HI TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

NOTICE OF MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Partnership in the Willow Room, Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway on **Thursday 8 October 2009 at 9:30am.** There will be an informal meeting of the Partnership for a briefing in the Willow Room, Cabarfeidh Hotel, Stornoway, on 7 October 2009 commencing at 6.00 pm, followed by dinner at 7:30pm.

AGENDA

APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

MINUTES

1   **Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2009**   (enclosed)

2   **Matters Arising**

FINANCE

3   **Final Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Treasurer

4   **Audited Statement of Accounts – 2008/2009**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Treasurer

5   **Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2009 to 31 August 2009**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Treasurer

6   **Travel Plans Programme 2009/10**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

7   **Review of HITRANS Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Director

RESEARCH

8   **Delivery of Transport Services Review**
     Presentation by David Scotney, ATKINS

9   **Air Services Review**
     Presentation by Laurie Price, Mott Macdonald

10   **Regional Access Scoping Study**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson

11   **Active Travel Audit Update**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

12   **Freight Capability Study**   (enclosed)
     Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach

| 13 | **Car Parking Strategy Response** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach | |

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

| 14 | **Mid Term Review of Research/Development Programme** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Director | |

| 15 | **Highland Wide Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by HITRANS Coordinator | |

| 16 | **Concessionary Travel Schemes** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Director | |

| 17 | **Inverness-Aberdeen Additional Services** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach | |

| 18 | **High Speed Rail** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach | |

| 19 | **Cycling Action Plan for Scotland** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Frank Roach | |

EUROPEAN FUNDING

| 20 | **Cearcaill na Gaidhlig ERDF Application** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership manager Ranald Robertson | |

| 21 | **START Project – Publicity Dissemination and Brochure** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson | |

| 22 | **START Project – Elgin to Inverness Airport JET Service** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson | |

| 23 | **START Project – Argyll Real Time Information Project** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Manager Ranald Robertson | |

PARTNERSHIP

| 24 | **Annual Report 2008/09** | (to follow) |
| | Report by Partnership Director | |

| 25 | **Programme of Meetings 2010** | (enclosed) |
| | Report by Partnership Director | |

AOCB

HI▶TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting held in the Aros Centre, Portree, Isle of Skye on Friday 5 June 2009 at 9.30am

PRESENT

Mr Duncan MacIntyre (Chairman) – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr John Laing (Vice-Chairman) – The Highland Council
Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
Mr George McIntyre – The Moray Council
Mr Okain MacLennan
Mr Wilson Metcalfe

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS, Partnership Director
Ms Naomi Coleman – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Mike Mitchell – The Highland Council, Partnership Treasurer
Mr Sam MacNaughton – The Highland Council
Mr David Summers – Permanent Advisor, Public Transport Co-ordination
Mr Robert Pollock – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Gareth Williams – SCDI
Mr Donald MacRae – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Miss Margaret Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, sub Secretary

APOLOGIES

Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Louise Smith
Mr Ranald Robertson – HITRANS
Mr Frank Roach – HITRANS
Mr Douglas Forson – Scottish Government
Mr Gordon Holland – The Moray Council
Ms Pip Farman – NHS, Highland
Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Derek MacKay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular welcomed Mr Okain MacLennan to his first meeting as a Member of the HITRANS Board.

MINUTES

HITRANS   1

The Minute of Meeting of 3 April 2009 was **approved** subject to the amendment of the word 'regarding' to 'regrading' in the subject heading of item 12.

     2

Matters Arising

With reference to Item 7, the Vice-Chairman updated Members on discussions which had taken place between Highland Council and the Transport Minister regarding the Inverness Link Trunk Road and the development of park and ride facilities on the A96 corridor into Inverness. Mr George McIntyre intimated that Moray Council had been involved in similar discussions with the Minister on possible joint working on works in the Moray area.

It was agreed:-

(1) **that representations be made to mainland constituent Local Authorities seeking a meeting of Council Leaders in order to coordinate efforts regarding progressing STPR interventions;**

(2) **that Mr Sam MacNaughton provide an update at the next meeting regarding the Caithness Partnership Project at Berriedale.**

With reference to Item 5, Ms Naomi Coleman gave a presentation to Members on the Orkney Ferry Services Review. The difficulties faced by the Council-run ferry services were highlighted and it was indicated that the Orkney Inter-Isles Service was the least adequate of all the services in the Regional Transport Network for the HITRANS area, with an ageing fleet, capacity issues and a significant shortfall in funding due to inadequate subsidies to meet changing circumstances.

Mr Jim Foubister expressed his thanks to HITRANS on behalf of Orkney Islands Council for the services of Mr Howard Brindley in undertaking the Review.

Mr Jim Foubister provided Members with a summary of the discussions at the Tier 2 Ferry Group Meeting in Shetland on Tuesday 2 June 2009 which he had attended with the Chairman.

It was agreed:-

   (1)   to note the situation in relation to the future of the internal Orkney Ferry Services;

   (2)   that HITRANS support the need for Government to work with the Council to achieve a sustainable solution and that Officers will make representations to the Scottish Government officials in relation to ensuring full consideration is given of the specific issues faced by Orkney in sustaining its local ferry network;

   (3)   that a subsequent meeting would focus more specifically on the Scottish Ferries Review and its implications for the area.

FINANCE

HITRANS Revenue Budget 2008/09   3   The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report setting out the provisional outturn revenue monitoring position for the year to 31 March 2009 which included details of a £6,891 underspend, this figure will however be subject to amendment in the fianl accounts once the full income and expenditure detail is available for 2008/09. The Partnership Treasurer also reported that in relation to the 2007/08 Travel Plan Grant, discussions with the Scottish Government indicate that the £70,000 shortfall would now be met 50:50 between HITRANS and the Government.

The Chair thanked the Partnership Treasurer for his hard work and extended the thanks to the Partnership Director and Managers for the delivery of the programme within budget

It was agreed to note the Report.

Travel Plans
Programme 2009/10

4

The Board considered a Report by the Partnership Manager in relation to the final year of Travel Plans funding under the designation *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards.* The Report proposed that this year's reduced funding of £35,000 be allocated as follows:-

1.   Get Healthy, Get Active! the Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme promoting better travel - £10,000;
2.   www.IfYouCareShare.com, the journey sharing web portal - £5000;
3.   Active Travel Regional Audits Match Funding, assisting in identifying and overcoming barriers to active travel - £20,000.

It was suggested that HITRANS engage with organisers of large events like Rock Ness in encouraging active travel and there was also the possibility of promoting sustainable travel planning with large private sector companies including the whisky distilleries in the area.

It was agreed:-

(1)   to note the Report;

(2)   to approve the expenditure as detailed in the Report;

(3)   to promote the use of Traveline through the HITRANS and Partner websites;

(4)   that the Principal Advisers would promote active travel and the www.IfYouCareShare.com website within their respective Local Authorities and Community Planning Partners.

RESEARCH

Orkney Smart Card
Enabled Integrated
Ticket Pilot

5   The Partnership Manager submitted a Report updating Members on the progress of the Integrated Ticketing Pilot Project being undertaken by Orkney Islands Council in partnership with Transport Scotland and HITRANS. The links between ticketing systems on the buses and ferries was currently being worked on. In discussion it was noted that in the event the pilot proves successful it could in time be extended throughout the Highlands and Islands, and that it would also be useful as a pilot which would provide input into the integrated ticketing initiative being promoted to support the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

It was agreed:-

> **(1)   to note the Report;**
>
> **(2)   that the Partnership Manager and Orkney Islands Council Permanent Adviser will report back to the Partnership at the next critical phase of the project.**

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Research/Strategy
Development
Programme 2009/10

6   The Partnership Director submitted a Report informing Members of the progress of the Delivery of Transport Services and Air Services Reviews which had now been commissioned. The Report set out a proposed amendment to the Research/Strategy Development Programme to include research of the necessary transport interventions in relation to the developing off-shore wind sector. As the renewables sector was a growing industry it was recognised that HITRANS should engage in research to establish the necessary infrastructure which would be needed to support opportunites for economic benefit within the Highlands and Islands from the implementation and operation of off shore wind in the short term, and other renewable energy sources in the longer term.

It was agreed:-

> **(1)   to note the progress on the Delivery of Transport Services and the Air Services reviews;**
>
> **(2)   to approve the amendment of the Research/Strategy Development Programme to include a study into Off-Shore Wind Energy Development – Necessary Transport Interventions.**

PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report
2008/09

7   The Board considered a Report by the Partnership Manager regarding proposals for the publication of HITRANS third Annual Report, covering the 2008/09 financial year period.

It was agreed:-

> **(1)   to note the report;**
>
> **(2)   to approve the allocation of £5000 from the Publicity budget to meet the graphic design and printing costs of the Annual Report.**

RTP Chairs' Meeting
Update

8   The Partnership Director updated Members on the RTP Chairs Meeting which took place on Wednesday 3 June 2009. In addition to a presentation on the Scottish Ferries Review, the meeting included discussion on the options for funding of major infrastructure projects and the lead being taken by COSLA, the partnership approach being taken by RTPs and their constituent Councils in supporting Government in delivering the STPR, the potential programme to revise Regional Transport Strategies, the case for High Speed Rail between Scotland and London, and a report on progress on the Review of Air Services in the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to note the update.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Single Outcome Agreements – Update	9	The Partnership Director updated Members on the Single Outcome Agreements developed by Community Planning Partners within the HITRANS area and indicated that all the SOAs have now been reviewed.

It was agreed that the Single Outcome Agreements developed by Community Planning Partnerships within the HITRANS area, including the further developed Outer Hebrides Partnership SOA, be signed off by HITRANS.

Scottish Planning Policy	10	The Partnership Coordinator submitted a Report in relation to the Scottish Government's proposal to consolidate current planning policy documents into one Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) which would result in SPP17, the current policy document on planning for transport, being superseded by this new document. The new policy document did not include provision for coordination between Regional Transport Strategies and other planning documents; rural area transport needs and the important role they have to play; and the new policy stated that new railway stations would not normally be supported except in specific circumstances. There was concern that the Dalcross rail link could potentially be questioned in light of this new planning policy. The issue around setting maximum parking standards for developments in remote areas was also discussed and should be included in the response to Government.

It was agreed that HITRANS should respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on their proposed Scottish Planning Policy in order to ensure that the provisions of SPP17 as included in the Report and discussed by the Partnership are included as appropriate.

AOCB

Concessionary Travel Schemes	11	Mr Jim Foubister enquired regarding the proposed cutbacks to concessionary travel schemes. The Partnership Director intimated that a Government review was now complete and was now in the public domain. It appeared that the only recommendation for immediate action was in relation to the extension of eligibility conventions. The Partnership Director agreed to look further into this matter.

It was agreed that the Partnership Director would provide an update on concessionary travel schemes for the next meeting.

Multi Modal Freight Study	12	Mr Gareth Williams informed the Board that the Multi Modal Freight Study was due for completion at the end of June 2009 and would be published shortly thereafter.

It was agreed to note the update.

Fixed Links Conference	13	The Chairman intimated that a Fixed Links Conference was due to take place in Norway in July with a focus on renewables and it would be appropriate for HITRANS to be represented.

It was agreed that Mr Jim Foubister would attend the Fixed Links Conference on behalf of the Partnership.

Item:
3

HI▶TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

FINANCE

Final Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009

SUMMARY

This report sets out the final outturn revenue monitoring position for the year to 31 March 2009.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The annual budget is as approved at the Board Meeting held on 1 February 2008, amended for the recovery of the 2007/08 overspend of £17,555 approved at the Board meeting on 5 September 2008. The attached summary statement shows the final outturn financial position for the year ended 31 March 2009.

1.2 The Partnership returned a small underspend of £15,919 (1.7%) for the year ended 31 March 2009 out of a net budget of £922,000. The provisional outturn position, as reported to the June Board, estimated the Partnership to be underspent by £6,891.

2. MAJOR MOVEMENTS

2.1 There was no major movement in the provisional financial position as reported to the June Board, however the underspend increased by £9,028 as a result of a late accrual adjustment as part of the accounts closure process.

3. NOTES ON VARIANCES

3.1 Total income is ahead of budget, mainly as a result of receiving unbudgeted income of £32,446 in respect of reimbursement of maternity cover for Orkney Islands Council, contributions towards strategy development costs and interest on revenue balances.

3.2 Overall expenditure has come within budget, with savings on property costs meeting the shortfall on travel plan grant.

3.3 The publicity underspend has been utilised on further research and strategy development work.

3.4 Current legislation in respect of Regional Transport Partnerships does not allow them to retain reserves, however there is scope to carry forward small under and over spends on committed expenditure but not incurred at the end of the financial year. This allows HITRANS to meet its legal obligation of breaking even for 2008/09.

4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

4.1 Under Scottish Government legislation each Transport Partnership is required to produce an annual statement of accounts by 30 June following the end of the financial year and presented for audit to their respected auditors, in HITRANS case, Audit Scotland. The

statement of accounts must prescribe to all accounting standards and statements of recommended practice.

4.2   The Partnership's unaudited financial statements were submitted to the Controller of Audit on 24 June 2009 and an amended statement was submitted on 7 July 2009. This means that the deadline of 30 June was not met. The amended statement was issued as a result of incorporation, previously omitted, of the bus route development grant for the Inverness to Dalcross Airport bus service. With the removal of ring-fencing, the grant is now rolled up into the Highland Council overall grant settlement.

4.3   The audited accounts and Audit Scotland's Report will be considered in a later item on the agenda.

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5.   RECOMMENDATION

5.1   Board Members are asked to note the above information as well as the attached schedule showing the final outturn revenue monitoring position for the year ended 31 March 2009.

