



NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Partnership in the HITRANS Office, Inverness Airport on **Friday 9 January 2009 at 14:00**

AGENDA

APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

MINUTES

- 1 **Minute of Meeting of 5 December 2008**
- 2 **Matters Arising**

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW

- 3 **Implications of STPR for the Highlands and Islands**
Report by Partnership Director

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- 4 **Road Transport Biofuels**
Discussion led by Partnership Director/Partnership Adviser Tony Jarvis

FINANCE

- 5 **EU Funding – START Project**
Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

AOCB

Item:
1



Minute of Meeting held
in the HITRANS Office,
Inverness Airport on
Friday 5 December
2008 at 9.30am.

PRESENT

Mr Duncan Macintyre (Chairman) – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr John Laing (Vice-Chairman) – Highland Council
Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
Mr George McIntyre – Moray Council
Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Wilson Metcalfe
Ms Louise Smith

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS
Mr Ranald Robertson - HITRANS
Mr Mike Mitchell – Highland Council
Mr Sam MacNaughton – Highland Council
Mr Howard Brindley – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Murdo Gray – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Gordon Holland – Moray Council
Mr Frank Roach – HITRANS
Mr David Summers – Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum
Mr Douglas Forson – Scottish Government
Mr Ian Duff - SCDI
Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Derek Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mrs Judith Ainslie – Scottish Government
Mr Bob Clark – Audit Scotland
Mr Justin Muir – Experian Catalist
Mr Arthur Renshaw – Experian Catalist
Mr Ian Jones – Department for Transport

APOLOGIES

Mr Donald Macrae – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Roseanne Urquhart – NHS Highland

MINUTES

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| HITRANS | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 5 September 2008 was approved . |
| Matters Arising | 2 | There was no matters arising from the Minute. |

FINANCE

HITRANS Audited Statement of Accounts – 2007/2008 3 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report in relation to HITRANS Annual Accounts 2007/08. Mr Bob Clark, Audit Scotland addressed members in relation to the Audit of the financial statements and review of the partnerships governance arrangements. It was stated that Audit Scotland had given an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of HITRANS for 2007/08.

It was agreed to note the information as well as the Auditors Clearance Report on the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008.

Revenue Budget Monitoring 4 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period ending 31 October 2008. The Report stated that income and expenditure were in line with the budget outturn target and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered by the end of the financial year.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Travel Plans Programme 5 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing progress with delivery of the Travel Plans Budget funded through the Scottish Governments allocation to mainstream SMART measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards. The Report highlighted the objectives of the grant and indicated that, in line with the recommendations made by Scottish Government, the budget had been earmarked for research and development of measures that would support sustainable travel and modal shift.

It was agreed to note the Report.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Highlands and Islands Fuel Study – Presentation 6 The Chairman welcomed Mr Justin Muir and Mr Arthur Renshaw, Experian Catalist to the Meeting and indicated that Mr Muir and Mr Renshaw would give a presentation in relation to the Highlands and Islands Fuel Study. The key factors arising from the Study were detailed together with a case study in respect of the provision of fuel in Caithness and Orkney.

It was agreed that the Permanent Advisor's would examine the Highlands and Islands Fuel Study and report back to the next Meeting.

Road Transport Bio
Fuels and UK RTFO
Consultation

7

The Chairman introduced Mr Iain Jones from the Department for Transport and indicated that Mr Jones would give a presentation in relation to consultation on the Draft Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order 2009 which proposed that the introduction of bio fuels be slowed resulting the delay of up to three years compared with the original RTFO targets. The Partnership Director submitted a Report highlighting a proposed response to the consultation.

It was agreed:

- (1) that the Partnership Director would arrange a Special Meeting of HITRANS in January 2009 to considered the RTFO consultation;**
- (2) that the partnership Director would engage with MP's, MSPs and MEP's and the Conference for Peripheral Maritime Regions in relation to the RTFO consultation; and**
- (3) to authorise the Partnership Director to finalise the response to the RTFO consultation, following the receipt of comments from Members.**

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Review of Highlands and Islands Air Services 8 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to Highlands and Islands Air Services. The Report stated that air provision has changed significantly since the introduction of ADS, both in terms of service provision and the cost of using services. The Report stated that it would be an appropriate opportunity to review the changes that have occurred in relation to Highlands and Islands Air Services following HITRANS promotion of a PSO network and the subsequent changes which were introduced by the previous Scottish Executive.

It was agreed:

- (1) that the permanent Advisors, in the consultation with the HITRANS members of the of the Aviation Group, would develop a Brief for the study into Highlands and Islands PSO Air Services; and**
- (2) that the HITRANS members on the Aviation Group be authorised to meet with Loganair/Flybe to discuss Highlands and Islands Services and the Partnership Director would invite members to highlight issues with these services prior to the Meeting.**

Orkney Smart Card Enabled Integrated Ticketing Pilot 9 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report indicating that Orkney Islands Council, in partnership with Transport Scotland, had developed a multi-modal integrated ticketing pilot project to test the opportunity to build on the infrastructure established to support the national concessionary fare system and national entitlement card thus allowing integrated ticketing on internal bus and ferry services.

It was agreed that HITRANS allocate £10K in 2008/09 to the set up costs of the Orkney Integrated Ticketing pilot and that a further £10K be allocated during 2009/11.

Research and Strategy Development Programme 2008/09 10 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing progress with HITRANS Research and Strategy Development Programme. The Report highlighted proposed amendments to the Programme to reflect changing priorities and indicated that the major changes would include a reduction in expenditure on research into rail/air and road based public transport to reflect changing priorities and that funding would be reallocated to meet the costs to be incurred in progressing the roles and functions review and the review of the Highlands and Islands Air Services.

It was agreed to approve the revised Research and Strategy Development Programme 2008/09.

