this mode of transport and which are already being applied to some degree in the HITRANS region.

10.5.2 A feasibility study for low carbon ferries was commissioned by Orkney Islands Council in 2015<sup>55</sup>. This follows the development of three hybrid ferries, the first of their kind, which are being operated in the HITRANS region by Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac) and are owned by CMAL, developed as part of the Small Ferries EU funded project<sup>56</sup>. "Project EcoShip", was also launched in 2015 by CalMac and will see a significant reduction of CO2 emissions from 10 of its vessels through a new fuel monitoring system<sup>57</sup>.

10.5.3 Reducing sulphur oxides (SOx) emissions from January 2020 will have an impact in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) area of operation requiring existing vessels to be modified, for them to use low-sulphur fuels, and for new builds to be built to comply with regulations.

10.5.4 Hybrid ferries have been shown to offer significant reductions in emissions<sup>58</sup>. CalMac has established a successful blueprint for this technology on the Hebrides link between Skye and Raasay. These ferries can re-charge at night from the national grid, drawing on renewable energy and are expected to offer long-term savings.

## 10.6 RAILWAY

10.6.1 Electric rail is able to provide faster, quieter, more reliable journeys and offers a 20-35 per cent reduction in carbon emissions, with zero emission at the point of use, when compared to conventional diesel trains. Bimode/hybrid-trains are able to provide similar benefits when the option of 100 per cent train electrification is not viable, due to costs of implementation and energy limitations. Both options have the potential to reduce air pollution in hot spots, such as urban centres and are seen as being necessary to reach the national emission targets of 2050.

<sup>49</sup> The EU has set a target of 30% of all >300km freight movements to be by sustainable mode by 2030, and 50% by 2050.

<sup>50</sup> Acea (2011) Modal Shift Target for Freight Transport Above 300km: An Assessment: [https://www.acea.be/uploads/publications/SAG\\_17.pdf](https://www.acea.be/uploads/publications/SAG_17.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (2015) Low Carbon Emission Buses: <http://www.lowcvc.org.uk/initiatives/lceb/index.htm>

<sup>52</sup> One of 13 bus projects in Scotland's to receive grants under the first round of Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund (BIF).

<sup>53</sup> HITRANS (2015) Inverness Goes Green with First Fully Electric Buses in Scotland: <http://www.hitrans.org.uk/News/Story/153>

<sup>54</sup> Orkney Islands Council (2015) Step aboard Orkney's first electric bus: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/OIC-News/Step-aboard-Orkneys-first-electric-bus.htm>

10.6.2 In 2014/15, there were 1,631 km of electrified track in Scotland, representing 38 per cent of the network according to Network Rail. The potential for electrification of rail in the region has been reviewed by HITRANS commissioned studies which have focussed on the potential for electric and hybrid rail systems in Inverness<sup>59</sup>.

10.6.3 By the end of 2018, the Highland Main Line (HML) will benefit from hybrid/bimode Intercity Express Project (IEP) trains operating services from London. In the long term, as demand for rail keeps increasing, electrification of the HML by 2027<sup>60</sup> may be required to replace older trains – when a key break point for the HST fleet is expected. The introduction of electrified rail, will enhance gauge for freight trains, enable greater use of Scotland's domestically-generated green energy and prove to be more economically viable than diesel fuelled trains.

## 10.7 AVIATION

10.7.1 Air travel in Scotland accounted for 13 per cent of GHG emissions and is the highest emitter per passenger per kilometre. With demand for this mode of transport increasing, GHG emissions are expected to increase. To offset this, in 2015 HITRANS launched the rural airports project SPARA 2020 (Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports) funded by ERDF. The project aims to decarbonise transport links to Highland and Islands airports, through the implementation of electric buses, plug-in vehicle hires and taxis. It also considers the business case for offering jet biofuel<sup>61</sup> to aircraft at the region's airports<sup>62</sup>.

## 10.8 MOVING FORWARD

- 10.8.1 Since the publication of the RTS in 2008, progress has been made in introducing a range of initiatives to achieve emissions reductions from transport.
- 10.8.2 Taking an integrated approach to reducing emissions across all transport modes will require close working with a range of different partners. Much of this will come down to working with organisations to develop compelling business cases for investment and communicating the benefits of low emission transport to individuals, communities and the region as a whole.
- 10.8.3 Central to this will be the economic benefit. Tourism is one of the most pollution sensitive economic sectors, with failures to reduce noise and emissions from transport potentially having profound consequences for tourism flows and the associated economic benefits that this brings. In addition, high fuel prices and longer journey distances mean that individuals, businesses and other organisations across the region could potential make significant savings by investing in low emission transport.
- 10.8.4 Links to renewable energy will also be important to many communities across the region and will undoubtedly support the uptake of electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles. The integration of green rural transport with renewable energy grids also offers potential for the region to offer a unique test bed and realise new investment opportunities.