Report by: Mike Mitchell
Designation: Partnership Treasurer
Date: 2nd October 2009

HITRANS - SUMMARY

STATEMENT OF REVENUE OUTTURNS: **31ST MARCH 2009**

BUDGET HEADINGS	2008/2009				
	ANNUAL BUDGET		ACTUAL TO DATE		(OVER) / UNDER
INCOME					
Councils	(£200,000)		(£200,000)		£0
Scottish Executive - Match Funding	(£200,000)		(£200,000)		£0
Scottish Executive - Travel Plan	(£107,000)		(£107,000)		£0
Scottish Executive - Regional Transport Strategy	(£415,000)		(£415,000)		£0
Orkney Islands Council - Maternity Cover Income	£0		(£26,457)		£26,457
Other Misc Income	£0		(£5,802)		£5,802
Interest on Revenue Balances	£0		(£187)		£187
	(£922,000)		**(£954,446)**		**£32,446**
DIRECT RUNNING COSTS					
Director	£89,400		£89,369		£31
Programme Managers	£111,100		£112,484		(£1,384)
Office Managers	£49,500		£50,973		(£1,473)
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£25,000		£24,875		£125
Members and Advisers Travel and Subsistence	£10,000		£8,420		£1,580
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£25,000		£19,989		£5,011
Office Costs - Property	£50,000		£18,500		£31,500
Office Costs - Admin	£30,000		£28,548		£1,452
	£390,000		**£353,158**		**£36,842**
PROGRAMME COSTS					
Publicity	£25,000		£15,099		£9,901
Travel Plan Work	£107,000		£107,189		(£189)
Research & Strategy Development	£336,445		£346,190		(£9,745)
Orkney Islands Council - Maternity Cover Costs	£0		£25,055		(£25,055)
Loss of 2007/08 Travel Plan Grant	£0		£35,000		(£35,000)
2007/08 Deficit	£17,555		£17,555		£0
	£486,000		**£546,088**		**(£60,088)**
Finance and Administrative Services	**£46,000**		**£39,281**		£6,719
TOTAL COSTS	**£922,000**		**£938,527**		**(£16,527)**
(UNDER) / OVERSPEND	**£0**		**(£15,919)**		**£15,919**

HI ▶ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

FINANCE
Audited Statement of Accounts – 2008/2009

SUMMARY

This report sets out the requirement for annual accounts and presents Audit Scotland's, HITRANS auditor, report and matters arising from the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2009.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Under Scottish Government legislation each Transport Partnership is required to produce an annual statement of accounts by 30 June following the end of the financial year and presented for audit to their respected auditors. In HITRANS case, Audit Scotland. The statement of accounts must prescribe to all accounting standards and statements of recommended practice.

1.2 The statement of accounts were presented, for audit, to Audit Scotland on 24 June 2009, with an amended statement presented on 7 July 2009. Legislation requires Audit Scotland to have completed their audit and report by 30 September. The completed audited accounts were signed by Audit Scotland on 30 September 2009.

2. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2.1 I am pleased to say no adjustments were required to the accounts during the audit.

2.2 A copy of the accounts will be placed on HITRANS website and if members require a hard copy these can be obtained from the Partnership's office.

3. AUDITOR'S CLEARANCE REPORT

3.1 A copy of Audit Scotland's "Report to members and the Controller of Audit on the 2008/09 audit" is attached. The audit report is unqualified with one matter arising.

3.2 The draft of the above report required approval by Members to allow sign off of the statement of accounts. The Chair and Vice Chair, on the Board's behalf, approved the draft report. Members are asked to homologate their decision.

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4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Board Members are asked to:

note the above information as well as the attached Auditor's Clearance Report on the statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2008, and

to homologate the Chair and Vice Chair approval of the draft "Report to members and the Controller of Audit on the 2008/09 audit".

Report by: Mike Mitchell
Designation: Partnership Treasurer
Date: 2nd October 2009

| Item:
5 | **H I ▶ T R A N S**
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP |

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2009 to 31 August 2009

SUMMARY

This report sets out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 August 2009 and the projected year end position.

1. Current Position

1.1 The annual budget is as approved at the Board Meeting held on 6 February 2009, subsequently amended for the inclusion of the 2008/09 underspend of £15,919. The attached summary statement shows the financial position to 31 August 2009. In total income and expenditure is broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

2. **Year End Projection**

2.1 The year to date actual figures represent the transactions for the five months ended 31 August 2009 and are in line with management expectations. At present officers are not aware of any anomalies that will distort the overall financial position.

2.2 Board Members will note that based on the financial performance to date, it is predicted that at the end of the financial year the budget will deliver a balanced budget.

3. **Major Issues and Variances**

3.1 There are currently no major issues or variances to highlight.

4. **Recommendation**

4.1 Board Members are asked to note the above information as well as the attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 August 2009.

Report by: Mike Mitchell
Designation: Partnership Treasurer
Date: 2nd October 2009

HITRANS - SUMMARY

STATEMENT OF REVENUE MONITORING TO: 31ST AUGUST 2009

BUDGET HEADINGS	ANNUAL BUDGET	BUDGET TO DATE	ACTUAL TO DATE	This Month Budget	This Month Actual	TO GO	PROJECTED OUTTURN
				2009/20010			
INCOME							
Councils	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	(£200,000)	£0	(£200,000)	£0	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Match Funding	(£200,000)	(£66,667)	(£66,667)	(£16,667)	(£16,667)	(£133,333)	(£200,000)
Scottish Executive - Travel Plan Officer	(£36,000)	(£15,000)	£0	(£3,000)	£0	(£36,000)	(£36,000)
Scottish Executive - Regional Transport Strategy	(£415,000)	(£62,333)	(£62,333)	(£12,333)	(£25,333)	(£352,667)	(£415,000)
2008/09 Surplus	(£15,919)	(£15,919)	£0	(£1,327)	£0	£0	(£15,919)
Other Misc Income	£0	£0	(£12,949)	£0	(£2,858)	£0	£0
	(£866,919)	**(£359,919)**	**(£341,949)**	**(£33,327)**	**(£244,858)**	**(£522,000)**	**(£866,919)**
DIRECT RUNNING COSTS							
Director	£94,000	£39,167	£39,501	£7,833	£8,142	£54,499	£94,000
Partnership Managers	£117,500	£48,958	£50,029	£9,792	£9,990	£67,471	£117,500
Office Managers	£52,000	£21,667	£22,334	£4,333	£4,422	£29,666	£52,000
Staff Travelling and Subsistence	£25,000	£10,417	£7,414	£2,083	£3,395	£17,586	£25,000
Members and Advisers Travel and Subsistence	£10,000	£4,167	£3,272	£833	£537	£6,728	£10,000
Partnership/Consultation Meetings	£25,000	£10,417	£5,538	£2,083	£1,234	£19,462	£25,000
Office Costs - Property	£45,000	£18,750	£7,527	£3,750	£0	£37,473	£45,000
Office Costs - Admin	£26,500	£11,042	£9,743	£2,208	£2,019	£16,757	£26,500
	£395,000	**£164,585**	**£145,358**	**£32,915**	**£29,739**	**£249,642**	**£395,000**
PROGRAMME COSTS							
Publicity	£25,000	£10,417	£10,689	£2,083	£70	£14,311	£25,000
Travel Plan Work	£36,000	£15,000	£4,048	£3,000	£1,768	£31,952	£36,000
Research & Strategy Development	£369,919	£112,500	£72,457	£40,000	£34,736	£297,462	£369,919
Other Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	£430,919	**£137,917**	**£87,194**	**£45,083**	**£36,574**	**£343,725**	**£430,919**
Finance and Administrative Services	**£41,000**	**£0**	£360	**£0**	**£0**	**£40,640**	**£41,000**
TOTAL COSTS	**£866,919**	**£302,502**	**£232,912**	**£77,998**	**£66,313**	**£634,007**	**£866,919**
(UNDER) / OVERSPEND	**£0**	**(£57,417)**	**(£109,037)**	**£44,671**	**(£178,545)**	**£112,007**	**£0**

HI TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

FINANCE

TRAVEL PLANS PROGRAMME 2009/10

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on progress in developing and delivering the £35,000 2009/10 allocation by Scottish Government to HITRANS to *Mainstream SMART Measures by Local Authorities and Health Boards.* The budget allocation was approved by Members at the Partnership meeting on 5th June 2009.

BACKGROUND

The main expected outcome of the Programme is to increase the number of staff, visitors and suppliers in Local Authorities and Health Boards using more sustainable modes of transport. The objectives of the grant are:

i. work with Local Authorities and Health Boards to implement and expand the coverage and monitoring of Travel Plans and disseminate lessons learnt through the production of case studies; and

ii. work with Local Authorities, and other sustainable and active travel stakeholders, to encourage organisations and individuals, for example through best practice, leadership, national events, promotion of publications, websites and tools, to test and habitually use more sustainable forms of transport.

The targets against which progress in achieving objectives / expected outcomes will be monitored are:

i. The continuation or implementation of a monitoring scheme. Implementation of the Energy Saving Trust Travel Plan monitoring tool, by all Local Authorities and Health Boards by April 2010;

ii. The development of at least two travel plan case studies for each Local Authority and each Health Board within the RTP area per financial year.

The case studies can cover any element of the travel plan process including development, gaining senior management support, implementation of a measure and monitoring or reviewing of the travel plan. The case study should be at least one page in length and contain the following elements:-
   - The rationale for the process i.e. why it was done
   - The outputs i.e. what was done
   - The outcome i.e. what was achieved
   - Learning experience i.e. what would be done differently
   - Link to National indicators and targets; and
   - Signed off by a senior member of the Local Authority or Health Board

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At least one case study per organisation should cover the implementation of a travel plan measure that was put into operation within the last 12 months.

iii. Increase the coverage of the Local Authority and Health Board Travel Plans to cover at least 60% of staff by April 2009, 80% of staff by April 2010.   This should exclude teachers and other educational staff working in schools.

iv. Produce at least one case study of a project which implements the advice contained in SPP17, or PAN76, within the area covered by the RTP by April 2010.

v. Produce an action plan detailing measurable sustainable and active travel outcomes that the RTP will be implementing. For example this could be increase the number of people using a car sharing database or an increase use of tele / home working.

This is the final year that Scottish Government intends to support this work with direct Grant funding to RTPs.

ALLOCATION OF THE 2009/10 GRANT

Get Healthy, Get Active!

HITRANS introduced 'Get Healthy, Get Active!' our sustainable travel grant scheme in 2007/08 and achieved good results in terms of promoting better travel with participation by our partner Councils. This success continued into 2008/09 with a further £21,480 awarded to The Moray Council and Highlands & Islands Airports Limited to improve active travel facilities at various workplaces in the region.

With the reduction in the HITRANS budget for travel plan related activities in 2009/10 an allocation of £10,000 has been set aside for this fund. No project proposals have been received by HITRANS and the only recorded expression of interest to date has been from Moray Council.

To help meet the exacting requirement for case studies to be provided on projects funded by the Scottish Government travel plans allocation to RTPs any funding awarded through *Get Healthy, Get Active!* will be paid only after a case study has been provided by the bidding party. Simple case study templates have been developed to ease this process.

www.IfYouCareShare.com

HITRANS launched our journey sharing web portal in June 2008 with the simple and easily remembered domain name www.IfYouCare Share.com. This name was selected as the favourite from over 100 very good entries in a competition HITRANS ran in schools throughout the Highlands and Islands. The winning name was the product of some really good thinking on the parts of two S2 pupils at Sgoil Phaibil in North Uist.

HITRANS contract with Jambusters to manage and deliver the site will run to February 2013 giving continuity of access to the portal. A budget of £5,000 has been allocated for promotion of this site.

Active Travel Regional Audit Match Funding

The Active Travel Regional Audits are continuing in 2009/10 and will see more Regional centres audited to identify barriers to active travel in each location, and identify how these might in time be overcome. To support member local authorities to deliver some of the infrastructure works recommended in past and future Active Travel Audits Memmbers agreed to allocate a budget of

£45,000 to part fund these works. £20,000 of this funding has been allocated fromt he travel plans grant while the remaining £25,000 is provided through the Research and Development budget.

Partnership Advisors discussed the intervention rate that HITRANS should apply to the funding of Regional Audit Active Travel infrastructure and it was agreed that this shall be set at 25%. Therefore it is hoped that the funding can support projects of a total value of £180,000.

No proposals have been submitted yet but the Partnership Manager with responsibility for Active Travel is working closely with local authority Advisors and their colleagues in developing projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

    1.   Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson / Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 10th September 2009

HI▶TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8ᵗʰ October 2009

FINANCE

Review of HITRANS Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders

SUMMARY

The HITRANS Business Plan for 2009/10 identified that a Review should be undertaken of the Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders of the Partnership. This has now been completed by the Partnership Director and Finance manager and the Findings and recommendations for changes are presented for the Board's consideration.

DETAIL

Regulation area	Current regulation	Proposed change
Financial Regulations of HITRANS	Financial Regulations of The Highland Council currently adopted, with the roles of 'Director of Finance' and 'Service Director' as the Regulations are applied by HITRANS being taken by the Finance Manager and Partnership Director respectfully	none
	Members, Permanent Advisors and Employees Expenses	Applied in accordance with the Scheme agreed by the Partnership at its Meeting on 5 October 2007
Contract Standing Orders	Highland Council Contract Standing Orders with the following amendments 1. competitive quotations for goods and services required above £10k, subject to value for money assessment by Co-ordinator and Proper Financial Officer 2. Competitive tendering for goods and services required above £25k Works contracts require tendering above £10k as per The Highland Council Standing Orders	The officer responsible for acceptance of tenders shall be the Partnership Director, who shall take the role of the Head of Procurement in terms of the application of the SOs by HITRANS. Value for money assessment to be undertaken by Partnership Director and Finance Manager for goods and services valued at £10k or less. Arrangements for Competitive quotations will be made by either the Partnership Director or Manager. Arrangements for Competitive tendering will be made by the Partnership Director.

	Advertising of Tenders	Responsible person for ensuring
	1. £25k and below, no advertising required, tenders from at least 3 experienced providers 2. In excess of £25k advertising on www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk 3. above £50k advertising on www.publiccontractsscoltland.gov.uk and Government Opportunities 4. Above EU thresholds advertisement as above plus official journal of the EU	Tendering processes are followed is the Partnership Director.
	Procurement Process to follow Highland Council Procurement Flowchart Requirements	The Partnership Director is the responsible officer for ensuring the Procurement Flowchart process is followed and fills the 'Head of Procurement' role for HITRANS.
	Procurement through collaborative contracts such as those awarded by Procurement Scotland, Scotland Excel, or the office of Government Commerce may be undertaken without further competition within the terms of the contract conditions	The Partnership Director fulfils the role of the 'Deputy Chief Executive' and the Finance Manager that of the 'Director of Finance' as defined in the SOs. Extend coverage to include Framework Contracts arranged by Member Councils
	Exemptions from Standing Orders as per those of The Highland Council SOs	The Partnership Director fulfils the role of the 'Deputy Chief Executive' and the Finance Manager that of the 'Director of Finance' as defined in the SOs.
	Aggregation of demand and partnership Working	The Partnership shall within its own procurement requirements ensure purchases are aggregated, and shall, where considered appropriate work with Member Councils to obtain best value in joint procurement
	Tendering processes – Operational Processes	Tenders shall be opened in the presence of 2 Partnership Officers. The responsible officer for ensuring Operational Processes are followed shall be the Partnership Director

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to agree to the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders as identified in the review, to be implemented forthwith.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 15 September 2009

HI ▶ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

RESEARCH

REGIONAL ACCESS SCOPING STUDY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is intended as an introduction to the Regional Access Scoping Study which follows as an appendix to the report.

BACKGROUND

At the Partnership meeting in September 2008 the Board considered and approved the allocation of a budget of £5,000 to deliver a Regional Access Scoping Study.

HITRANS engaged Transport and Travel Research (TTR) to deliver this work as TTR have excellent experience of developing projects that could form a platform for a European funding application and establish where partner opportunities may exist within EU partner countries.