CONSULTATION

Ferry User Groups Review 11 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing proposals to alter the system of Ferry Users Groups in light of the comments made by the Transport Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee as part of their review of Scotland's Ferry Services. The Report detailed proposals to merge the Argyll Ferry Users Group with the Kintyre and its Islands Ferry Users Group which would retain local accountability but avoid duplication of attendance and repetition of the items covered for discussion.

It was agreed to amalgamate the Kintyre and Argyll Ferry Users Groups.

Rail Engagement with Stakeholders	12	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to proposals to establish a rail stakeholder group. The Report stated that representatives of existing rail service user groups had met with HITRANS Officers to discuss the most effective way to input into the partnership's Policy and Strategy Development. The Report stated that there would be value in establishing a HITRANS Rail Users Group consisting of representatives from duly constituted groups representing the views of rail service users in the Highlands and Islands area and Passenger Focus in order to discuss service related issues.</p> <p>It was agreed to establish a Rail Users Group consisting of duly constituted groups representing the views of Highlands and Islands Rail Users & Passenger Focus.</p>
ScotRail Franchise Consultation	13	<p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing a proposed response to Transport Scotland's consultation on the Scotrail franchise extension.</p> <p>It was agreed to approve the response to Transport Scotland in relation to the consultation on the Scotrail Franchise Extension.</p>
RTP Chairs Meeting Update	14	<p>The Partnership Director gave a verbal update in relation to the Regional Transport Partnership's Chairs Meeting which had taken place in Nairn on 4 December 2008. The main items discussed at the Meeting were detailed</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the update from the RTP's Chairs Meeting; and</p> <p>(2) that the Partnership Director would circulate the note of the RTP Chairs Meeting to Members.</p>
European Week of Regions and Cities	15	<p>The Partnership Director submitted a verbal update in relation to the European Week of Regions and Cities.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update on the European Week of Regions and Cities.</p>
Review of the Roles and Functions of HITRANS	16	<p>The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing proposals to review the roles and functions of HITRANS in order to identify how the Partnership could aid the delivery of better and more sustainable transport across the Highlands and Islands area.</p> <p>It was agreed to undertake a Study, funded from the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2008/09, reviewing the roles and functions of HITRANS.</p>
AOCB	17	<p>Mr Murdo Gray indicated that he had raised local concerns in respect of Uig pier with The Highland Council.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update.</p>

Item:
3



Report to Partnership Meeting 9 January 2009

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW

BACKGROUND

The STPR is aimed at delivering a strategic transport network which will benefit the whole of Scotland and deliver on the priorities set out in the Government Economic Strategy, the National Transport Strategy, the National Planning Framework and the Scottish Climate Change Bill.

It identifies improvements on the national rail and road networks in Scotland to meet the challenges Scotland faces from 2012 and beyond. A series of investment priorities have been identified and developed for each of Scotland's strategic transport land based corridors from the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow and the important transport centres of Perth and Inverness.

The priorities were based on the outcomes of the National Transport Strategy which are:

Improving journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport that impact on the potential for continued economic growth

Reducing emissions, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement and

Improving quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car.

A wide range of possible transport solutions were then measured by Transport Scotland against these priorities to establish whether they met the Scottish Government's purpose of contributing to sustainable economic growth. The results have been published as a series of reports, which are available on the website www.transportscotland.gov.uk/stpr. These reports reflect the different stages of the assessment process and, together, provide the background to the transport packages of work presented in the Summary report.

Report 1 Network Performance

Report 2 Determine Expectations, Gaps and Shortfalls

Report 3 Generation, Sifting and Appraisal of Interventions

Report 4 Summary Report

STPR Environmental Report

STPR PROPOSALS

Based on the defined investment priorities, the STPR has developed a wide range of potential transport projects across the whole of Scotland, informed by projects which had already been put forward by Regional Transport Partnerships and Local Authorities as well as new ideas developed through discussions with other stakeholders.

Across Scotland, a total of 29 major packages of work have been identified as best serving the needs of Scotland and its regions. These have been developed within a three-tiered approach as indicated below.

1. To maintain and safely operate existing assets

Investing in existing roads and rail – making sure they continue to operate safely and efficiently.

2. Make better use of existing capacity

Increasing the capacity of existing roads and rail – helping make better use of our network.

3. Targeted infrastructure improvements

New infrastructure projects – to add to the network and increase capacity to meet future needs.

In developing options, the Transport Scotland and through them Scottish Government has not brought forward recommendations for infrastructure improvements without first considering whether improvements in the first two categories can achieve similar results. This is a more sustainable approach to investment and will make better use of the available resources.

The STPR recognises that it is neither practical nor possible to deliver all the projects at once. It will be necessary to prioritise projects to reflect the benefits they offer, the contribution they make to the Government objectives and the future funding that is available.

Proposed STPR Projects

The 29 major packages of work outlined below have been recommended by the STPR:

Maintain and safely operate existing assets

1. Strategic Road Safety Plan
2. Maintenance and safe operation of rail network
3. A82 targeted road improvements
4. Road safety improvements in North and West Scotland
5. Route management.

Make better use of existing capacity

6. Electrification of the strategic rail network
7. Reconfiguration of the National Rail Timetable
8. Strategic Park & Ride / Park & Choose sites
9. Intelligent Transport Systems
10. Integrated Ticketing
11. Improved links to Loch Ryan ports
12. Rail system enhancements
13. East of Scotland rail improvements.