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

9/ Do the main issues highlighted in this section in relation to carbon reduction reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 and the current challenges and opportunities for the region?  
 Yes in full  Yes in part  No

Please state any issues that are not covered or captured adequately; please describe the nature of the issue(s) and what this means to you, your business and / or your community?

<sup>55</sup> OPPEX (2015) A Study Into The Feasibility of Low-Carbon Ferries – Orkney: [https://oppex.com/notice/SCOTLAND\\_3f166bc123eac1f6abdfdefe2f27429a](https://oppex.com/notice/SCOTLAND_3f166bc123eac1f6abdfdefe2f27429a)

<sup>56</sup> The Press and Journal (2015) New £12m ferry for Clyde and Hebrides service launched: <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/north-of-scotland/777828/new-12m-ferry-for-clyde-and-hebrides-service-launched/>

<sup>57</sup> The Press and Journal (2015) CalMac hails early effects for "Project Ecoship": <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/north-of-scotland/722504/calmac-hails-early-effects-project-ecoship/>

<sup>58</sup> A typical ferry with a 250 kW diesel engine and 1800 hours runtime per year will consume 120m<sup>3</sup> of diesel. The emission per year will be in the range of 300 tonnes of NO<sub>x</sub> and 150 kg of particles. A corresponding electric driven ferry will have no emissions and the consumed energy will be around 500 MWh as opposed to 1200 MWh from a diesel fuelled ferry.

<sup>59</sup> Hitachi Rail Europe (2015) 70 new trains for the ScotRail franchise: [http://www.hitachirail-eu.com/class-385-for-scotland\\_141.html](http://www.hitachirail-eu.com/class-385-for-scotland_141.html)

<sup>60</sup> Earliest date at which a replacement franchise could introduce a new fleet for InterCity services in Scotland.

<sup>61</sup> Jet biofuel is a blend between sustainable natural waste feedstock and 50% regular fossil fuel kerosene.

<sup>62</sup> HITRANS (2015) Minister launches HITRANS rural airports project: <http://www.hitrans.org.uk/News/Story/166>

# 11. RTS OBJECTIVES

## 11.1 INTRODUCTION

11.1.1 Consultation with stakeholders and HITRANS Board members to inform this Main Issues Report has included discussions on the validity, relevance and detail of the original RTS vision and objectives. The majority felt that the

essence of the vision and objectives remained valid, but that there was the opportunity to refine, develop and re-focus the objectives to help steer the RTS and HITRANS' work over the coming years.

11.1.2 The existing vision and objectives comprise:

<b>Enhance the region's viability</b>				<b>Vision</b>
<b>Improving interconnectivity of the whole region to strategic services &amp; destinations</b>				<b>Delivery objective</b>
<b>Economy - enable the region to compete &amp; support growth</b>				<b>Primary outcome objective</b>
<b>Enable people to participate in everyday life</b>	<b>Improve the safety and security of travel</b>	<b>Manage the impacts of travel on the region's environmental assets</b>	<b>Improve the health of the region's people</b>	<b>Supporting outcome objectives</b>

11.1.3 Specific issues and salient points in respect to the objectives that have emerged during the preparation of the Main Issues Report include:

- The economy should remain the key focus. Cost effective transport is a key theme. The objectives should explicitly refer to reducing travel times. Internationalisation and connecting with the global economy should be a focus. Need to emphasise place competitiveness from a business economy point of view and also population growth.
- There is a need to deliver on government aspirations of integration and smart ticketing. Integration is vital in a region where there are many operators and many means of transport. The objectives should highlight the gap between the Highlands and Islands and the rest

of Scotland; the objective should be to find ways to overcome these inequalities.

- There should be a focus on the environment and particularly reducing emissions; a more positive statement than "manage the impacts of travel on the region's environmental assets".
- There is a need to have a strong theme in the objectives around participation / social inclusion. Improving physical and digital information would be welcomed in the objectives – the Smart Rural Agenda. There is a need to emphasise "lifeline" in the objectives; and to be explicit about accessibility – in the widest sense meaning removing barriers to access to health, jobs, social events, cultural activities etc. Health is probably more relevant and topical now; and the objectives should be explicit

about coordinating access to health better. Further, health should be woven through with the aspects that affect health outcomes, rather than being a standalone objective.

11.1.4 These aspects gathered in the preparation of the Main Issue Report will be used to inform updated objectives for the refreshed RTS.