The main objectives of the scoping study were to:

1. review the suitability of public transport services and information sources for key tourist routes in the Highlands and Islands;
2. recommend what and how public transport information should be presented on tourist sites;
3. investigate the possibility of providing links from tourist sites to Traveline Scotland;
4. review best practice of similar initiatives for tourists; and
5. recommend marketing themes to encourage modal shift in tourist travel.

STUDY BRIEF

The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy identified the need to increase the sustainability of transport provision particularly in support of the tourist industry. Cearcaill na Gaidhlig (the Gaelic Rings) is an example of a practical measure towards achieving this objective.

In considering the issue of boosting sustainable travel with particular reference to tourism in other parts of the region in the same way as success has been achieved through the Gaelic Rings project in the Western Highlands and Islands it seems clear that there could be a number of opportunities for public transport to better serve key facilities and attractions from hub tourism centres across the region. Promotion and provision of such transport services would make the Highlands and Islands even more attractive as a destination for green tourism while at the same time the increased uptake in public transport by visitors could help our public transport network expand to the benefit of local residents.

The summer season currently does see increased service patterns operated across the public transport networks in the region reflecting a number of factors but not least the increased market demand as a result of our tourism industry. However it is questionable whether this market demand is entirely satisfied by the existing public transport service provision. Statistics gathered by Visit Scotland suggest that 85% of tourist travel to, from and within the Highlands and Islands is

by private car. Only 10% is by public transport and organised coach with an approximately even split between public transport and organised coach. This clearly demonstrates a potential case for modal shift to occur from the private car and for the public transport operators to obtain greater patronage from visitors.

Research undertaken by Steer Davies Gleave for the Scottish Government identified a number of factors which undermine public transport access to cultural and tourist facilities. These are listed below:

a. Lack of information on existing public transport and other travel options, and lack of promotion of available information sources by those involved in generating travel.
b. Lack of motivation to promote and achieve access by public transport. The need to develop audiences and attain visitor numbers may override how they reach the venue.
c. Relating public travel to other objectives - there is a case for cultural activity providers making the most of related reasons to encourage public transport solutions.
d. There is a clear "cultural" and information divide between those providing cultural activity, and those involved in promoting and providing public transport solutions.
e. Lack of clarity over who is responsible for promoting public transport access.
f. Underutilisation of community transport and demand responsive transport solutions.
g. Public transport issues are not flagged up at an early enough stage (registration issues).
h. Lack of knowledge sharing on successful initiatives or ideas.
i. Lack of integrated entry and travel ticketing options.
j. Lack of consideration of the end-to-end journey for the visitor.

These issues are all recognisable as being a barrier to access to facilities across the Highlands and Islands in the same way as they are a deterrent elsewhere in the country. The purpose of the Regional Access Scoping Study was to consider these factors and identify how tourist attractions could be promoted in tandem with establishing how best to access facilities to ensure the most sustainable results. The study had to consider the modern traveller who may use the internet and publications such as travel guide books as the basis for their planning. To understand the weakness in existing tourism initiative (including Cearcaill na Gaidhlig) an important element of the Regional Access Scoping study was the inclusion of mystery shopper type analysis.

METHODOLOGY

The scoping study was divided into the following 4 tasks to address each of the project objectives and provide HITRANS with a way forward to encourage tourists to use public transport to travel around and see the key attractions of the Highlands & Islands region.

Task 1 – Desk Based Mystery Traveller Review
This task reviewed the availability of public transport services on a selection of key tourist routes. For each route a desk based mystery traveller exercise was completed with the objective of producing a public transport travel itinerary for each route. The exercise highlighted information sources that were used and opportunities for improvement.

Task 2 – Public Transport Information Presentation on Tourist Web Sites
This task reviewed suitable information sources for the tourist public transport routes identified in Task 1. Each information source was reviewed in terms of how it was presented and linked to on key tourist information sites.

Task 3 – Good Practice Review
This task undertook a review of other tourist web sites that contain good links to public transport. The review identified tourist information sites that effectively provided public transport information.

Task 4 – Marketing Theme Recommendations
This task reviewed the work undertaken in each if the above tasks to make recommendations for themes for marketing strategies and campaigns to promote travel along the routes.

CONCLUSIONS

The main focus of the scoping study was the completion of a desk based mystery traveller exercise that attempted to plan public transport routes for the 6 Gaelic rings and a route linking Whisky distilleries located in the Highlands and Islands region. The exercise showed that it was possible to plan a public transport journey for all of the Gaelic Rings and between most Whisky distilleries.

Each route has been assessed in terms of suitability to a tourist and the performance of the information sources used. This information is available to be used to develop these routes for use by tourists and improve information for them. The routes, to be effective, also need to be marketed to address the following identified potential barriers when compared to the equivalent car journeys. The following factors were significant and could deter people from travelling using sustainable modes on the routes:

- Long Journey times;
- Large waiting times between transport modes; and
- Limited alternative options (e.g. what happens if I miss my bus?).

The study has also made recommendations as to how public transport can be better presented on tourism web sites, identified good practice examples of other tourist web sites that provided information, and suggested some initial themes for marketing the public transport routes.

The following are a series of recommendations that have been identified as part of this scoping study.

Review Mystery Traveller Results

The desk based mystery traveller review has shown that it is possible to plan a public transport route for each Gaelic Ring and between most of the whisky distilleries. It is recommended that these routes are reviewed to determine whether the best itinerary has been identified. For example there may be better public transport services available for a particular leg of the journey than the mode selected by the mystery traveller.

Monitor/analyse hit rates for each of the tourism routes

The frequency at which each of the Gaelic Rings received the most web site hits should be monitored. This would identify the most popular ring and could determine the order in which public transport routes are developed for each ring. A similar process should be undertaken for the whisky distilleries.

Complete a Mystery traveller exercise

Once a public transport route has been developed a mystery traveller exercise should be completed. The exercise would send a researcher on the suggested journey and they would be tasked with assessing it in terms of how easy it is to follow. The exercise would also review information provided on route and identify any further opportunities to provide better information of improvements to services and /or interchanges that will encourage tourists to use them.

Develop back up plans or identify help lines

A risk assessment process should be followed for each recommended route or strategy. This process will identify potential areas where things could go wrong and measure the impact this would have on the traveller's experience. The assessment would assess each risk and develop contingency plans to minimise their impact.

Provide separate information of starting point and for getting around

The public transport information review recommended that the journey to the starting point of each route and the route itself are separated. This will allow options for different starting points to be developed and mean that only a single route is developed to complete the route itself. The routes could be termed "getting here " and "getting around".

Improve links to journey planning web sites

Section 3 of this document has made the following recommendations for improving public transport information provision and its awareness on the tourism web sites reviewed in the project.

- Include a link to travel information on the introduction page of each Gaelic ring (e.g. Getting here) as appears on subsequent pages.
- Travel to route start points could be planned using the page landing technique. For example the user would enter their home postcode and Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland will provide them with a route to get there (including by car on the Transport Direct website).
- The getting here page should include public transport options and each mode should contain a link that provides more information regarding the service.
- Explore the possibility of using the Transport Direct Day Trip Planner for planning travel itineraries for the Gaelic Ring routes.

Provide recommended itineraries

For routes with limited choice and high risk of failure consideration should be given for providing recommended routes. This would have the advantage of taking away the hassle of planning the route from the traveller, but have the disadvantage of having to be monitored to ensure the information provided is still valid.

Develop marketing themes

A series of recommended marketing themes were made by the study and it is recommended that these are pursued to in order to have a suitable marketing campaign to support the initiative to encourage the use of sustainable transport whilst travelling along the routes.

Investigate "things to do" at key waiting points

A recommendation of one of the marketing ideas was to promote things to do at locations where travellers will be required to wait between public transport services. It is therefore recommended that each identified waiting location is reviewed to produce a list of attractions or places to eat or drink.

Interchange and route audit

One of the key aspects of the public transport journeys will be for the tourist to leisurely admire the stunning views and scenery along the route. In order to demonstrate this, key points of interest along each route should be identified. This could follow a similar method used for the photographic journey currently in place for each Gaelic ring, but would have reference to the particular public transport service (e.g. an image of someone admiring a landmark from the window of a bus or a picture of someone waiting for a bus at a stunning location). The review should also consider relocating bus stops if it is felt that they could be moved to a more suitable location.

NEXT STEPS

TTR recommend that the results of the scoping study are carefully reviewed with the objective of developing a public transport option strategy for each of the routes covered in this study. The strategies should include the study recommendations and once implemented should be monitored to establish how much they are used and evaluated so that further improvements can be made.

The full study follows this report as Appendix A. To reduce the size of this study for inclusion with the meeting papers a large number of images and website screen shots have been removed. The full report is available to all members if they would prefer a copy of this to help them review the work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Members are asked to note the report.
3. Members are asked to consider whether there are any changes they wish to make to the Regional Access Scoping Study findings before recommending their implementation by Member Councils .
4. Members are asked to approve the Regional Access Scoping Study for publication on the HITRANS website.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 10th September 2009
Background Papers: Appendix A - Regional Access Scoping Study Final Report

Item 10 - APPENDIX A

Highlands and Islands Regional Access Scoping Study

Final Report

Prepared for

Hitrans

By

Transport and Travel Research Ltd

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Transport & Travel Research Ltd (TTR) for Hitrans and details a scoping study on public transport tourism development.

The report summarises the findings of a review of public transport services and information provision for some key defined tourist routes in the Highlands & Islands region of Scotland. This project has completed a scoping study that has investigated whether existing public transport and information services are suitable for marketing to tourists and has made recommendations for potential improvements to be made.

The main objectives of the scoping study were to:
6. review the suitability of public transport services and information sources for key tourist routes in the Highlands and Islands;
7. recommend what and how public transport information should be presented on tourist sites;
8. investigate the possibility of providing links to Traveline Scotland;
9. review best practice of similar initiatives for tourists; and
10. recommend marketing themes to encourage modal shift in tourist travel.

A desk based mystery traveller review was undertaken to determine how easy it was to plan a journey by public transport using the internet and telephone. A total of 7 journeys were planned including the 6 Gaelic Rings and a route between the many Whisky distilleries in the region. The exercise revealed that a public transport journey could be planned within the hour for each of the selected routes. Each route was assessed in terms of suitability to a tourist and the performance of the information sources used. The results showed that when compared to the equivalent car journeys the following factors were significant and could deter people from travelling using sustainable modes on the routes:
- Long Journey times;
- Large waiting times between transport modes; and
- Limited alternative options (e.g. what happens if I miss my bus?).

In order to better present and promote the use of sustainable transport options on these routes the study has made recommendations as to how public transport options can be presented and marketed. This has included recommendations of how to provide a user friendly link to the Transport Direct and/or Traveline Scotland Journey Planner and a series of marketing initiatives that to tackle the potential barriers identified above. These initiatives include good practice techniques that have been identified from other tourist web sites that provide public transport information as part of this scoping study.

The scoping study concludes with a series of recommendations to further develop public transport itineraries for each of the routes together with recommendations as to how they could be marketed.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Outline

This project has been completed by Transport & Travel Research Ltd (TTR) on behalf of Hitrans. The project has undertaken a review of public transport services and information provision for some key defined tourist routes in the Highlands & Islands region of Scotland. The project has investigated whether existing public transport and information services are suitable for marketing to tourists and has made recommendations for potential improvements to be made.

1.2 Background

Statistics gathered by Visit Scotland suggest that 85% of tourist travel to, from and around the Highlands and Islands is by private car. Only 10% is by public transport and organised coach with an approximately even split between the two. Existing research has identified many factors that undermine public transport access to cultural and tourist facilities. Research undertaken by Steer Davies Gleave for the Scottish Government identified the following factors which undermine public transport access to cultural and tourist facilities:

a. Lack of information on existing public transport and other travel options, and lack of promotion of available information sources by those involved in generating travel.
b. Lack of motivation to promote and achieve access by public transport. The need to develop audiences and attain visitor numbers may override how they reach the venue.
c. Relating public travel to other objectives - there is a case for cultural activity providers making the most of related reasons to encourage public transport solutions.
d. There is a clear "cultural" and information divide between those providing cultural activity, and those involved in promoting and providing public transport solutions. Following a discussion with Visit Scotland Hitrans have decided to commission a scoping study to investigate the options of providing and marketing public transport services on key tourist routes.
e. Lack of clarity over who is responsible for promoting public transport access.
f. Under utilisation of community transport and demand responsive transport solutions.
g. Public transport issues are not flagged up at an early enough stage.
h. Lack of knowledge sharing on successful initiatives or ideas.
i. Lack of integrated entry and travel ticketing options.
j. Lack of consideration of the end-to-end journey for the visitor.

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the scoping study were to:
1. review the suitability of public transport services and information sources for key tourist routes in the Highlands and Islands;
2. recommend what and how public transport information should be presented on tourist sites;
3. investigate the possibility of providing links to Traveline Scotland;
4. review best practice of similar initiatives for tourists; and
5. recommend marketing themes to encourage modal shift in tourist travel.

1.4 Methodology

The scoping study was divided into the following 4 tasks to address each of the project objectives and provide Hitrans with a way forward to encourage tourists to use public transport to travel around and see the key attractions of the Highlands & Islands region.

Task 1 – Desk Based Mystery Traveller Review
This task reviewed the availability of public transport services on a selection of key tourist routes. For each route a desk based mystery traveller exercise was completed with the objective of producing a public transport travel itinerary for each route. The exercise highlighted information sources that were used and opportunities for improvement.

Task 2 – Public Transport Information Presentation on Tourist Web Sites
This task reviewed suitable information sources for the tourist public transport routes identified in Task 1. Each information source was reviewed in terms of how it can be presented and linked to on key tourist information sites.

Task 3 – Good Practice Review
This task undertook a review of other tourist web sites that contain good links to public transport. The review identified tourist information sites that have effectively provided public transport information.

Task 4 – Marketing Theme Recommendations
This task reviewed the work undertaken in each if the above tasks to make recommendations for themes for marketing strategies and campaigns to promote travel along the routes.

The structure of the remainder of this report is based on the 4 above tasks.

2   DESK BASED MYSTERY TRAVELLER REVIEW

The first task of the project was to undertake a desk based mystery traveller exercise. The objective of this exercise was to test the availability of and ease accessing information on public transport provision on a selection of identified tourist trails in the Highlands and Islands region.   The task was completed by a TTR consultant who was asked to follow the methodology outlined below to attempt to plan each route using the internet and/or the telephone.

The objective of the task was to assess each route in terms of:
- Suitability for a tourist;
- Availability of information on services; and
- Ease of access to information on services.

It is important to note that the routes identified in this report may not be the only, or best, option for travelling by public transport for each trail in the region. The results that have been produced are entirely dependent on this particular mystery traveller's internet search techniques. For example, there may be better public transport links or alternative routes than those identified.

The purpose of this exercise was to see what services and routes were identified when a person with no existing knowledge of the local area or local public transport services would identify. Therefore, the event of existing good public transport links not being identified is a result of the study.   In such cases the information provision and marketing for these services would need to be reviewed.