Targeted infrastructure improvements

14. Forth Replacement Crossing
15. Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvements
16. A9 upgrade from Dunblane to Inverness
17. Highland mainline rail improvements
18. A96 Inverness to Nairn upgrade
19. Rail improvements between Aberdeen and Inverness
20. Grangemouth road and rail access upgrades
21. Upgrade Edinburgh Haymarket
22. Targeted road congestion / environmental relief schemes
23. Rail improvements between Aberdeen and the Central Belt
24. West of Scotland strategic rail enhancements
25. Light Rapid Transit between Edinburgh and Fife
26. Rail enhancements between Inverclyde, Ayrshire and Glasgow
27. West Coast mainline rail freight improvements
28. Inverkeithing to Halbeath railway line
29. Dundee Northern Relief Road.

DETAILS OF THE PACKAGES

The STPR recommends a total of 29 transport packages which will enhance the transport network in key locations across the country.

National Transport Improvement Projects

The following nine packages of work apply across all or most of our national rail or trunk road networks.

Project 1 – Strategic Road Safety Plan

Aim: To reduce accident rates and achieve national targets for casualty reductions by delivering the Strategic Road Safety Plan and proposed safety measures. Transport Scotland's ten-year Strategic Road Safety Plan was published in 2007. This project is to continue the development and delivery of the plan from 2012, implementing relevant measures on the network in order to reduce the rate and severity of road accidents on Scotland's trunk roads.

Cost estimate: Between £10 and £50 million over the ten-year period.

Project 2 – Maintenance and Safe Operation of Scotland's Rail Network

Aim: To effectively manage and maintain the country's rail infrastructure in partnership with Network Rail. Scotland's rail network is managed and maintained by Network Rail with funding from the Scottish Government. This project is an ongoing commitment to maintain and manage Scotland's £5 billion-worth of rail infrastructure from 2012 and beyond to ensure it is fit for purpose and used to best advantage.

Cost estimate: £3 billion over ten years.

Project 5 – Route management

Aim: To optimise the road network along key corridors through active route management and targeted individual investments. This is a package of works to develop and build on Transport Scotland's programme of route management to cover:

A90 – Aberdeen to North East Scotland

A92 – Edinburgh to Dundee

A76 – Ayrshire to Dumfries

A68/A7/A702 – Edinburgh to the Scottish Border

A1 – Edinburgh to the Scottish Border

A83, A85 and A828.

Specific plans will ensure these roads are safe and suitably maintained for the expected levels of traffic and may, for instance, include realigning sections of road, individual junction improvements, creating 2+1 lanes, or, where appropriate, stretches of dualling.

Cost estimate: £100-£250 million in total (budget for some works already in place).

Project 6 – Electrification of the Rail Network

Aim: To work towards creating an electrified rail network across Scotland to reduce journey times, operating costs and emissions. Currently, only 23 per cent of the Scottish rail network is electrified. Electrification of the network would be a long-term package of works, rolling out over sections in phases. There is already a commitment to electrification as part of the Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvement programme. Other Central Belt routes and routes north to Aberdeen and Inverness would follow. This large-scale project will bring significant environmental benefits, reducing energy consumption and emissions and enabling new routes and services to be introduced.

Cost estimate: £250-£500 million for each of the five phases.

Project 7 – Reconfiguration of National Rail Timetable

Aim: To reduce public transport journey times, particularly between Aberdeen / Inverness and the Central Belt. This work involves re-casting the national rail timetable to provide fast, limited-stop trains for longer-distance journeys along with an adequate number of semi-fast services serving intermediate stations. This will have the effect of reducing train journey times between Aberdeen / Inverness and the Central Belt by up to 20 minutes, helping to attract passengers from cars onto rail.

Cost estimate: Less than £10 million.

Project 8 – Park and Ride and Park and Choose

Aim: To make public transport more competitive with the car by providing highly visible and accessible Park & Ride or Park & Choose sites on key commuter routes. Providing new strategic Park & Ride/ Park & Choose sites will encourage the use of public transport and help make city centres and employment areas more easily accessible. Potential locations have been identified, serving Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee and sites at strategic access points to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Cost estimate: £50-£100 million.

Project 12 – Rail System Enhancement

Aim: To improve the current rail system's overall operational performance by making improvements at points in the network which are operating close to capacity. The project involves rolling out operational and relatively small-scale individual infrastructure measures which will improve efficiency, reduce journey times and allow more trains to use the network. Activities would include replacing and upgrading signalling, improving track layout at junctions and adding new loops of track and double track.

Cost estimate: £100 – £250 million.

Project 22 – targeted Road Congestion / Environmental Relief schemes

Aim: To reduce conflicts between strategic and local traffic to contribute to road safety, improve journey times and reliability, reduce emissions and reduce the impact of traffic on local communities. The project targets specific locations on the road network where improvements could help resolve conflicts between strategic and local traffic. These include:

Upgrade of the A77 from single to dual carriageway around Ayr

Enhancements on the A77 south of Ayr

Enhancements on the A737 such as a bypass around Dalry Junction improvements for the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass

Enhancements to the A96 such as a bypass at Nairn and a new Inveramsay Bridge.

Cost estimate: £100-£250 million.

Project 10 –Integrated Ticketing

Aim: To introduce a national, integrated ticketing system which will allow people to travel seamlessly on all modes of transport using one ticket.

Measures to incorporate integrated ticketing would include introducing smartcard technology, similar to schemes operating in London and other European cities, and investing in equipment at sales facilities, terminals, on buses and trams and for back-office systems. A 'one ticket' system would make public transport more accessible, easier to use and more attractive.

Cost estimate: £50 – £100 million.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR INVESTMENTS

Transport Scotland accepts that each of Scotland's regions has its own unique geography and spread of population which affects the use of transport in that area. The STPR considered the needs and priorities of transport across Scotland and identified solutions. These proposed solutions are presented under the four following key areas:

The WEST & HIGHLANDS

Inverness – Fort William – Oban – Glasgow

Road and public transport projects proposed in the Highlands and North West of Scotland are designed to significantly improve connections between local communities and the rest of Scotland and reduce the number of severe road accidents and fatalities, as well as improve road reliability and reduce journey times.