## 11.2 MAIN ISSUES

11.2.1 To support the development of new objectives, it is useful to consider the main issues that have emerged to date through the RTS refresh (as described in Sections 5 to 10) set in the context of the NTS Framework, specifically the NTS three Key Strategic Outcomes.

NTS Key Strategic Outcomes	Points emerging through the RTS Refresh
Promote economic growth by building, enhancing managing and maintaining transport services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of moving goods is high in the region, particularly from distant areas.</li> <li>Freight requires same level of attention as passenger transport.</li> <li>Increase in network disruptions; service disruptions can cause significant negative economic impacts.</li> <li>No consolidated data sources covering the number and duration of road closures.</li> <li>Transport funding is under pressure in local authorities.</li> <li>Connectivity to outwith the region, to the Central Belt and internationally.</li> </ul>
Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the transport network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Journey reliability a greater issue than previously.</li> <li>Fare levels on lifeline air services are high.</li> <li>Disparity in ferry fare levels across Scotland.</li> <li>Loss of bus investment funds.</li> <li>Transport assets, particularly some ferries, are very old.</li> <li>Reduction in bus service kilometres.</li> <li>Fragmented provision of community transport.</li> <li>Poor mobile and broadband connections in some areas.</li> <li>Importance of connectivity and accessibility to health and wellbeing; including access to health, social, leisure and cultural opportunities.</li> </ul>
Protect our environment and improve health by building and investing in public transport and other types of efficient and sustainable transport which minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather related disruptions on the rise.</li> <li>Increasing demand for transport and travel. People travelling further, more regularly.</li> <li>Opportunities across all modes to reduce carbon contributions.</li> <li>Opportunities to reduce the need to travel; use of telecommunications resources, where they are of a good enough standard.</li> <li>Evidence of increasing levels of activity travel, particularly in towns and cities with relatively short journey lengths.</li> </ul>
Improve safety of journeys by reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, passengers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local roads can become heavily congested.</li> <li>Road accidents are falling.</li> </ul>
Improve integration by making journey planning and ticketing easier and working to ensure smooth connection between different forms of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of understanding of transport bodies' roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>Inconsistent approach to sharing information on activity.</li> <li>Need to strengthen relationships between HITRANS and health boards.</li> <li>Community Planning as an opportunity to pursue locality-based planning approach to delivery.</li> <li>Expectations of good, up to date, information in your hand; need for greater ambition in what is proposed for transport integration.</li> </ul>

## 11.3 PROPOSED NEW RTS OBJECTIVES

11.3.1 By considering the key issues in the context of the NTS Key Strategic Outcomes and the local Community Planning Partnership priorities, the following objectives have been drafted for the RTS refresh:

### HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVES

Support an increase in the rate of sustainable economic growth; and widen participation in the labour market for those constrained by transport

Increase independence and individuals' participation in learning, social, leisure and cultural activities, and access to employment and healthcare.

### TRANSPORT OUTCOMES

Reduce journey times and improve reliability and resilience across the network, including to national gateways and direct links to destinations outside Scotland

Tackle congestion in Inverness and at other crunch points in the network

Improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of transport

Improve the attractiveness of bus and rail as an alternative to the car; and improve connections particularly for those without transport or at risk of isolation

Maximise opportunities for walking and cycling, particularly in towns and cities; and supporting the development of active tourism

### HELPING TO:

Protect the environment and minimise emissions and consumption of resources and energy

Improve the health and wellbeing of people across the region



## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

10/ Are the new draft RTS objectives appropriate and fitting? Yes in full  Yes in part  No

11/ How could the objectives better meet the issues that have been described?

12/ What do you feel the refreshed RTS should focus upon?

13/ Should one or more objective(s) carry more weighting than others, or should all be given the same weighting?