2.1   DESK BASED MYSTERY TRAVELLER METHODOLOGY

The Mystery Traveller was provided with a briefing note that firstly set the scene by asking them to assume the following:

"You are a tourist who wishes to plan a holiday in June to the Highlands and Islands. You have little or no knowledge of the region and have been recommended a series of tourist destinations/routes. You have decided to fly to Scotland, but have decided to try and travel sustainably during your visit. You are planning your journey from home where you have access to both the internet and telephone. You are not a regular public transport user and you have never heard of or used Transport Direct or Traveline."

The Mystery Traveller was then asked to attempt to plan public transport journeys for the following tourist routes from the most appropriate gateway (e.g. Airport, Rail station, Port, or bus station) such as Inverness Airport:
- The Gaelic Rings:

- o Barra;
- o Mull;
- o Skye;
- o Islay;
- o Tiree;
- o Rum;
- The Speyside Whisky Trail; and
- The Highland Whisky Trail.

The Mystery Traveller was asked to follow the steps outlined below:

1. To try and plan the above journeys using the internet and/or telephone and create a suggested itinerary or itineraries for each route.

2. Record each step (including screenshots where appropriate) and time taken to complete each itinerary including:

- Search words used; and
- Information sources used (also record if the information was available in other languages);

3. Analyse each route by reporting on:

- whether it was possible to find public transport information for each stage of the route? (Please immediately report any route stage where no information has been found, as clarification will need to be gained to ascertain whether this is the case).
- the suitability of the route itinerary on a scale of 1 to 3 (where 1 = suitable, 2 = suitable with improvements, 3 = not suitable)
- how easy it was to find the information on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = very easy, 2 = easy, 3 = O.K., 4 = difficult, and 5 = very difficult)
- the performance of any information sources on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = very good (i.e. perfect), 2 = good (i.e. could be better), 3 = bad (i.e. needs improvement), 4 = very bad (i.e. needs significant improvement).
- any gaps/opportunities for improved information (e.g. more detail, additional info, downloadable documents, multi-lingual provision etc…) and/or services (e.g. Increased frequency, more direct, less connections, reduced waiting time etc…).

2.2 MYSTERY TRAVELLER EXERCISE RESULTS

The following sections provide a summary of the Mystery Traveller exercise and the planned route for each of the project routes/trails. The Mystery Traveller has estimated the time needed to visit each location along the route. This is primarily governed by the availability and timetable of the public transport service to the next destination.

2.2.1   Gaelic Rings

The term Gaelic Ring was entered into Google, which led to the following web site being found:

http://www.gaelic-rings.com/www/index.php

The home page of the Gaelic rings web site states that travelling between the Gaelic rings can be carried out using the ferry via the Caledonian MacBrayne's Island Hopscotch route tickets (see Figure 1).
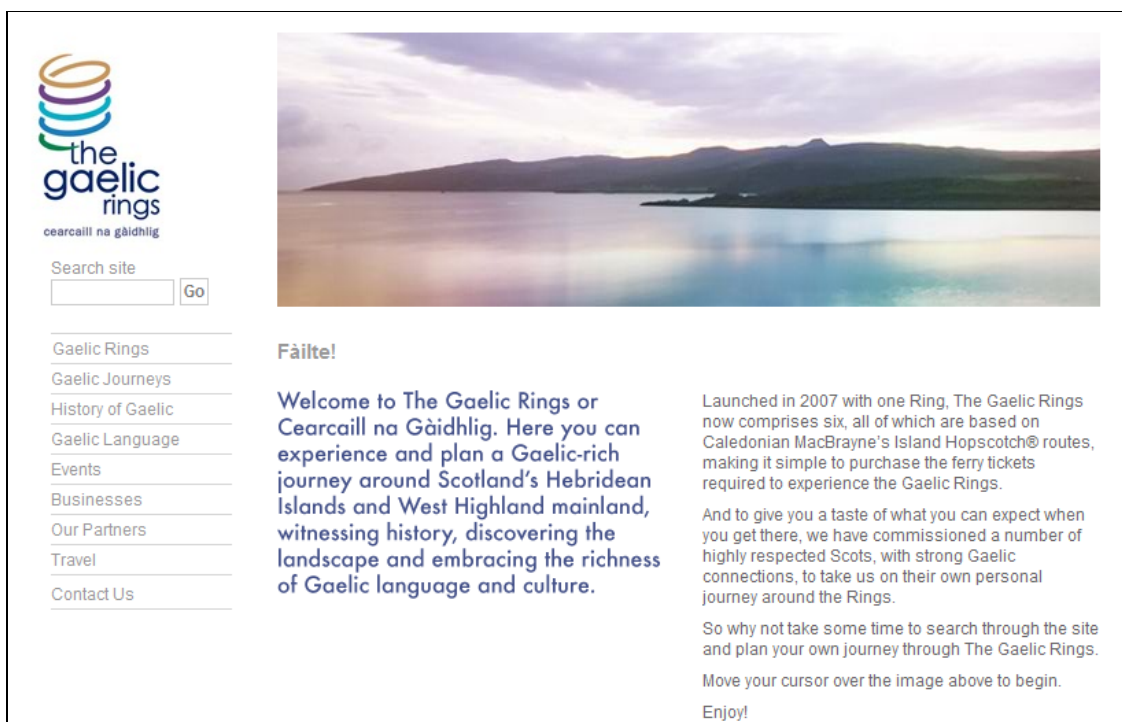
Figure 1 Home Page of the Gaelic Rings Web Site

The travel link in the index of the home page contains information on the ferry routes and numbers with a web link provided to the Caledonian MacBrayne website (http://www.calmacbookings.co.uk/booking/asp/web090.asp) and a telephone hotline.

Figure 3 shows that the travel section of the web site also provides the links to following information sources for travel within Scotland and for complete journeys within Great Britain:
- Travel Line Scotland (web link and telephone number)
- Transport Direct (web link)
- Scottish Citylink (web link)
- National Rail enquiries (web link)

Information links are also provided for visitors wishing to explore the isles by car, with links to:

- Traffic Scotland (web link)
- The AA (web link)
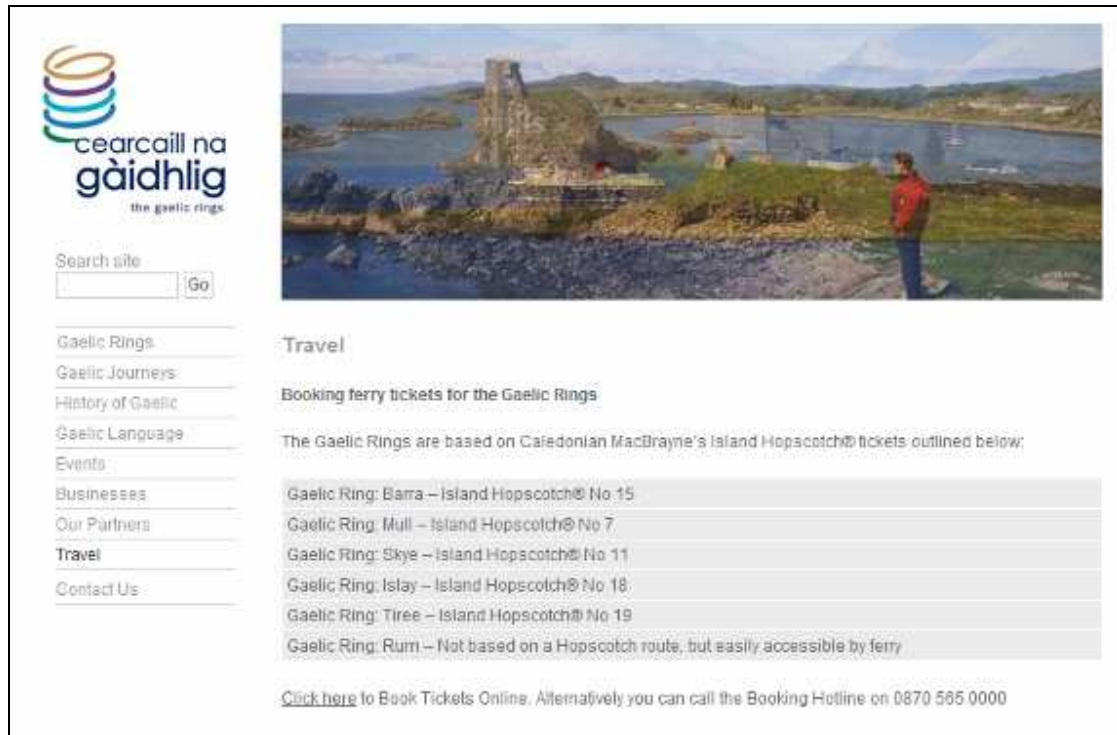
Figure 2 Travel Page on the Gaelic Rings Web Site

Figure 3 Travel Links on the Gaelic Rings Web site

Armed with this information the Mystery Traveller produced the following travel itineraries for each Gaelic ring.

2.2.1.1   Barra Gaelic Ring
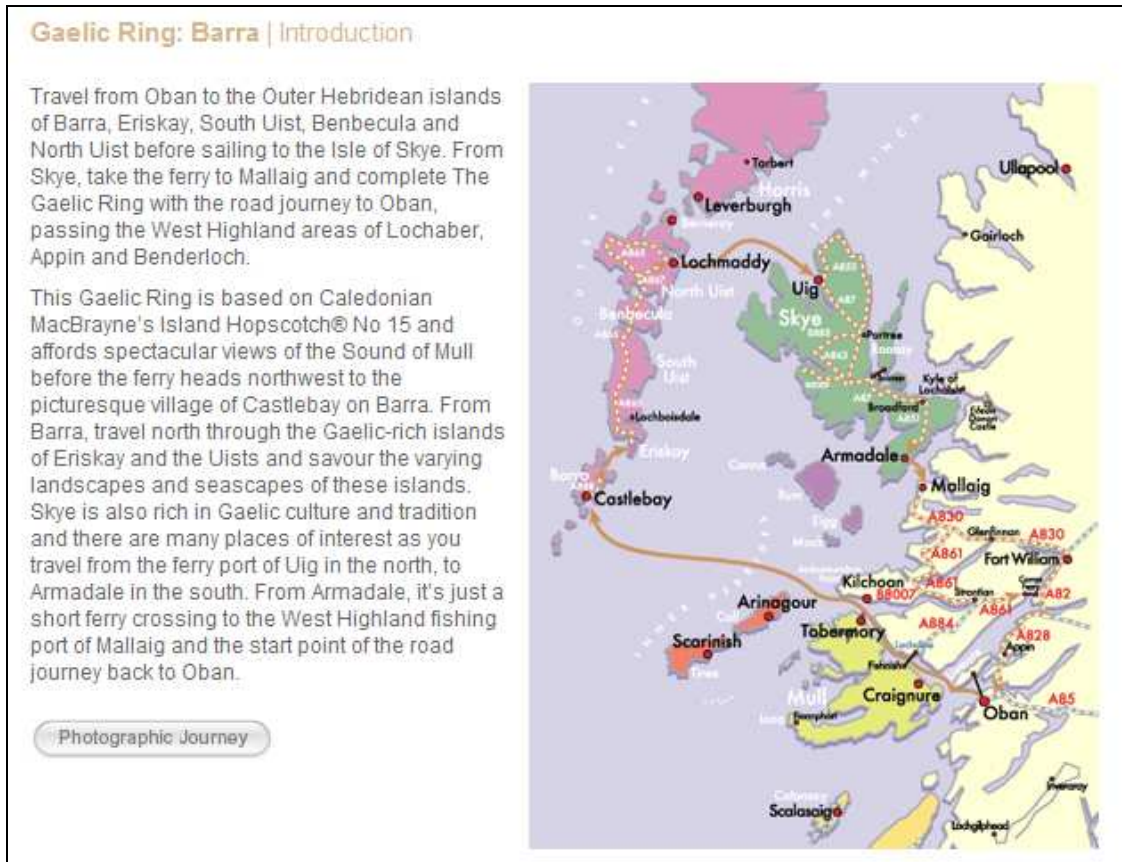
Figure 4 The Barra Gaelic ring route (source: www.gaelic-rings.com)

Figure 4 shows that the Barra Gaelic Ring starts from Oban taking in the Isles of Barra, Eriskay, South and North Uist and Skye finishing back at Oban via the port of Mallaig.

The Mystery Traveller identified that from the Caledonian Macbrayne ferry website, it is possible to get a complete ticket and journey from Glasgow Queen Street to Castlebay on the Isle of Barra. The Mystery Traveller therefore decided to arrive at Glasgow Airport on Monday morning arriving at 09:00 to begin their visit. The resulting planned itinerary for the Barra Gaelic Ring journey is summarised in table 1 below.

Table 1: The Barra Gaelic Ring Route Itinerary

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Perform	Comments
Day 1 - Glasgow International Airport to Barra (11:19 Hours travel time)									
Glasgow Airport	Glasgow Queen Street	Bus Route 500	09:11 (Mon)	09:36	http://www.glasgow-airport-guide.co.uk/transport.html which directs to traveline Scotland (google search Glasgow Airport to Glasgow Queen Street)	1	2	1	No issues with frequency, waiting time or reliability of the bus services or the traveline website. The Bus Route 500, also known as the Glasgow Flyer is 24 hours a day, every 10 minutes.
Glasgow Queen Street	**Oban**	Train	12:21	15:27	http://www.calmac.co.uk/ and http://www.scotrail.co.uk/sites/files/1Glasgow%20&%20the%20West%20Highlands.pdf	1	3	1	Both of the ferry and rail timetables are downloadable, with the Ferry timetable recommending an origin rail station and journey. There is limited frequency of ferry services from Oban to Barra (1 ferry per day only) and there are limited train frequencies (4 trains per day Mon – Sat). The limited service frequencies led to a long waiting time at Glasgow Queen Street prior to the train departing for Oban.
Oban	Castlebay **(Barra)**	Ferry	15:40	20:30					
Day 2 – Barra – It is assumed the day will be spent exploring the Isle									
Day 3– Barra to North Uist (9:40 Hours travel time)									
Castlebay **(Barra)**	**Eriskay**	Ferry	09:25 (Wed)	10:05		1	2	1	The Barra to Eriskay ferry has a short journey time, with 5 ferries departing and arriving at Barra throughout the day.
Eriskay	Clachan	Bus (operated by DA Travel)	13:10	14:45	http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/uist-travel.htm directs to council bus timetables page http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/ (see Figure 6) from which identify the Isles concerned (Google search Eriskay to South Uist Public Transport)	2	3	2	Route from Eriskay to Lochmaddy direct requires a change at Clachan, with a long waiting time. On the Eriskay to Clachan route, there are only 3 buses a day (Mon – Fri).
Clachan	Lochmaddy **(North Uist)**	Bus (operated by Grenoite Travel and/or A Ferguson Travel)	17:55	19:05		2	3	2	Route from Clachan to Lochmaddy has only 4 buses operating per a day (Mon – Fri), with 2 of these being direct routes, and 2 requiring a change, A map of the isles showing the bus routes would be useful.