Improved links between the West and the Highlands and Inverness and Central Scotland will make the region a more attractive destination for business, while improvements to public transport will contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Improved connections to Inverness Airport could also be developed.

Significant improvements to major roads – including bringing a more consistent standard to the A82 between Inverness and Glasgow, and the A9 from Dunblane to Inverness – will contribute to improved safety, reliability and efficiency.

Some of the key objectives the STPR has sought to achieve in this region include:

- To continue to reduce accident rates and accident severity in the region
- To achieve journey time reductions and improve connectivity between Inverness and Central Scotland
- To improve connectivity, particularly by public transport between Inverness, areas to the west of Inverness including the airport, and Aberdeen
- To improve the operational effectiveness of the A9 and the A82 and reduce driver frustration.

Project 3 – A82 Targeted Road Improvements

Aim: To significantly improve the standard of the A82, reducing accident rates, accident severity and cutting journey times. In addition to a general upgrade of the route, this project would include measures such as road widening at selected locations between Tarbet and Inverarnan and between Corran Ferry and Fort William. Climbing lanes and overtaking lay-bys accompanied by road realignments, junction improvements, hard strips and safety cameras will create safer overtaking opportunities and more reliable and safer routes.

Cost estimate: £100-£250 million.

Project 4 – Road Safety Improvements in North and West Scotland

Aim: To improve safety on key routes in North and West Scotland to reduce severe and fatal accident rates. This project comprises a range of measures including road widening

and improvement alignments, climbing and overtaking lanes, junction improvements and other safety measures at the following proposed locations:

- A9 north of Inverness – such as improvements at Tore Roundabout A835 between Inverness and Ullapool
- Safer overtaking on A835, realignments and widening in some areas
- A82 / A87 / A830 / A887 between Inverness, Fort William, Mallaig and Skye – safer overtaking
- opportunities, hard strips for farm traffic, realignments and junction improvements
- A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness – safer overtaking via 2+1 lanes, climbing lanes and
- overtaking lay-bys, hard strips for farm traffic, realignments and junction improvements.

Cost estimate: £100-£250 million.

Project 5 – Route Management

Aim: To optimise the road network along key corridors through active route management and targeted individual investments. This is a package of works to develop and build on the Transport Scotland programme of route management on the A83, A85 and A828.

Project 16 – A9 Upgrade from Dunblane to Inverness

Aim: To reduce the number and severity of accidents and driver frustration between Inverness and Central Scotland by reducing journey times.

The proposed upgrade to the A9 would take place over two major phases. Phase one would include providing grade separated junctions on the A9 between Keir Roundabout and south of Broxden Roundabout, dual carriageway from Perth to Blair Atholl, grade separation at the Broxden and Inveralmond roundabouts and climbing lanes, overtaking sections and junction improvements between Blair Atholl and Inverness. Phase two would see dual carriageway introduced between Aviemore and Inverness and Blair Atholl and Aviemore.

Cost estimate: Phase one – £500m to £1bn, Phase two – £1.5bn to £3bn.

Project 17 Highland Mainline rail Improvements

Aim: To improve rail network capacity for passengers and freight between Inverness and Perth. This package of works would comprise additional loops, double-track sections, line gauge enhancements and new and improved signals, as well as the use of more powerful traction. Together with the removal of freight train speed limits below 75 mph, this is expected to help reduce journey times by around 35 minutes making rail an attractive alternative for passengers and freight.

Cost estimate: Phase 1 – £50-£100 million, Phase 2 – £100-£250 million, Phase 3 – £50-£100 million.

Project 19 – Rail Improvements Between Aberdeen and Inverness

Aim: To reduce journey time and increase frequency of service on the train between Aberdeen and Inverness. Improvements to the rail line between Aberdeen and Inverness as part of this proposal would include new loops and line speed improvements, dual track sections and a new station at Dalcross with Park & Ride and an interchange to Inverness Airport. This would allow the introduction of more trains per day between Inverness and Aberdeen (at least one per hour) and additional rail services between Nairn and Inverness (two per hour)

Cost estimate: £250-£500 million.

THE NORTH & NORTH EAST

Inverness – Aberdeen – Dundee

Reducing journey times by road, but particularly by rail, between Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh and Glasgow is of paramount importance to allow the region to achieve sustainable economic growth. Reconfiguring the rail timetable to provide express services will greatly enhance the attractiveness of the train for this journey and allow businesses to achieve an effective working day when travelling between these centres. Within the region and on key routes, improving road safety and reducing the number and severity of accidents is also a critical issue, as is creating and promoting the use of an integrated, accessible public transport system. Some of the key objectives the STPR has sought to achieve in this region include:

- To continue to reduce accident rates and accident severity across the transport network
- To achieve journey time reductions by public transport and by road between the North
- East and the central belt
- To improve connections, particularly by public transport, between Aberdeen and Inverness
- To reduce conflicts between local and strategic traffic in Dundee
- To improve access between Aberdeen city centre, Dyce, the airport and South East Aberdeen
- To make rail freight an attractive, competitive alternative to the roads.

Project 4 – Road Safety Improvements in North and West Scotland

Aim:

To improve safety on key routes in North and West Scotland to reduce severe and fatal accident rates. Measures on the A96 between Aberdeen and Inverness would include safer overtaking via 2+1 lanes, climbing lanes and overtaking lay-bys, hard strips for farm traffic, realignments and junction improvements.

Project 5 – Route Management

Aim: To optimise the road network along key corridors through active route management and targeted individual investments. This is a package of works to develop

and build on the Transport Scotland programme of route management on the A90 between Aberdeen and North East Scotland.