## 12. QUESTIONS FOR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

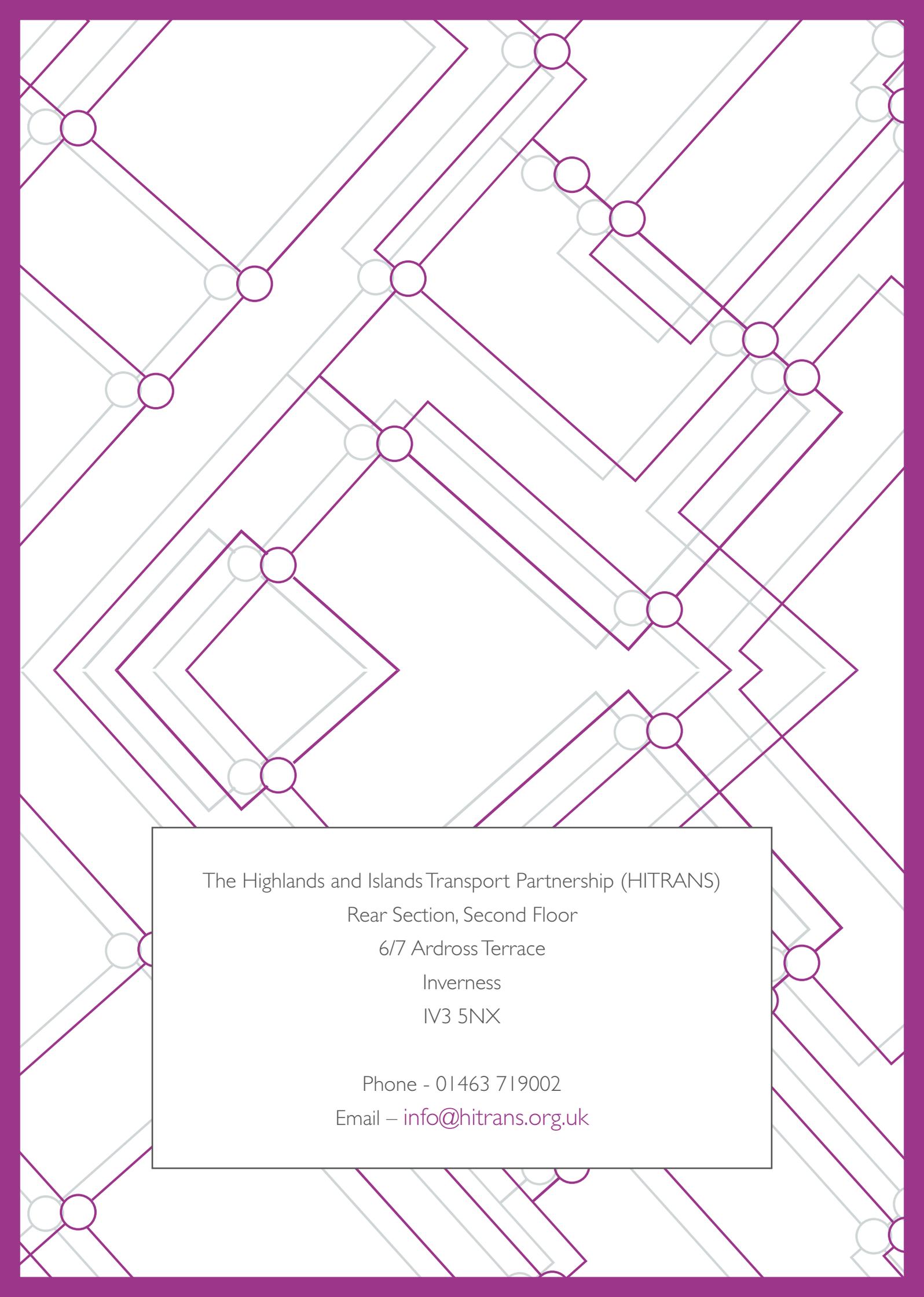
12.1.1 There will be a period of consultation on this Main Issues Report. The feedback received through this consultation will be used to finalise the Main Issues Report and in turn to inform the refresh of the HITRANS RTS.

12.1.2 Key questions have been provided at the end of the sections in this Main Issues Report, they are summarised here - key questions for partners, stakeholders and those with an interest in the refresh of the RTS are as follows:

- Does the draft Main Issues Report fairly reflect the changes in policy and trends since the publication of the first RTS in 2008? Are there any other policy or trends that will or should influence the delivery of the RTS that need to be considered?
  - Does the draft Main Issues Report fairly reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS in 2008 described in [Sections 5](#) through to [10](#)? If any issues are not covered or captured adequately, please describe the nature of the issue(s), and what this means to you, your business and / or your community?.
  - Are the new draft RTS objectives ([Section 11](#)) appropriate and fitting? How could the objectives better meet the issues that have been described? What do you feel the refreshed RTS should focus upon? Should one or more objective(s) carry more weighting than others, or should all be given the same weighting?
  - HITRANS current responsibility through The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 place a statutory duty to produce the RTS for their area. The RTS influences all of the future plans and activities of HITRANS and informs future national and local transport strategies. In terms of HITRANS' role and activities, from your perspective what works well and why?
- Also in terms of HITRANS' role and activities what could be built upon or changed in the future during the term of the refreshed RTS?
  - The RTS Refresh will go on to consider and evaluate a list of policies and proposals for action for HITRANS and partners to progress in the coming five-15 years. What are the key policies and proposals that you think HITRANS and partners should focus efforts upon and why?

These consultation questions for partner and stakeholders can be completed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/hitransRTSMIR>



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