Day 4– North Uist – Mallaig (7:20 Hours travel time)									
Lochmaddy **(North Uist)**	Uig **(Skye)**	Ferry	11:50 (Thur)	13:35	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	All timetables for the ferries are downloadable. However, there are only 1 -2 ferries per day, which led to long waiting times and a stop over being needed.
Uig	Portree Square	Operated by Rapsons Bus (57a)	13:57	14:25	http://www.uig-skye.co.uk/transport.html (google Uig to Armadale Isle of Skye) – links to Rapsons website, now operated by Stagecoach, with complete timetable of all services on the Isle. http://www.rapsons.com/	2	3	2	Only 3 – 4 57a buses (Mon – Fri) a day, with other services being dependant on whether it is a school day or school holiday.
Portree Square	Armadale	Operated by Rapsons Bus (52C)	17:15	18:24					Only 2 52C buses operate a day which is not dependant on whether it is a school day or school holiday. However, 2 additional buses operate when the Calmac Easter timetable is operation. Due to the limited frequency excluding school dependant buses, there is a long waiting time, which could be used to see the town.
									No direct service from Uig to Armadale – necessary to change at Portree. No search or route planning option on the website itself, but linked to the stagecoach website which allows for origin/destination searches. In addition, an integrated map showing bus routes and ferry terminals would be beneficial. The bus timetable also appears to incorrectly say there is a ferry at 16:21 to Mallaig, the ferry actually leaves at 17:05.
Armadale	**Mallaig**	Ferry	18:40	19:10	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	8 ferry services per day from Mallaig to Armadale.
Day 5– Mallaig – Glasgow Airport (6:34 Hours Travel time)									
Mallaig	Fort William	Train	10:10 (Fri)	11:32	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do?rid=12397	1	2	1	There are links to Western Isles Flyer from the website. http://www.road-to-the-isles.org.uk/westhighlandflyer.html

Fort William	Oban	Citylink Coach 918	11:45	13:12	02492022, http://www.scotrail.co.uk/sites/files/1Glasgow%20&%20the%20West%20Highlands.pdf and www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/roadsandtransport/gettingabout/bus/				However, the timetable was last updated for 2007 on their website (see Figure 7). No evening options were identified on the Traveline website and thus an overnight stop will be needed, with travel to Oban occurring on the Friday. The train service from Mallaig to Fort William, and the Citylink 918 both have frequencies of only 4 services a day (Mon – Sat).
Oban	Stirling	Blue Bus Service 700	13:15	15:35		1	2	1	The journey from Oban to Glasgow requires multiple changes, with low waiting times between changes, although this does not allow for delays or if there are any problems associated with walking between connections. The bus route to Stirling (Blue Bus 700) only operates 1 service each way per a day and as such alternatives would be needed depending on the time of travel.
Stirling	Glasgow Queen Street	Train	15:43	16:13					
Glasgow Queen Street	Glasgow Airport	Blue Bus Route 500	16:22	16:44					

Figure 5 shows the information provided on the Gaelic Rings web site provided by the 'Getting Here' menu option on the Barra ring page. It should be noted that the information provided is targeted at a car driver and does not any timetable information for the ferry services (e.g. Oban – Barra ferry departs once a day at 1540 etc…).

Gaelic Ring: Barra | Eriskay | Getting Here

The information below is a guide to help you plan your journey throughout the Gaelic Ring from Oban to Barra Eriskay, South Uist, Benbecula, North Uist, Skye and Mallaig.

Travel times/mileage		
Inverness - Oban	Car	2hrs 30 mins*
Glasgow – Oban	Car	2hrs 20 mins*
Edinburgh – Oban	Car	3hrs*
Oban - Castlebay, Barra	Ferry	5hrs 20 mins
Barra – Eriskay	Ferry	40 mins
Eriskay – Lochmaddy, North Uist	Car	52m /84km
Lochmaddy – Uig, Skye	Ferry	1hr 45mins
Uig – Armadale	Car	59m / 95km
Armadale – Mallaig	Ferry	30 mins
Mallaig – Inverness	Car	3hrs*
Mallaig – Glasgow	Car	3hrs 50 mins*
Mallaig – Edinburgh	Car	4hrs 20 mins*

Figure 5 Information available from Gaelic Rings Website http://www.gaelic-rings.com/barra/getting_here.php?sel=2&top=1&mid=1&base=2&ring=Barra

The public transport itinerary for the Barra Gaelic ring took approximately 1 hour to complete. The itinerary produced recommends 5 days to visit the area and Table 2 summarises the journey in terms of modes of transport and total journey time

Table 2: Barra Gaelic Ring summary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Glasgow International Airport - Barra	Bus/Train/Ferry	11:19 Hours
Day 2	Barra	Day spent on the Isle of Barra	
Day 3	Barra – North Uist	Ferry/Bus/Bus	09:40 Hours
Day 4	North Uist - Mallaig	Ferry/Bus/Bus/Ferry	07:20 Hours
Day 5	Mallaig – Glasgow International Airport	Train/Bus/Coach/Train/Bus	06:34 Hours

The exercise has identified that forward planning, advanced journey planning is crucial when looking to undertake this Gaelic Ring by public transport. This is particularly relevant given the limited frequency of bus, coach, train and ferry services which can lead to long waiting periods. This is represented by the long travel times on Day 1 and Day 3 with travel times of over 9 hours.

The difficulty of completing this Gaelic Ring by public transport is compounded by the number of Isles that make up the Ring, and the need to cross between the various Isles.

The proposed itinerary allows for a day to be spent exploring the Isle of Barra, with further sight seeing envisaged where long waiting periods are needed e.g. At Portree in the 2 hours 50 minute wait to connect with the service to the ferry terminal at Armadale.

Figure 6 Bus and coach timetable information screen shot from the council website (http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/)

Figure 7 Screen shot of the West Highland Flyer Screen timetable

2.2.1.2   Mull Gaelic Ring

Figure 8 The Mull Gaelic Ring route (www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_mull/index.php?top=1&mid=2&ring=Mull)

The Mull Gaelic Ring starts from Oban taking in the Isle of Mull, Kilchoan and Mallaig on the mainland, the Isle of Skye before returning to Oban via Fort William. From the Caledonian Macbrayne ferry website, it is possible to get a complete ticket and journey from Glasgow Queen Street to Craignure, on the Isle of Mull.

The Mystery Traveller has assumed that they have landed at Glasgow Airport on Monday morning at 09:00 and Table 3 shows the itinerary produced for the Mull Gaelic Ring.

Table 3: Mull Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Performance	Comments
Day 1: Glasgow Airport to Craignure (7:35:00 travel time) with the remainder of the day spent at Craignure with an overnight stay.									
Glasgow Airport	Glasgow Queen Street	Bus Route 905	09:11 (Mon)	09:36	http://www.glasgow-airport-guide.co.uk/transport.html which directs to traveline Scotland (google search Glasgow Airport to Glasgow Queen Street)	1	2	1	No issues with frequency, waiting time or reliability of traveline
Glasgow Queen Street	**Oban**	Train	12:21	15:27	http://www.calmac.co.uk/ and http://www.scotrail.co.uk/sites/files/1Glasgow%20&%20the%20West%20Highlands.pdf	1	3	1	Both of the ferry and rail timetables are downloadable, with the Ferry timetable recommending an origin rail station and journey. There are limited train frequencies (4 trains per day Mon – Sat) throughout the day leading to long waiting times.
Oban	Craignure (**Mull**)	Ferry	16:00	16:46	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	There are at least 6 ferries per a day (Mon – Sat) from Oban to Craignure.
Day 2: Craignure to Kilchoan via Tobermory (4:19:00 travel time). It is envisaged that approximately 2 hours will be spent at Tobermory.									
Craignure	Tobermory (Ledaig Car Park) **(Mull)**	Bus (Bowman's Coaches 495)	10:46	11:27	http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pdffilesstore/btt495 (google search Craignure to Tobermory Buses)	1	2	1	Limited bus frequency with approximately 6 bus services throughout the day only.
Tobermory	Kilchoan (**Mainland**)	Ferry	14:30 (Tues)	15:05	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	No comments. All timetables downloadable, frequent service with 6 crossings (Mon – Sat).
Day 3: Following overnight stay at Kilchoan, Kilchoan to Mallaig is not possible to be made directly by public transport – has to be made via Fort William. (7:21:00 travel time).									
Kilchoan	Fort William	Sheils Bus 506 School Bus Only	07:50	10:22	http://www.stagecoachbus.com/uploads/guide3final.pdf	3	3	2	The only bus to serve Kilchoan is a daily school bus service leaving at 07:50 to Fort William. A change is then needed to continue to Mallaig. The stagecoach route finder only identifies the timetable

									for the area – it doesn't identify the specific route needed within the area timetable which could be improved.
Fort William	Mallaig	Shiels Bus 500	13:45	15:11		2	3	2	Only 5 bus services throughout the day leads to long waiting periods.
Day 4: Mallaig to Oban after spending the majority of the day on the Isle of Skye (4:21:00 travel time)									
Mallaig	Armadale **(Skye)**	Ferry	08:10 (Thur)	08:40	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	No comments. All timetables downloadable, frequent service with 8 crossings per a day.
Armadale	Broadford **(Skye)**	Rapsons Buses 52C	09:25	09:52	http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/skye.htm http://www.uig-skye.co.uk/transport.html (google Uig to Armadale Isle of Skye) – links to Rapsons website, now operated by Stagecoach, with complete timetable of all services on the Isle. http://www.rapsons.com/	2	3	2	No direct route from Armadale to the Kyle of Lochalsh. The only buses from Armadale are towards Portree via Broadford, from where a change is required. The 52C suffers from a limited frequency of services (5 services per a day) which are not dependant on it being a school day.
Broadford	Fort William via Invergarry **(Mainland)**	City Link, 916	16:03	18:21					Limited frequency of services with only 5 services per a day.
Fort William	Oban via Appin and Benderloch	City Link 918	18:30	19:57	http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/pdffilesstore/btt918	1	2	1	The through service by bus is beneficial for this route, although there is limited frequency of service (4 services per a day only).
Day 5: Oban to Glasgow Airport (Travel Time 5:26:00)									
Oban	Ballachulish	City Link 918	08:40	09:39	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysF	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service results in a long waiting period at Ballachulish

Ballachulish	Glasgow Airport	City Link 915	11:47	14:06	ound.do				

Table 4: Summary of Mull Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Glasgow Airport to Craignure	Bus/Train/Ferry	7:35:00
Day 2	Craignure to Kilchoan via Tobermory	Bus/Ferry	4:19:00
Day 3	Kilchoan to Mallaig is not via Fort William.	Bus/Coach	7:21:00
Day 4	Mallaig to Oban	Ferry/Bus/Coach	4:21:00
Day 5	Oban to Glasgow Airport	Coach	5:26:00

It took approximately 1 hour to plan this itinerary for the Mull Gaelic Ring and table 4 summarises the journey and modes selected. However, it should be noted that the mystery traveller could not find any suitable public transport options to make the journey from Kilchoan to Mallaig via the West Coast of Scotland taking in Moidart and Morar. Kilchaon itself is only served by 1 bus per a day at 07:50, which is run as a school bus service, which limits the use of public transport for this leg of the Mull Gaelic Ring.

The Mull Gaelic ring has the benefit of at least 6 ferry crossings per a day, but suffers from the limited frequencies of services for buses and coaches that result in long waiting times between key stages of the journey. As with the Barra Gaelic ring it is recommended that advanced journey planning is crucial when looking to undertake this Gaelic Ring by public transport.

Figure 9 shows the information provided on the Gaelic Rings web site provided by the 'Getting Here' menu option on the Mull ring page. It should be noted that the information provided is targeted at a car driver and does not contain any timetable information in order for a route to be planned.

Gaelic Ring: Mull | Mull | Getting Here

The information below is a guide to help you plan your journey throughout the Gaelic Ring from Oban to Mull, Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Morar and Mallaig to Armadale on Skye.

Travel times/mileage		
Inverness - Oban	Car	2hrs 30 mins*
Glasgow – Oban	Car	2hrs 20 mins*
Edinburgh – Oban	Car	3hrs*
Oban – Craignure, Mull	Ferry	46 mins
Craignure – Fionnphort	Car	37m / 60km
Craignure – Tobermory	Car	21m / 34km
Tobermory – Kilchoan	Ferry	35 mins
Kilchoan – Mallaig	Car	57m / 92km*
Mallaig – Armadale, Skye	Ferry	30 mins
Armadale – Fort William (via Kyle of Lochalsh)	Car	48m / 77km*

*Source: www.theaa.com
Please note: It is advisable to check your journey before setting off.

Figure 9 Information available from Gaelic Rings Website (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/mull/getting_here.php?sel=2&top=1&mid=2&base=2&ring=Mull

2.2.1.3   Skye Gaelic Ring

Figure 10 The Skye Gaelic Ring route (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_skye/index.php?top=1&mid=3&ring=Skye)

The Skye Gaelic Ring starts in Fort William, taking in the Isle of Skye, North Uist, Berneray, Harris and Lewis returning to Ullapool, then Fort William via Invergarry. For the purposes of this exercise the Mystery Traveller has assumed that they will arrive at Inverness Airport at 08:30 on a Monday morning and the resulting itinerary is shown in table 5.