Project 18 – A96 Inverness – Nairn Upgrade

Aim: To improve connectivity between Inverness and communities to the east, while reducing the number and severity of accidents. This proposal would see the A96 between Inverness and Nairn upgraded to dual carriageway with a new link connecting the A96 and the A9 south of Inverness. This would bring a number of benefits to local journeys – improving access to Inverness Airport and new development at Tornagrain and reducing congestion at Raigmore junction – while also cutting long-distance journey times between Aberdeen and Inverness.

Cost estimate: £250-£500 million.

Rail Improvements Between Aberdeen and Inverness

Aim: To reduce journey time and increase frequency of service on the train between Aberdeen and Inverness. Improvements to the rail line between Aberdeen and Inverness as part of this proposal would include new loops and line speed improvements, dual track sections and a new station at Dalcross with Park & Ride and an interchange to Inverness Airport. This would allow the introduction of more trains per day between Inverness and Aberdeen (at least one per hour) and additional rail services between Nairn and Inverness (two per hour).

Cost estimate: £250-£500 million.

Project 22 – Targeted Road Congestion / Environmental Relief schemes

Aim:

To reduce conflicts between strategic and local traffic to improve road safety, improve journey times and reliability, reduce emissions and reduce the impact of traffic on local communities. The project targets specific locations on the road network where improvements could help resolve conflicts between strategic and local traffic. For this region, this includes enhancements to the A96 such as a bypass at Nairn and a new Inveramsay Bridge.

Project 23 – Rail Improvements Between Aberdeen and Central Belt

Aim: To make travelling by rail between Aberdeen and the Central Belt more competitive than road journeys for passengers and freight. This project will entail a number of initiatives being introduced in phases:

Phase 1 would include re-working the passenger train timetable on the Aberdeen – Dundee – Edinburgh – Glasgow route to provide:

- One express train an hour to Glasgow (2¼-hour journey)
- One express train an hour to Edinburgh (2-hour journey)
- Separate stopping services for intermediate stations.

Line speed improvements, additional loops, upgraded signalling along the entire length of track and more powerful rolling stock would also be

introduced. An immediate improvement in journey time between Aberdeen and the Central Belt of 20 minutes would be experienced.

Phase 2 would see the doubletracking of the line at Usan near Montrose, including a new bridge over Montrose Basin. Freight improvements would also be included in the works.

Cost estimate: Estimated
£100-£250 million for Phase 1,
£100-£250 million for Phase 2,
£50-£100 million for freight improvements.

Project 29 – Dundee Northern Relief Road

Aim: To separate strategic and local traffic in Dundee and improve connections between Aberdeen and the Central Belt. This project would see the provision of either a new Northern Peripheral Bypass around Dundee from the A90 west of Invergowrie to the A90 north of Dundee or upgrades to the existing A90 Kingsway such as improved roundabouts and junctions. Both options could incorporate a package of bus priority lanes, cycle lanes and pedestrian measures. The bypass option would remove around 50 per cent of traffic from the Kingsway, bringing environmental benefits to adjacent properties while reducing the journey time between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

Cost estimate: £100-£250 million.

Other Strategic Transport Corridor investment packages are included in the report for the other regions of Scotland

Next Steps in Implementing the Review Findings

The STPR recommends packages of proposed investments for the period 2012 and beyond. This is the start of a process that will help inform Ministers' future decisions on transport spending for Scotland. The projects within the scope of the STPR provide only a part of the overall investment in transport in Scotland. The Review recognizes there are many other projects which are outside the scope of the review and are the responsibility of Regional Transport Partnerships and Local Authorities, but which will still help significantly improve transport provision in Scotland. The works proposed here are additional to those schemes which have already been committed.

Some of the packages of work recommended in the STPR are already under way or are in preparation. Decisions on further transport projects will be based on the funding that is available. As the next stage in the process, Transport Scotland intends to work to establish how to progress and ultimately deliver this next round of improvements.

Initial Comment on the Review from a Highlands and Islands Perspective

The Review has been undertaken on some 20 land based transport corridors across Scotland, a number of which are in or influence the delivery of effective transport service delivery within and to the HITRANS area. The Review recognises the work undertaken by each Regional Transport Partnership and Council in preparing their statutory Regional and Local Transport Strategies and uses these as reference documents in undertaking the review. It is therefore useful in considering the output from the Review to compare this with the conclusions of Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands and the proposals in the associated Draft Delivery Plan which have been subject to detailed and widescale consultation across the Highlands and Islands.

The Vision of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is to enhance the Region's viability by improving interconnectivity of the whole region to strategic services and destinations with the proposed outcome of enabling the region to compete and support economic growth. This Vision overlaps seamlessly with the Scottish Government's overall Purpose to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth, with which the Review is supported from a transport perspective.

A detailed comparison with the proposals contained in the relevant sections of Draft Delivery Plan and those in the Review are included as an Appendix to this report.

The Review clearly supports the conclusions of the RTS in a number of areas, particularly those for

- Enhancements of rail services between Inverness, the Central Belt, and Aberdeen to allow hourly minimum levels of service,
- improvements to the A9 between Perth and Inverness to dual carriageway standard
- upgrading of the A96 link between the A9 and Nairn, including the western end of the Inverness Trunk Link Road between the A9 and A96, and a Nairn bypass,
- supporting the case for investment on improvements on the A82 between Tarmachan and Fort William
- delivering modal shift around Inverness by developing Park and Ride facilities

These are all welcome and will significantly improve connectivity in parts of the Highlands and Islands.