Table 5: Proposed Skye Gaelic Ring itinerary

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Perform	Comments
Day 1: Inverness Airport to Portree, Isle of Skye with overnight stop (Travel Time 6:27:00)									
Inverness Airport	Inverness Bus Station	Stagecoach 11	09:03	09:25	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyLegDetails.do	1	2	1	No comments. Frequency of service is approximately 1 – 2 an hour.
Inverness Bus Station	Fort William	City Link 919	09:30	11:20	http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/fortwill.htm#transport and http://www.citylink.co.uk/journeyplanner.php	1	2	2	City Link journey planner provided a few problems. Limited frequency (5 services a day Mon – Fri) leads to issues with long waiting times.
Fort William	Mallaig	Train	12:12	13:34	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	No problems or comments. All timetables downloadable and links into train times. Limited train frequency at 5 trains per a day.
Mallaig	Armadale (**Skye**)	Ferry	13:45	14:15					
Armadale	Portree (**Skye**)	Bus 52C	14:25	15:30	http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/skye.htm http://www.uig-skye.co.uk/transport.html (google Uig to Armadale Isle of Skye) – links to Rapsons website, now operated by Stagecoach, with complete timetable of all services on the Isle. http://www.rapsons.com/	1	2	1	Timetables downloadable from the website. Limited bus service frequency, with 4 services a day Mon – Fri which are not school dependent, although 2 of these only run when Easter ferry timetable is in operation.
Day 2: Portree to Leverburgh (leave after 12:00 to allow for sight seeing in Portree travel time 5:00:00)									
Portree	Uig	City Link 916	13:20	13:50	http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/skye.htm http://www.uig-skye.co.uk/transport.html (google Uig to Armadale Isle of Skye) – links to Rapsons website, now operated by Stagecoach, with complete timetable of all services on the Isle.	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service with approx 5 services per a day.

					http://www.rapsons.com/				
Uig **(Skye)**	Lochmaddy **(North Uist)**	Ferry	14:00	15:45	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited number of ferry crossings (1-2 per a day) although do link with buses to UIG.)
Lochmaddy	Berneray	W19 Bus	16:30	17:00	http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/travel/busservice/ - Selecting Uist and Barra	1	2	1	Timetables are downloadable and the bus arrival is scheduled for the ferry arrivals/departures so minimal waiting times. However, only 4 services per an hour.
Bernerray	Leverburgh **(Harris)**	Ferry	17:20	18:20	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Bus services arranged to coincide with ferry arrivals from Leverburgh.
Day 3: Leverburgh to Stornaway (leaving after 12:00 and allowing for time in Tarbert) Travel Time 01:58:00 excluding waiting									
Leverburgh	Tarbert Pier **(Lewis)**	W10 Bus	11:35	12:33	http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/travel/busservice/ - selecting Lewis and Harris	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service at 5 services per a day. The bus route is a through service from Leverburgh to Stornaway. Arriving at this time the next ferry isn't until the following morning necessitating an overnight stop.
Tarbert	Stornaway **(Lewis)**	W10 Bus	16:00	17:00		2	2	1	
Day 4: Stornaway to Inverness Travel Time 04:10:00									
Stornaway	Ullapool **(Mainland)**	Ferry	07:00	09:45	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service with only 2 ferries per a day.
Ullapool	Inverness	Stagecoach 61	09:50	11:10	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyLegDetails.do	1	2	1	The website (http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk/ullapool.htm) does not provide any linkages between Ullapool and Fort William,, and there are no direct trains or coaches. However, there are direct routes back to Inverness, rather than Fort William from Ullapool by Stagecoach and City Link.

The itinerary took approximately 45 minutes – 1 hour to compile and a summary of the itinerary is shown in Table 6. Although a number of connections between Isles are needed, a number of buses are available allowing for connections between the various ferry terminals. Therefore it is felt that the Skye Gaelic Ring can be made by public transport, although rather than visitors being able to just turn up and complete the Ring, journey planning is still needed. With journey planning, it is also possible to minimise waiting times between the various journey legs.

Table 6: Summary of Skye Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Inverness Airport to Portree, Isle of Skye via Fort William and Armadale	Bus/Coach/Train/Ferry	6:27:00
Day 2	Portree to Leverburgh via Uig and Lochmaddy	Bus/Ferry	5:00:00
Day 3	Leverburgh to Stornaway via Tarbert	Bus	01:58:00
Day 4	Stornaway to Inverness via Ullapool	Ferry/Coach	04:10:00

Gaelic Ring: Skye | Skye | Getting Here

The information below is a guide to help you plan your journey throughout the Gaelic Ring from Mallaig to Skye, North Uist, Berneray, Harris and Lewis.

Travel times/mileage		
Inverness - Fort William	Car	65m / 105km*
Glasgow - Fort William	Car	108m / 174km*
Edinburgh - Fort William	Car	132m / 213km*
Fort William - Mallaig	Car	43m / 69km*
Mallaig – Armadale	Ferry	30 mins
Armadale – Uig, Skye	Car	59m / 94km
Uig – Lochmaddy, North Uist	Ferry	1hr 45 mins
Lochmaddy – Berneray	Car	10m / 16km
Berneray – Leverburgh, Harris	Ferry	1hr
Leverburgh – Stornoway, Lewis	Car	56m / 90km*

Figure 11 Information available from Gaelic Rings Website (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/skye/getting_here.php?sel=2&top=1&mid=3&base=3&ring=Skye)

2.2.1.4　　Islay Gaelic Ring

Figure 12 : Islay Gaelic Ring route (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_islay/index.php?top=1&mid=4&ring=Islay)

The Islay Gaelic Ring starts at Kennacraig on the West Coast of Scotland, located to the south of Oban. The Ring takes in the Isle of Islay and Colonsay before finishing at Oban. For the purposes of the study, the mystery traveller will be flying into Glasgow Airport at approximately 08:00 on a Monday.

Table 7: Proposed Itinerary for Islay Gaelic Ring

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Performance	Comments
Day 1: Glasgow Airport to Port Askaig (Isle of Islay) (Travel Time 6:57:00)									
Glasgow Airport	Kennacraig	Coach	08:08	12:25	http://www.islayinfo.com/travel.html (see Figure 14)	1	2	1	Service is twice daily only.
Kennacraig	Port Askaig **(Islay)**	Ferry	13:00	15:05	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	This only allows 5 minutes leeway if problems arise as passengers have to check in 30 minutes before departure.
Day 2: To be spent on the Isle of Islay									
Day 3: Port Askaig to Scalasaig (Isle of Colonsay with the remainder of the day spent on the Isle) (Travel Time 1:10:00)									
Port Askaig	Scalasaig **(Colonsauy)**	Ferry	10:15	11:25	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited frequency on Tuesday affected travel arrangements.
Day 4: Scalasaig to Glasgow Airport (Travel Time 10:00:00)									
Scalasaig	Oban	Ferry	11:40	14:15	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service requires overnight stay on Wed night to go to Oban on the Thurs.
Oban	Glasgow Bus Station	City Link 976	18:15	21:05	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyLegDetails.do	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service results in long waiting time
Glasgow Bus Station	Glasgow Airport	Bus Route 500	21:15	21:40					

Table 8: Summary of Islay Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Glasgow Airport to Port Askaig (Isle of Islay) via Kennacraig	Coach/Ferry	6:57:00
Day 2	To be spent on the Isle of Islay		
Day 3	Port Askaig to Scalasaig (Isle of Colonsay with the remainder of the day spent on the Isle)	Ferry	1:10:00
Day 4	Day 4: Scalasaig to Glasgow Airport via Oban	Ferry/Coach/Bus	10:00:00

The Islay Gaelic Ring's proposed itinerary took approximately 30 minutes to produce due to the small number of connections that are needed to complete the ring as shown in Table 8. The itinerary only contains one large waiting period located at Oban after completing the ring, and before returning to Glasgow Airport. Whilst the coach to Kennacraig from Glasgow airport is limited by the frequency of service, it was felt by the mystery traveller that this Gaelic Ring could be feasibly completed by public transport.

Figure 13 Information available from Gaelic Rings Website (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/islay/getting_here.php?sel=2&top=1&mid=4&base=2&ring=Islay)

Figure 14 Screen shot of public transport information provision (http://www.islayinfo.com/travel.html)

2.2.1.5   Tiree Gaelic Ring

Figure 11: Tiree Gaelic Ring route
(http://www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_tire/index.php?top=1&mid=5&ring=Tiree)
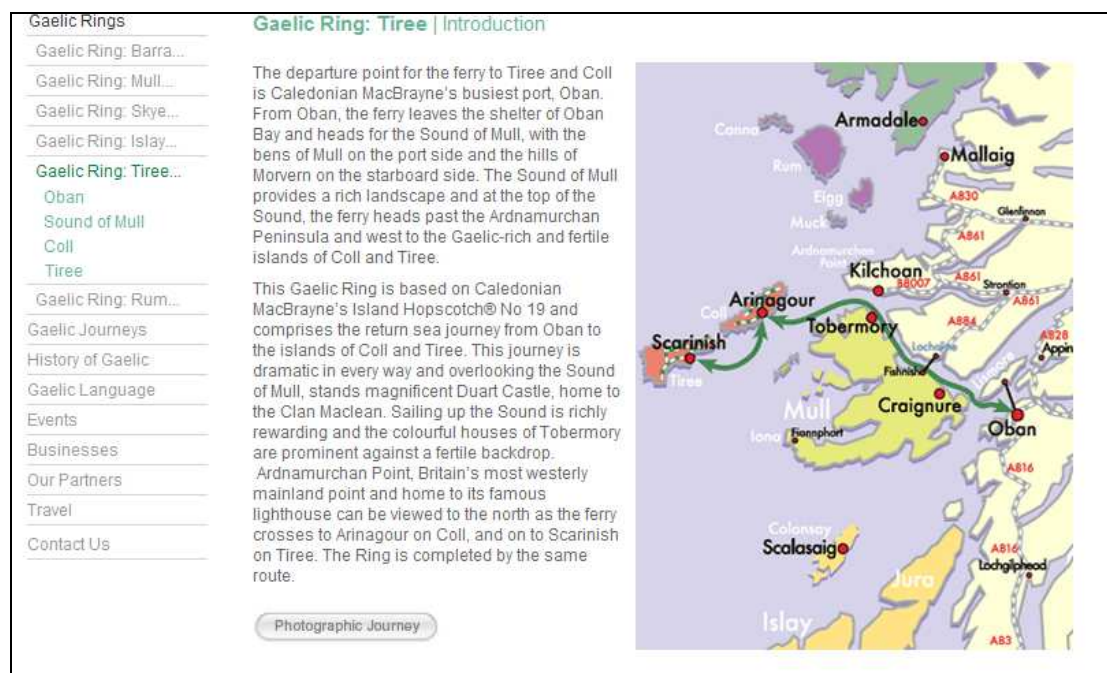
Figure 15 Tiree Gaelic Ring route (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_tire/index.php?top=1&mid=5&ring=Tiree)

The Tiree Gaelic Ring commences and finishes at Oban, taking in the isles of Tiree and Coll via the Sounds of Mull. The Caledonian MacBrayne timetable means that the only ferry available on a Monday from Oban to Coll departs at 08:00 in the morning. However, there is an evening train on the Sun at 18:21 that would allow for this ferry to be caught after an overnight stop in Oban.

However, to avoid this, the mystery traveller decided to fly into Glasgow Airport at 07:00 on a Tuesday morning and catch the 15:00 ferry, which resulted in the travel itinerary shown in table 7.

Table 9: Tiree Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Performance	Comments
Day 1: Glasgow Airport to Arinagour (Coll) (Travel Time 9:54:00)									
Glasgow Airport	Glasgow Queen Street	Arriva Bus Route 500	07:46	08:15	http://www.glasgow-airport-guide.co.uk/transport.html which directs to traveline Scotland (google search Glasgow Airport to Glasgow Queen Street)	1	2	1	No issues with frequency (every 10 minutes), waiting time or reliability of traveline.
Glasgow Queen Street	Oban	Train	08:21	11:27	http://www.calmac.co.uk/ and http://www.scotrail.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited frequency of the trains affects waiting times and times which are compatible with ferry crossings.
Oban	Arinagour **(Coll)**	Ferry	15:00	17:40		1	2	1	Frequency and timings of the ferries limits travel options.
Day 2 Spent on the Isle of Coll									
Day 3 (Thurs) Arinagour (Coll) to Scarininsh (Tiree) (Travel Time 0:55:00)									
Arinagour	Scarinish **(Tiree)**	Ferry	11:20	12:15	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Frequency and timings of the ferries limits travel options
Day 4 Scarinish to Glasgow Airport via Oban (Travel Time 13:35:00)									
Scarinish	Oban	Ferry	09:35	13:15	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Frequency and timings of the ferries limits travel options
Oban	Glasgow Queen Street	Train	18:11	21:29		1	2	1	Limited frequency of rail services from Oban to Glasgow leads to long waiting time.
Glasgow Queen Street	Glasgow Airport	Bus Route 500	22:48	23:10	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	**1**	**2**	**1**	No issues with frequency, waiting time or reliability of traveline

The Tiree Gaelic Ring itinerary took approximately 30 minutes to plan and is summarised in Table 10. Whilst this ring could potentially be made by public transport, it is essential that the journeys are planned in advance due to the limited frequency of the ferry service to both Tiree and Coll, and the timings of the ferries, with ferries on Monday, Wednesday and Friday through to Sunday departing Oban before 09:00. Additionally, due to the limited train service frequencies, planning of connectivity between the ferries and train services will minimise waiting times for the visitors.

Table 10: Summary of Tiree Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Day 1: Glasgow Airport to Arinagour (Coll)	Bus/Train/Ferry	9:54:00
Day 2	Spent on the Isle of Coll		
Day 3	Day 3 (Thurs) Arinagour (Coll) to Scarininsh (Tiree)	Ferry	0:55:00
Day 4	Scarinish to Glasgow Airport via Oban	Ferry/Train/Bus	13:35:00

Figure 16 : Information available from Gaelic Rings Website (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/coll/getting_here.php?sel=2&top=1&mid=5&base=3&ring=Tiree)

2.2.1.6   Rum Gaelic Ring

Figure 17 Rum Gaelic Ring route (http://www.gaelic-rings.com/ring_rum/index.php?top=1&mid=6&ring=Rum)

The Isle of Rum Gaelic Ring originates and finishes from the Port of Mallaig, taking in the islands of Rum, Eigg, Muck and Canna. The Caledonian MacBrayne website state that direct trains are available from Fort William to Mallaig before 09:00 in the morning, to meet ferries departing at 10:15 Monday to Thursday. For this reason, the mystery traveller decided to arrive at Inverness airport at 14:00 on Sunday afternoon and travel to Fort William for an overnight stay before continuing to Mallaig on Monday morning.

The exercise showed that due to the timing, frequency and routes of the ferries, it was not possible to see all four of the Small Isles in one trip and spend any great period of time on them. For this reason it was decided to visit only Rum, Eigg and Muck on this visit and not visit Canna.

Table 11: Rum Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Perform	Comments
Day 1: Inverness to Fort William (Travel Time 2:30:00)									
Inverness Airport	Inverness Strothers Lane	Bus Route 11	16:55	17:22	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	1	2	1	Due to the departure time of the Fort William Train to connect with the ferry departures, it is necessary to have an over night stop at Fort William before continuing to Mallaig on the Monday. City Link 919 operates a service 5 times a day.
Inverness	Fort William	City Link 919	17:35	19:25					
Day 2: Fort William to Eigg via Rhum (Travel Time 7:50:00)									
Fort William	Mallaig	Train	08:30	09:52		1	2	1	
Mallaig	Rhum	Ferry	10:15	12:45	http://www.calmac.co.uk/				Only 1 ferry service per day, that does not stop arrive/depart all of the Isles. Furthermore, due to the timings of the islands drop offs and pick ups, it is not possible to visit all of the Isles in one go, with any significant period of time spent on them all. For this reason, only Rhum and Eigg have been visited.
Rhum	Eigg	Ferry	15:20	16:20		1	2	1	
Day 3: Eigg to Muck (Travel Time 0:35:00)									
Eigg	Muck	Ferry	13:00	13:35	http://www.calmac.co.uk/	1	2	1	Limited frequency of ferry services affects choice of islands that can be visited as part of the trip and the timings of these.
Day 4: All day on Muck									
Day 5: Muck to Inverness Airport (Travel Time 8:02:00)									
Muck	Mallaig	Ferry	12:35	14:35					Limited frequency of service affects travel arrangements.
Mallaig	Fort William	Train	16:05	17:27		1	2	1	Limited frequency of services (4 a day) led to slight waiting periods.
Fort William	Inverness	City Link 919	18:15	20:05	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	1	2	1	Limited frequency of service (approx 4 - 5 a day) leads to slight waiting periods.
Inverness Strothers Lane	Inverness Airport	Bus Route 11	20:15	20:37		1	2	1	No comments

Due to the complexities involving the ferries timings and destinations, the Rum Gaelic Ring itinerary took approximately 45 minutes to plan. The limited frequency of the ferry service and the differing nature of the Isles called on each day is slightly confusing. The connections from Mallaig to Fort William do not integrate well with the ferry timings leading to long waiting periods. In this respect, advanced journey planning before visitors try to undertake the Rum Gaelic Ring would be essential.