Some aspects of the review as currently developed do not reflect the findings of the RTS or the related Research work in some areas which focused on the economic impact that investment in transport services and infrastructure improvements could deliver to the region. Of concern in this regard are the lack of detailed commitments to

- Provision of bypasses on the A96 in Moray, particularly of Elgin but also of Keith. These have been shown to create significant benefit both to overall traffic flow and journey times along the Aberdeen Inverness corridor, while reducing local congestion and facilitating economic growth
- Upgrading of both rail and road links on the far north A9 corridor between Inverness and Caithness and Orkney, where improvements are required to realize the potential regeneration of this area following the run down of Dounray and the realizing of the development opportunities associated with the extraction of renewable tidal energy from the Pentland Firth. This has elsewhere been consistently identified as a Government priority for the future.
- Realignment of the sections of the A82 between Tarbet and Inverarnan, and between Ballachullish and Fort William where the recent economic study has indicated that only by step change improvements on these sections will significant economic benefit be achieved. The details within the Review do not at first sight appear to encapsulate the necessary level of improvement, although the funding levels may if realized allow major parts of the works to be undertaken.
- Investment in significant improvements to any of the trunk routes to the east of the A82 serving Argyll and the West Highlands and Islands through the apparent lack of recognition in the option appraisal process undertaken of the economic benefits these regions can make to the national economy and the role improved accessibility can play in achieving this aim.
- The lack of commitment to delivering the remainder of the Trunk Link Road around Inverness between the A82 and A9.

Statements within the Review make it clear that only interventions that would deliver national benefits would be taken forward by Government through Transport Scotland, and accept that there is a case for interventions that offer regional or significant local benefit to be taken forward by Regional Transport Partnerships and Councils with and without support funding from Government, and a number of the above omissions from the review could fall into these categories and a means may yet be established of realizing the economic benefits from these interventions. The Regional Partnerships and their constituent Councils should seek an early meeting with Ministers to clarify the Government's view on how best to progress with the design and delivery of these projects.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 24 December 2008

**APPENDIX TO REPORT ON ITEM 3
HITRANS DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN - 2008 TO 2022
STPR PROPOSALS**

INTERVENTIONS		Draft delivery Plan			STPR Proposals	Comment
£m	Delivery agents - funding expectations	Short £m	Med £m	Long £m		
National funding	Scottish Government (ferry and air)					
	Orkney inter-isle connections					
	Orkney Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements* (with OIC)	20	24	24		
	Western Isles spinal route					
	WI Faster, more frequent ferry crossings*	0.5				

Scottish Government through Transport Scotland						
A82 Corridor (Road)						
S1a	A82 Western Bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel	11				Committed for completion 2011/12 in current SG Programme
S1b	A82 Ballachulish to Fort William route enhancements*	2	15	3	Carriageway widening at selected locations between Corran Ferry and Fort William	This level of work will not realise the available and necessary economic benefits for the West Highlands and Islands.
S1c	A82 Tarbet to Ballachulish (road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan)		27	27	Carriageway widening at selected locations between Tarbet and Inverarnan	This level of work will not realise the available and necessary economic benefits for the West Highlands and Islands.
S1b	A82 Tyndrum to Ballachulish – route enhancement,*			15	Included in STPR	More detail required to establish the extent of the commitment to achieve the delivery of a consistent standard over the route
S1d/S1f	A82 Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness plus strip widening Inverness to Glasgow*	2	5	13	Included in STPR	More detail required to establish the extent of the commitment to achieve the delivery of a consistent standard over the route
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - EAST*	2	35		Included in STPR	
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - WEST*			85	Not mentioned in STPR	Discussions are required with the Minister as to how this project can best be delivered through partnership working
Highland Main Line						
S2a	HML Journey time and frequency improvements (hourly departure)*	45	9.5		included in STPR	
A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)						
S3	Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (including existing programme of dualling Perth to Pitlochry, and strategic dualling Inverness to Pitlochry supported by upgrading Scottish Executive programme of 2 plus 1s)*	28	110	130	Full Dualling included as phased approach in STPR	Phasing proposed should be adjusted to reflect HITRANS study which demonstrated that greatest economic benefit would be gained by dualling Perth to Pitlochry then Kingussie to Aviemore as priorities
Inverness-Aberdeen Rail Line						
S5a	Commuter services Elgin-Inverness	0.8			Included in STPR	

S5b	Dalcross Station at Inverness airport		13		Included in STPR	Both station and Park and Ride included
S5c	Journey time improvements and hourly Inverness to Aberdeen*			20	Included in STPR	
	A96 Corridor (Road)					
S6a	Dual carriageway Inverness to Airport		30		Included in STPR	Dualling commitment extended to the full length between Inverness and Nairn
S6b	Fochabers bypass	30				Committed for completion in current SG Programme
S6c	Elgin bypass with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through Elgin, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*		46		Not included in STPR	Further discussions required with SG to establish why this critical improvement is excluded from the Government's proposals
S6d	Other bypasses on route (including Nairn and Keith) with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through settlements, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*			40	Nairn Included, but no mention of Keith	Further discussions required with SG to establish why this improvement is excluded from the Government's proposals
S6f	Strategic dualling of the A96*		10	80	Strategic dualling between Inverness and Nairn, 2+!s elsewhere	
	A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow					
S7a	Modern 2-track standard Campbeltown to A82		15	12	Route management measures included but no detail of extent or nature provided	Further discussion required with SG to establish to extent of the proposed works
S7b	A83 Address pinch points on route	3	13.5		Route management measures included but no detail of extent or nature provided	Further discussion required with SG to establish to extent of the proposed works
	A9 North and A99					
S9a	A9N Berriedale Braes crossing*			30	Not included in STPR	
S9b	A9N Bypass settlements on route*			23	Not included in STPR	

S9c	A9N Provision of roadspace for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness & P&R facilities and services	0.1	5		Not included in STPR	
	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental improvements to the rail network	5	5	5	Not included in STPR	
S9d	A9N Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes and other improvements		12	8.5	Targeted programme of measures to reduce accident severity	
	Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow					
S10a	Oban and Fort William Rail Line rail service enhancement / frequency increase	1	3.1		Not included in STPR	
	Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh/Glasgow					
S13b	A95 road improvements*		10	20	A95 not identified as strategic corridor, no commitments in STPR	
	A832/A835 Gairloch to Garve					
R26a	A835 trunk road section*			20	Targeted programme of measures to reduce accident severity	
	Network Rail					
	Far North Line					
S8b	Measures to speed up FNL		24.8		Not included in STPR	

	HIAL					
	Inverness airport and flights					
S4a	Inv airport Surface Access Strategy to deliver better integration	0.5				
S4b	Inv airport Terminal building	5	5			
S4b	Inv airport Runway extension			4		
	Barra airport and flights					
S14a	Barra Fixed landing strip and surface access strategy to deliver better integration*			15		
	TOTAL					
Local Funding	ABC					
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network					
H32a	Road Maintenance	7				
	MC					
	A96 Corridor (Road)					
S6c	Elgin demand management		1			
S6d	Keith demand management		1			
	Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh/Glasgow					
S13a	Elgin to Criagellachie A941 road improvements		23			
	A939 Nairn and Tomintoul to A95					
S24a	A939 Road improvement options	1.2				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network					
H32a	Road maintenance	5				
	OIC					

	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network					
H32a	Road maintenance	3				
	CNES					
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network					
H32a	Road maintenance	2				
	HC					
	A96 Corridor (Road)					
S6d	Nairn demand management	1.5				
	Far North Line					
S8a	New station at Conon Bridge	0.5				
	A9 North and A99					
S9e	Passenger transport access to Wick airport	0.05				
	Raasay ferry terminal					
R17a	Raasay new terminal – and associated Sconser terminal improvements	13				
	A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg					
R22a	A838 Removal of single-track section at Laxford Bridge*	0.5	0.5			
R22b	A838 Route enhancement*		5			
	A890 Lochcarron to A832					
R23a	A890 Route enhancement including single track sections and visibility improvements in vicinity of Achnashellach*		7	7		
	A832/A835 Gairloch to Garve					
R26a	A832 Road improvement options*		5	5	Targeted programme of measures to reduce accident severity	
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network					

H32a	Road maintenance	11				
	Scottish Government Funding					
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Road maintenance (not committed)	28				
	European Funding					
	Locally significant network & road maintenance					
H32a	Locally significant network (ERDF)	3.7				
	HITRANS					
	HITRANS Research and Development	1.5	1.5	1.5		
	TOTAL	212.8	614.4	758		
Regional/ National Funding	Partnership approach needed between Councils and Government (not committed)					
	Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow					
S10a	Oban Development Road and demand management measures in Oban* (with Government)	0.2	14		Not included in STPR	
	Easdale, Lismore, Luing and Islay-Jura ferry services					
R16a	Replacement vessels and infrastructure*	2	12.6	3		
	A816 Oban to Lochgilphead					
R19a	A816 Road improvement options*	3	15	12		
	A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort and Iona Ferry					
R20a	A848 A849 Route enhancement of remaining five mile section*		13.2			

	A941 Dufftown to A95				
R21a	A941 Road improvement including addressing pinch points and providing overtaking opportunities*		8.5		
	A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh and A950 to Peterhead				
R25a	A98 Road improvement options*		6	5.5	
	Orkney inter-isle connections				
R15a	Orkney Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements*	20	24	24	
	Western Isles spinal route				
R18a	WI Fixed links on the Sounds (cost for Harris only)*	0.4		100	
R18c	WI Road improvement options *	3.75	20	20	
	Western Isles & Skye connections to A82 for Glasgow				
S11a	Improve infrastructure to develop Skye air service to central belt*		10		
	TOTAL				

Report to Partnership Meeting – 9th January 2009

FINANCE

START Project

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The START Project has been developed by 15 regional partners across the Atlantic Area for consideration under the terms of funding for INTERREG IVB. The term START was adopted at a project scoping meeting on 31st March and it stands for **Seamless Travel** across the **Atlantic Area Regions** using **Sustainable Transport**. The report updates Members on the progress made to date with this project.

BACKGROUND

The project is a good fit with the horizontal themes of the Regional Transport Strategy and offers an opportunity to improve links to our key hubs. The Partnership considered and approved our participation in the project at the meeting held in Kirkwall on 4th April and a more detailed scheme including the projects for inclusion in the bid was approved at the Partnership meeting on 6th June. The full project proposal was submitted by Merseytravel (lead partner) in July 2008 with a view to project funding being made available from 1 January 2009.

FUNDING UPDATE

The INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area Programme Committee met on the 5th November to consider projects submitted for the first call. Formal notification was finally sent out early in December to lead partner Merseytravel confirming the project had been successful in gaining a full funding award for the amount bid for by each partner. It has therefore been confirmed to all partners that we are in a position to commence with delivery of the project on 1 January 2008.

The letter of award sent to Merseytravel as lead partner is included in this report as Appendix B and this document lays out the next steps required to comply with the funding criteria. The Partnership Manager and Partnership Director will engage with the other project partners at the project “kick off” meetings to be hosted by Merseytravel in Liverpool on 12th and 13th March.