Table 12: Rum Gaelic Ring proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	Inverness to Fort William	Bus/Coach	2:30:00
Day 2	Fort William to Eigg via Mallaig	Train/Ferry	7:50:00
Day 3	Eigg to Muck	Ferry/Train/Coach/Bus	0:35:00
Day 4		All day on Muck	
Day 5	Muck to Inverness	Ferry/Train/Coach/Bus	8:02:00

Figure 18 'Getting Here' Information available from Gaelic Rings Website

2.2.2   Highlands & Islands Whisky Trails

The mystery traveller exercise could only find one identifiable whisky trail and could not find specific reference to "Speyside" or "Highlands" whisky trails. "The Malt Whisky Trail" (www.maltwhiskytrail.com) is shown in figure 19 and comprises of 9 distilleries in the Speyside region of Scotland, approximately located between Aberdeen and Inverness. The distilleries are located in the towns/villages of Forres, Elgin, Rothes, Fochabers, Keith, Dufftown, Carron and Glenlivet.

Figure 19 The Malt Whisky Trail (www.maltwhiskeytrail.com)

On the Whisky Trail website itself, there is limited transport information, with information relating to rail services from the UK to Aberdeen, Aberdeen airport and if driving to the area. There is no reference to public transport to the individual distilleries on the main travel page[1]. There is however a link to traveline for public transport information.

For the purposes of the mystery traveller exercise, it was decided to begin the journey in Inverness on a Monday morning at approximately 09:00, with a view of travelling between the distilleries by public transport in the following order:
- Benromach and Dallas Dhu at Forres
- Glen Moray at Elgin
- Strathisla at Keith
- Glen Grant at Rothes
- Speyside Cooperage and Glenfiddich at Dufftown
- Cardhu at Carron
- Glenlivet

The travel planning tool Traveline Scotland was found to be essential when planning this journey.

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[1] http://www.maltwhiskytrail.com/functions.asp?pageid=TRAVEL

Table 13: Proposed Itinerary for the Highlands & Islands Whisky trail

Origin	Destination	Mode	Depart	Arrive	Source of Info	Suitable Route	Ease of Info Finding	Info Sources Performance	Comments
Day 1: Inverness to Forres (Travel Time 4:04:00)									
Inverness Airport	Inverness Retail Park	Stagecoach Route 11	09:33	09:46	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	1	2	1	No information about PT access displayed on the website. It is envisaged to stay at this distillery for approximately 2 hours before moving to the Dallas Dhu Distillery.
Inverness Retail Park	Benromach Distillery, FORRES (IV36 3EB)	Stagecoach Bluebird 305, then 10 min walk	09:55	10:47					
Benromach Distillery	Dallas Dhu Distillery (IV362RR), FORRES	Traveline identifies that the distillery is approximately 40 minutes walk, with the option to use a bus for 0 – 1 minutes of the journey from the Benromach distillery.	12:51	13:37	http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/places/propertyresults/propertyplan.htm?PropID=PL_085&PropName=Dallas%20Dhu%20Historic%20Distillery	3	2	2	Information is available on the distillery website that FORRES is approximately 25 minutes from Aberdeen by Scotrail, with the distillery a 15 minute walk from the station. The maltwhiskytrail.com website also indicates that the distillery can be accessed by Bus or rail to Forres, with the station and a bus stop 1 mile from distillery. Traveline did not originally recognize the distillery postcode
Day 2: Forres to Keith (Travel Time 3:45:00)									
Forres Rail Station	Glen Moray Distillery, Elgin (IV30 1YE)	305 Stagecoach Bluebird	09:20	09:41	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	1	2	1	No information is available on either the maltwhiskytrail.com or the distillery website relating to public transport access.
		Walk from West Road, Elgin	09:41	09:54					
Glen Moray Distillery, Elgin	Strathisla Distillery, Keith (AB555BS)	Walk to West Road, Elgin	12:07	12:20		2	2	1	Information is available on the maltwhiskytrail.com website indicating that the distillery is 600m from Keith Rail station and 500m from a Bus Stop. Bus is 1 per an hour, although alternative route is available involving train and bus interchange.
		10 Stagecoach Bluebird	12:20	13:05					
Day 3: Keith to Speyside Cooperage (Travel Time 3:16:00)									
Keith Rail	Glen Grant	Train to Elgin	09:33	09:51	http://www.travelines	1	2	1	Information is available on the

Station	Distillery, Rothes (AB38 7BS)	336 Stagecoach Bluebird from Laich Moray Hotel	10:09	10:28	cotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do				distilleries website about transport access with buses from Elgin. Buses fairly frequent, without the issue of excessive waiting periods.
Glen Grant Distillery, Rothes	Speyside Cooperage(AB38 9RS)	336 Stagecoach Bluebird	12:28	12:35	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneysFound.do	1	2	1	No information is available on either the distillery's website or the maltwhiskytrail.com. Bus frequency is one per hour.
		Walk from Craigellachie, The Hotel, At the Hotel	12:35	12:49					
Day 4: Speyside Cooperage to Dufftown (Travel Time 5:15:00)									
Dufftown Square	The Glenfiddich Distillery, Dufftown, Banffshire AB55 4DH	From Dufftown Square, 336 Stagecoach	08:57	08:59	http://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables/336web_Layout2[1].pdf	1	2	2	The maltwhiskytrail.com website comments that a bus stop is located close to the distillery. The distillery website also provides car based journeys from various gateways including Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh. Initially, there were problems with traveline recognising the postcode, so went through Stagecoach.
Dufftown Station	Cardhu Distillery, Aberlour AB38 7RY	336 Stagecoach Bluebird to Rothes High Street	12:59	13:22	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyLegDetails.do	2	2	1	Limited frequency of service limits time choices for travel. No public transport information on the maltwhiskytrail.com website, and there isn't any information on the distillery's page on the Diaego drinks group website.
		337 Stagecoach Bluebird to Cardhu Distillery	13:52	14:12					
Day 5: Dufftown to Inverness (Travel Time 11:10:00)									
Dufftown Station	Glen Livet Distillery, AB37 9DB	336 Stagecoach Bluebird to Charlestown of Aberlour	08:27	08:37	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyLegDetails.do	2	2	1	No information on the distillery's or maltwhiskeytrail.com's websites relating to public transport access.
		362 Central Garage to Glen Livet Distillery	09:05	09:28					
Glen Livet Distillery	Inverness Airport	563 WW Smith to Dufftown	16:18	16:57	http://www.travelinescotland.com/journeyplanner/showJourneyL	2	2	1	
		10 Stagecoach Bluebird to	17:04	18:56					

		Inverness Retail Park			egDetails.do				
		11 Stagecoach Bluebird to Inverness Airport	19:21	19:37					

Table 14: Summary of the Whisky Trails proposed itinerary

Day	Origin and Destination	Modes Used	Journey Time
Day 1	**Inverness to Forres**	Bus, Bus, Walk	**4:04:00**
Day 2	**Forres to Keith**	Bus, Walk, Bus	**3:45:00**
Day 3	**Keith to Speyside Cooperage**	Train, Bus x2, Walk	**3:16:00**
Day 4	**Speyside Cooperage to Dufftown**	Bus x 3	**5:15:00**
Day 5	**Dufftown to Inverness**	Bus x 5	**11:10:00**

The Mystery Traveller exercise has shown that it is possible to complete a trail of the whisky distilleries by public transport. However, some of the routes require the traveller to walk relatively large distances that might make the routes less attractive for some visitors. The process identified that Stagecoach rebranded the 336 bus as the Whisky Trail bus in 2008, with all vehicles being fully accessible and with cctv cameras for security. The buses are applicable to the trail from Forres to Findhorn, Elgin and Aberlour to Dufftown[2].

The exercise has shown that more work would be needed in terms of information provision and whether some of the services identified would be suitable for a tourist. Consideration should also be given to recommending day trips using public transport instead of a trail for some parts of the journey itinerary above.

Figure 20 Screen Shots from the Whisky Trail Website and Distilleries – the Trail

Figure 21 Screen Shots from the Whisky Trail Website and Distilleries – PT access to Strathisla

Figure 22 Glen Grant Distillery Screen Shot PT Info

Figure 23 Glenfiddich Distillery 'Find us' web page

Figure 24 Reference to Forres Gazette Article regarding rebranding of the bus for the Whisky Trail

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[2] (Google search Term Public Transport Glen Fiddich Distillery) http://www.scotlandwhisky.com/news-and-events/whisky-trail-bus. This was announced in the Forres Gazette on 18 March 09 by representatives of HiTRANS and Stagecoach Staff (see figure 24).

Figure 25 Lack of branding on the stagecoach timetable

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3 PRESENTATION AND LINKING PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

The second task of the scoping study undertook a review of the web sites identified in task 1 to make recommendations as to how public transport links could be added or better presented on each web site.

3.1 Public Transport Information on the Gaelic Rings Web Site

3.1.1 Improving the Gaelic Ring Introduction pages

Each of the Gaelic Rings has a specific page containing information about 'Getting Here'. However, the link bar containing the link to this page does not appear on the Introduction page for each Ring, and only appears on the sub-pages:
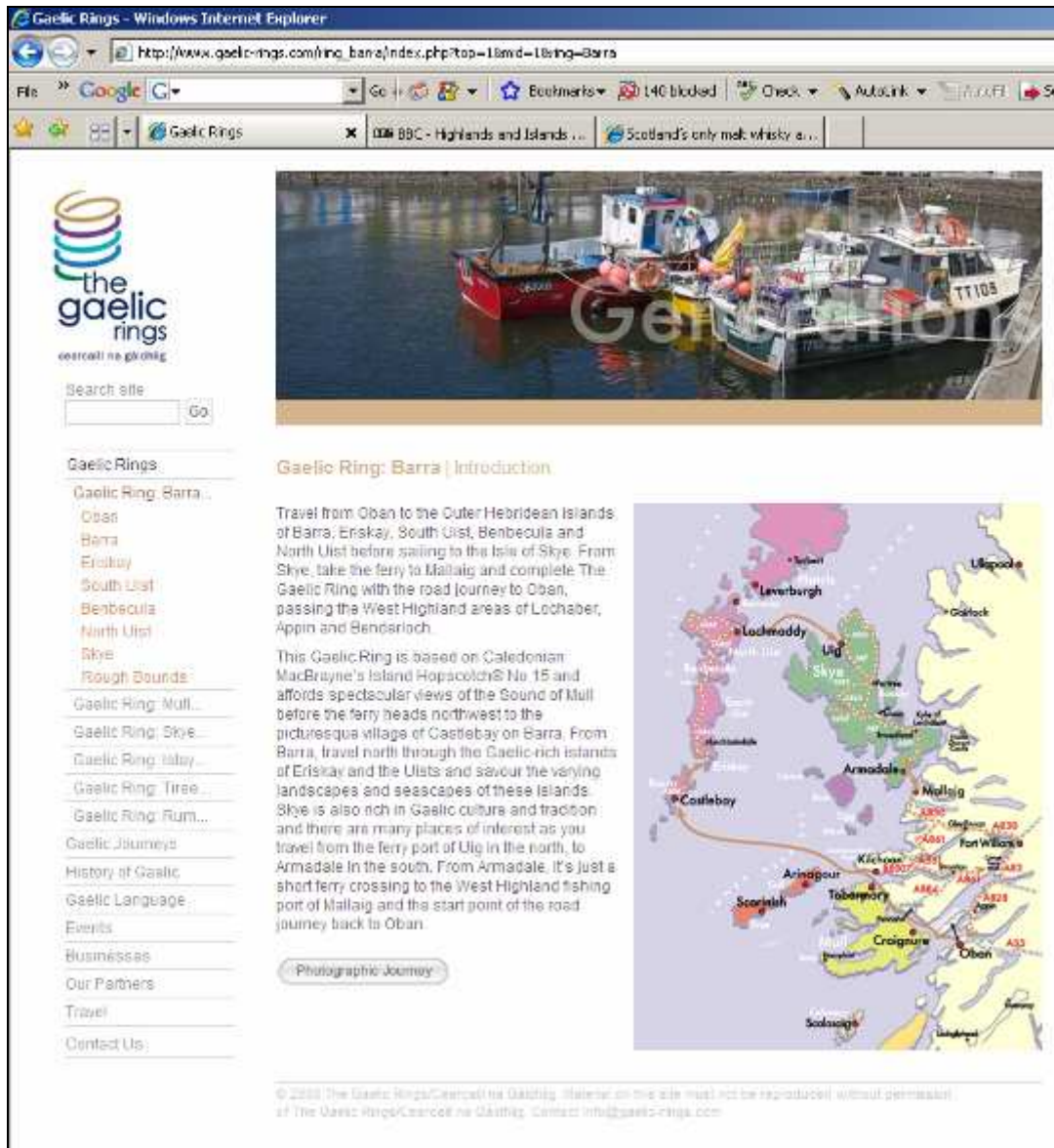
Figure 26 Introduction page for the Barra Gaelic Ring

On the Introduction page there is a button linking to a photographic journey of the Ring and this would be an ideal space for a second button or link indicating 'Plan your journey now' to the user. This link would take the user directly to the 'Getting Here' page that can be accessed from the page for each leg of the journey (see Figure 27). Having seen the photographic journey, the user would then be encouraged to plan the journey for themselves. It is therefore recommended that a link bar is included on the Introduction page and a button (e.g. plan you journey) or link directly to the 'Getting Here' page from the Introduction page.