PROJECT PROGRAMME – HITRANS AREA

The detailed project budget for the HITRANS share of the project is listed in Appendix A to this report. Members should note that although the potential overall funding levels are quite rigid there is some flexibility over the timescale over which projects are funded and in the event that an individual action cannot progress for whatever reason it is possible to redistribute funding within the project. The table below summarises the proposed project costs and contribution being made by HITRANS to these:

Funding Source	Amount (in Euros)
HITRANS	273,676.01
ERDF	508,255.45
	781,931.46

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note that funding has now been secured by HITRANS as a partner in the START project.
2. Members are asked to note the latest progress on delivering this funding stream.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 24 November 2008
Background Papers: Appendix A – START Project (Highlands and Islands Detailed Budget)
Appendix B – Official award letter from AA Secretariat

Appendix A: START Project – Highlands and Islands Detailed Budget

Activity	Action	Description and Budget Line	TOTAL
	HITRANS Costs	Staff time and travel costs associated with START Project. This includes costs for project management, dissemination, monitoring, steering group meeting, travel and Regional Seminars.	€95,533.75
A9	Support Services Contribution	As a partner HITRANS is required to share the support services contract costs.	€110,658.71
A6	Gaelic Rings	Develop the Gaelic Rings portal to help facilitate travel and tourism in the West Highlands and Islands.	€57,349.00
A7	Oban Ferry and Flight Connecting Bus RTI	Extend real time information to buses making the connection to the key regional gateways of Oban Airport the Ferry Terminal, and regional/national coach services.	€30,352.00
A7	Moray - Inverness Airport JET On Bus Multi Lingual Displays	Introduce on bus multi lingual TFT information screens with a GPS map showing bus position in relation to route.	€3,793.00
A7	Moray - Inverness Airport JET On Bus Multi Lingual Audio	Introduce multi lingual audio facilities advising travellers of the next stop on services linking to key gateway hubs.	€2,536.00
A7	Inverness Airport – Inverness City JET On Bus Multi Lingual Audio	Introduce multi lingual audio facilities advising travellers of the next stop on services linking to key gateway hubs.	€10,142.00
A7	Kirkwall Airport JET RTI	Include the new JET bus in the Orkney wide RTI system.	€4,200.00
A7	Moray - Inverness Airport JET RTI	Include the new JET bus in the RTI system.	€4,200.00
A9	Moray - Inverness Airport JET Bus	Introduce high specification bus to serve Inverness Airport to Moray on an hourly basis.	€76,053.00
A9	Stornoway Airport Bus	Introduce an accessible low floor bus for a new service linking Stornoway to Stornoway Airport.	€57,057.00
A9	Kirkwall Airport JET Bus	Introduce an accessible low floor bus for the service to Kirkwall Airport and adopt a JET brand to promote the service.	€57,057.00
A9	Inverness Airport to Inverness JET Service	Operational costs of the Inverness City and Airport bus route development scheme.	€273,000.00
			€781,931.46

Appendix B – Official letter from the AA Secretariat confirming the success of START application

Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority
and Executive (Merseytravel)
Neil Scales
24 Hatton Garden
L3 2AN Liverpool
UNITED KINGDOM

STC-CP2008-1-Ap- 555605

12th December 2008

Subject: Notification of the Monitoring Committee decision on the first call for projects -2008 results.

The Monitoring Committee of the Atlantic Area Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, at its meeting in Belfast on 4 and 5 November 2008, has taken the final decisions regarding the selection of projects submitted under the first call for projects in 2008. The project nr. 2008-1/001 START - Seamless Travel across the Atlantic area Regions using sustainable Transport has been approved.

By this decision of the Monitoring Committee, a maximum co-financing of 4.840.911,20 euros is assigned to the project for which you are the Lead Partner, representing a co-financing rate of 65% of the total project eligible costs amounting to 7.447.555,67 euros.

I would appreciate if you could communicate this decision to all the other partners of the project.

In order to proceed with the preparation of the subsidy contract, it is your responsibility as Lead Partner, via the "Call for projects" section of the Web site, to prepare and submit scanned copies of the following documents:

- The transnational Partnership Agreement signed by all the project partners;
- The documents that evidence the availability of the matching national co-financing;
- The documents that evidence the solvency of the Lead Partner (the solvency of public organisations is assumed) ;
- The financial identification form for the Lead Partner's account;
- The information form regarding the contact person responsible for management of the Collaborative Communication Platform project's domain.

Subject to satisfactory receipt of this information the Joint Technical Secretariat will prepare the subsidy contract proposal. Please note that the signed subsidy contract represents a legal contract between the Atlantic Area Programme and the Lead Partner of the project. The subsidy contract template, the Partnership Agreement model and the other documents are available in the "Call for Projects" section of the programme website. According to the information in the application form, the formal documents will be provided in English. A guideline is also provided in order to help you in the contractualization process.

You are requested to read carefully the terms and conditions of the subsidy contract proposal and you are requested to draw to the attention of the other project partners, the requirement to respect the contractual obligations and national and European regulations, particularly with regard to state aids, public procurement, environmental rules, equal opportunity and nondiscrimination.

If you accept the subsidy contract proposal, you must tick a specific field in the "Call for projects" section of the programme Web site. If you refuse it, please inform us by e-mail and explain the reasons for your decision. On ticking the specific field for accepting the subsidy contract proposal, an online form will be automatically presented at your disposal. It will allow you to upload digital versions of the documentation required for the subsidy contract.

Following validation of the digital documentation by the Joint Technical Secretariat, the formal subsidy contract will be issued. You must send three signed hard copies of the subsidy contract by post, one will be returned to you after the Managing Authority has signed the documents.

The whole process of contracting should be concluded no later than **13th February 2009**.

Once the subsidy contract has been signed, the Joint Technical Secretariat will arrange an information session on project implementation and the project monitoring process.

Should you require any clarification on any of these matters, please do not hesitate to contact the Joint Technical Secretariat via e-mail at the following address: atlantico.stc@ccdr-n.pt.

I thank you for your involvement during the preparation of this project, which, I am sure, will be important in reinforcing co-operation activity within the Atlantic Area and will make a significant contribution to development of the Programme.

With my best regards,

For the Managing Authority
Paulo Jorge Gomes