Figure 27 Introduction page for the Barra Gaelic Ring
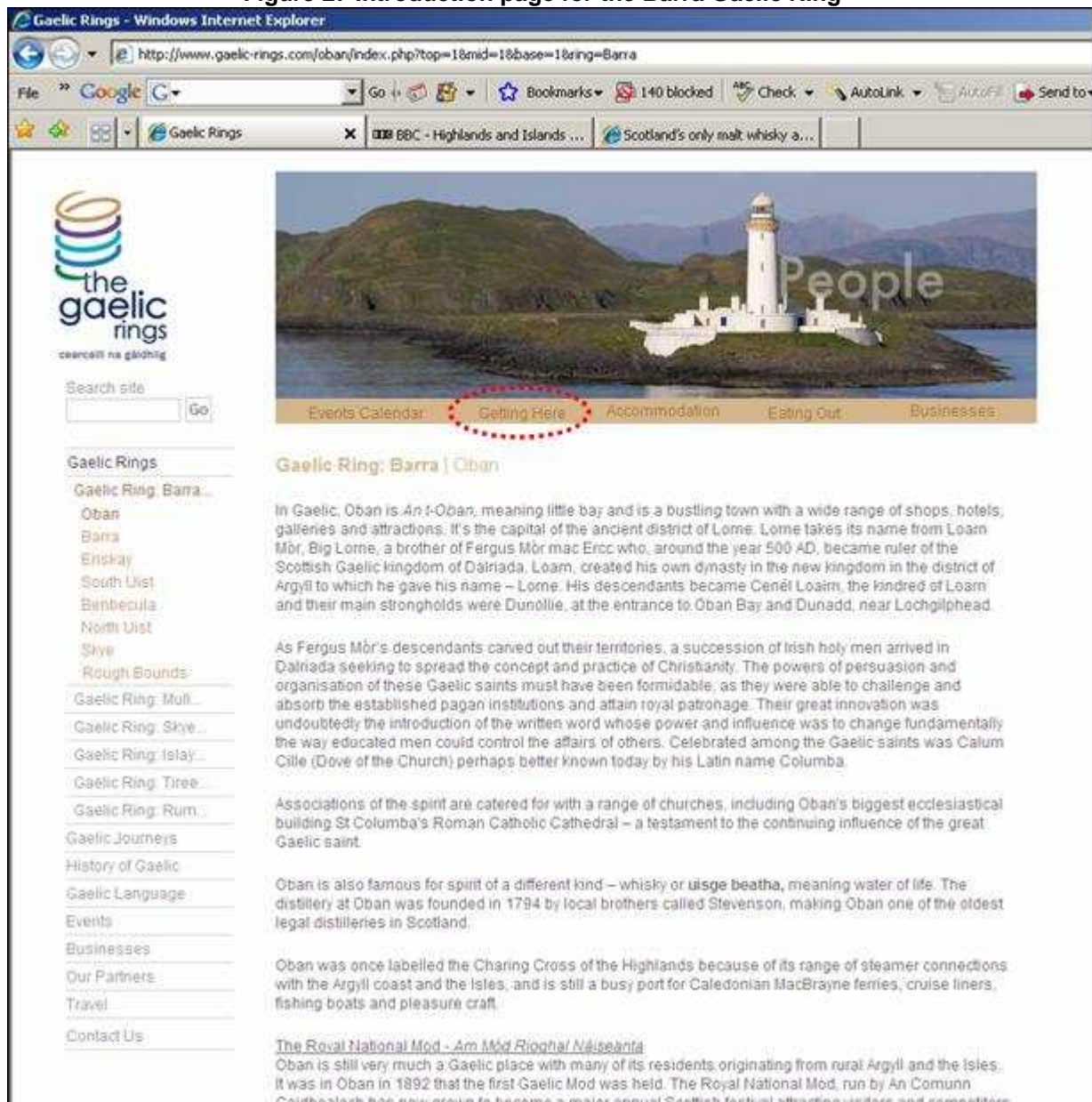
3.1.2 Improving travel information for Ring legs on www.gaelic-rings.com

The 'Getting Here' page is a generic page that is common to all legs of a given Ring. The page displays information about three aspects of travel – reaching the start point from Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh, travel around the Ring itself, and onward travel from the finish point back to Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The information gives car driving times or mileages and ferry travel times. It does not give rail or bus travel times or indicate where such information could be found.

The mystery traveller work has shown that it is possible to travel to the start point of each Rings from Glasgow or Inverness airports using public transport. It has also been possible to travel around the Rings using public transport, including ferries (see annex A). Therefore, this information should be made available to the user through the Getting Here page, both to increase awareness of public transport as an available mode of travel, and to allow the user to find results for any given leg of their journey by any mode.

In terms of presenting travel information to the user, it is recommended that the table is reformatted according the elements presented in Table 1 below (Barra Ring). Obviously the text will vary depending upon the best mode of travel identified in the Mystery Traveller report.

Table 15 Example of how the 'Getting Here' tables could look like

Travel times/mileage	How to travel (click link for travel information for journey leg)	Travel time/distance
Inverness - Oban	Drive or take the train	2hrs 30 mins
Glasgow – Oban	Drive or take the train	2hrs 20 mins
Edinburgh – Oban	Drive or take the train	3hrs
	_	
Oban - Castlebay, Barra	Ferry	5hrs 20 mins
Barra – Eriskay	Ferry	40 mins
Eriskay – Lochmaddy, North Uist	Drive or take the bus	52m /84km
Lochmaddy – Uig, Skye	Ferry	1hr 45mins
Uig – Armadale	Drive or take the bus	59m / 95km
Armadale – Mallaig	Ferry	30 mins
	_	
Mallaig – Inverness	Drive or take the train	3hrs
Mallaig – Glasgow	Drive or take the train	3hrs 50 mins
Mallaig – Edinburgh	Drive or take the train	4hrs 20 mins

(All times and distances are estimated for example purposes).

The [drive](#) link can link through to a preferred motor route planner such as theaa.com or autoroute.com. There are a number of options for how the public transport link may function (ferry, bus or train). In practice these options may represent a development path for the client to follow, based on cost and ease of implementation.

3.1.2.1   Link to operator timetable.

The most up to date source of information for the journey leg should be the published timetable of the operator offering the service. The link should open the relevant timetable in a new window for the user to consult and print out if necessary.

The advantage of this approach is that the user can review the timetable and select a day and journey time to suit their needs.

The disadvantage of this approach is that it requires staff time to maintain an overview of timetable changes to ensure that the current timetables are always available.

3.1.2.2   Link to Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland via page landing

Online journey planners such as Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland now offer a 'page landing' capability. If implemented for the Gaelic Rings website, this would mean that after the [take the bus](#) link was clicked, a new browser window would open. In the new browser window would be a set of journey results already calculated for the next available journey between a specified origin and destination. The journey planner can do this because the Gaelic Rings website sends it information about the origin, for instance Eriskay, and the destination, for instance Lochmaddy, North Uist. Note that Transport Direct also offers options by car.

The advantage of this approach is that the user does not have to key the information into a journey planner or scan through a timetable. There is also no need to maintain the links to timetables on operators' websites.

The disadvantage is that a satisfactory journey result may not always be returned, since users are likely to be planning a journey at a different time and date to when the actual journey will be made. The journey planners mentioned about do however offer the user the ability to change any detail of the journey, for example changing the date and time of travel, as required.

Further discussions would be needed with Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland to define the relatively simple functionality that needs to be embedded in the Gaelic Rings website to support page landing functionality. TTR has good personal contacts with both services and can make the necessary introductions on request.

3.1.2.3   Link to Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland via white labelling

Some website owners may wish to offer a journey planning capability on their website, but prefer not to 'hand off' a user to a page in new browser window. In this case, Transport Direct supports a 'white labelling' capability. If implemented for the Gaelic Rings website, this would mean that after the [take the bus](#) link was clicked,

the user would be taken to a journey planner page that appeared to be **within** the same browser window. The branding of the journey planner would reflect the branding of Gaelic Rings website, even though the journey planner would actually be sending the queries to the Transport Direct website to answer. It is also possible to implement white labelling where a new browser window opens, but the Gaelic Rings website branding is retained.

The example shown in Figure 28 illustrates how white labelling has been implemented for the BBC Highland and Islands website's link to the Transport Direct journey planner. In this case Transport Direct already supports a white labelling capability. Although Traveline Scotland does not currently offer white labelling, this is something that they would consider for suitable partners
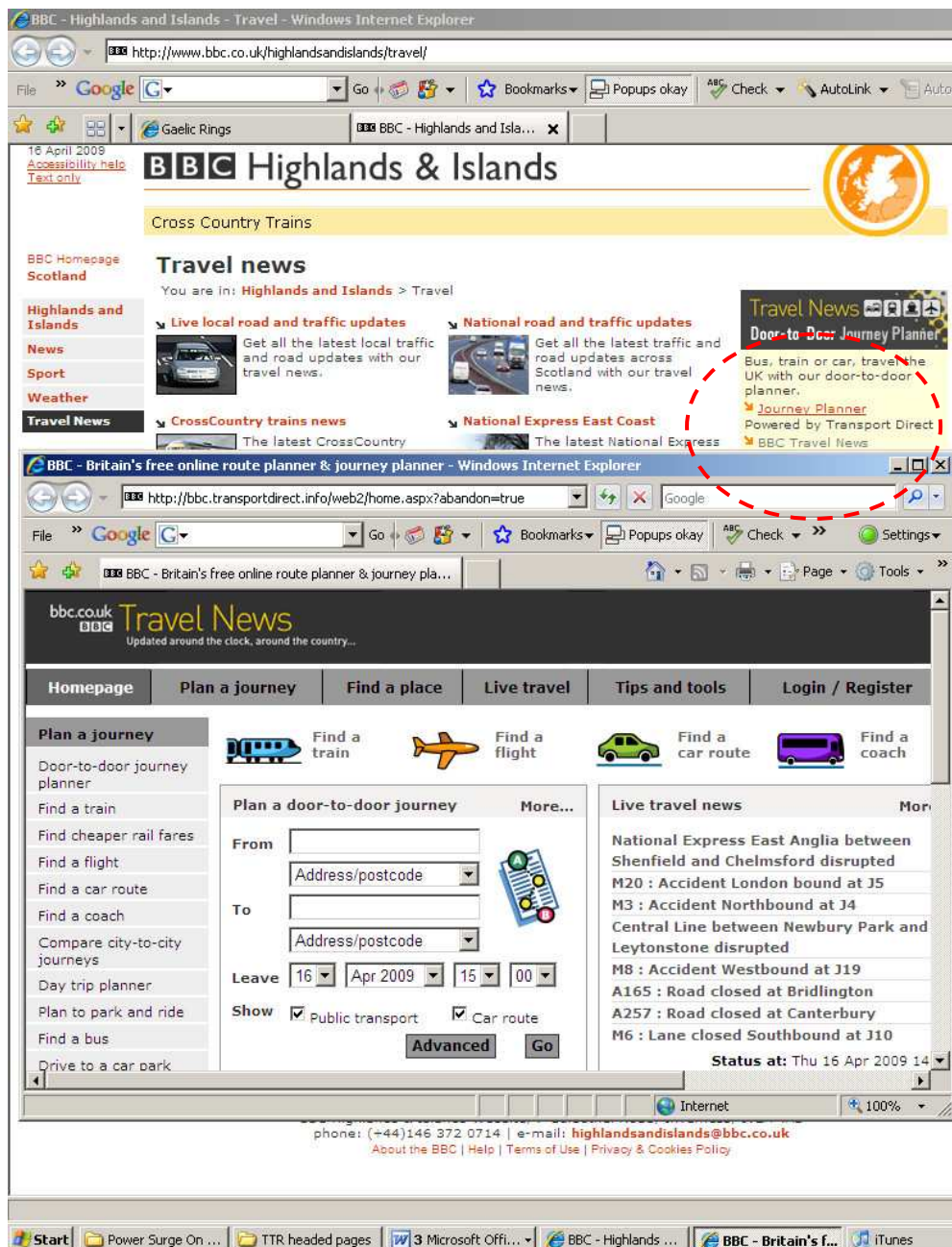
Figure 28: White labelling technique to Transport Direct used on the BBC Highland and Islands website

3.1.2.4 Exploitation of the Transport Direct Day Trip Planner

The Transport Direct web site contains a feature that allows the user to plan a circular trip (see Figure 29). The feature is designed for people wanting to plan a day trip and allows a return journey to be planned with visits to two other locations (see Figure 30). It is recommended that this feature is explored to see whether it is capable of providing travel itineraries for the Gaelic Ring routes.

Figure 29 Transport Direct Link to the Day Trip Planner
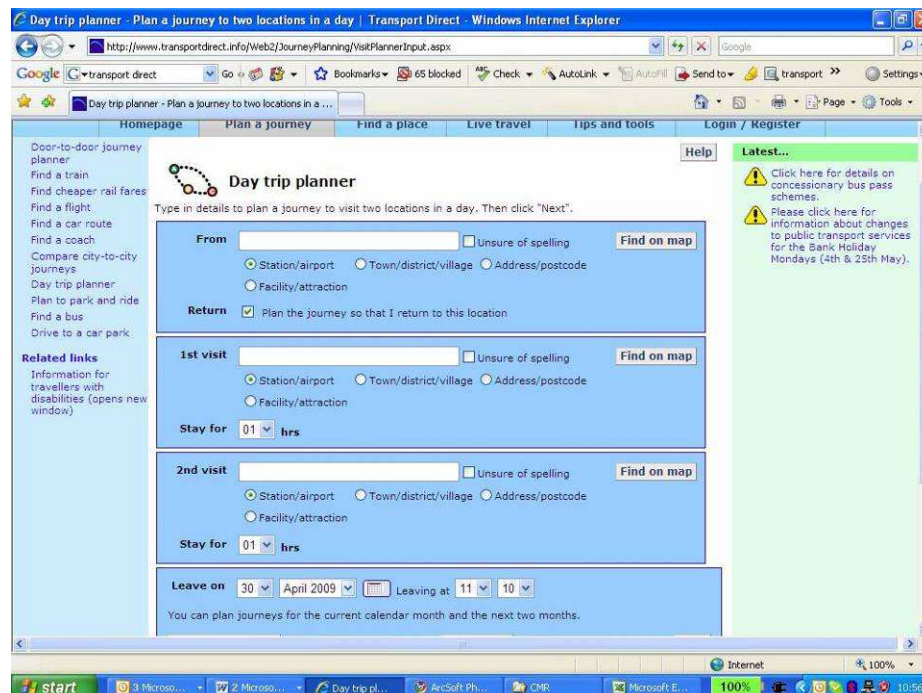
Figure 30: Transport Direct Day Trip Planner

3.2   Improving travel information on www.maltwhiskytrail.com

The Malt Whisky Trail website gives information about nine distilleries that the user may wish to visit. No overall journey plan between the distilleries is given, despite the word 'trail' in the website's title. Some brief information about transport links is given in the distillery descriptions. The mystery traveller exercise has shown that it is possible to plan journeys between the distilleries using public transport (see section 2).

Some users may be planning to visit individual distilleries as part of a wider set of tourist visits. Other users may wish to plan a route that takes in two or more distilleries over a number of days. Other users may wish to travel from outside the area to visit one distillery only. In all scenarios, the user's origin will not be known in advance (unlike the legs of the Gaelic Rings).

Therefore, it is recommended that a Transport Direct 'Get here' link is implemented on each distillery page. The link would be prepopulated with the destination coordinates of the distillery. Users would type in their origin postcode to get directions. Figure 31 shows how the Transport Direct 'Get Here' function has been applied to the TTR web site.
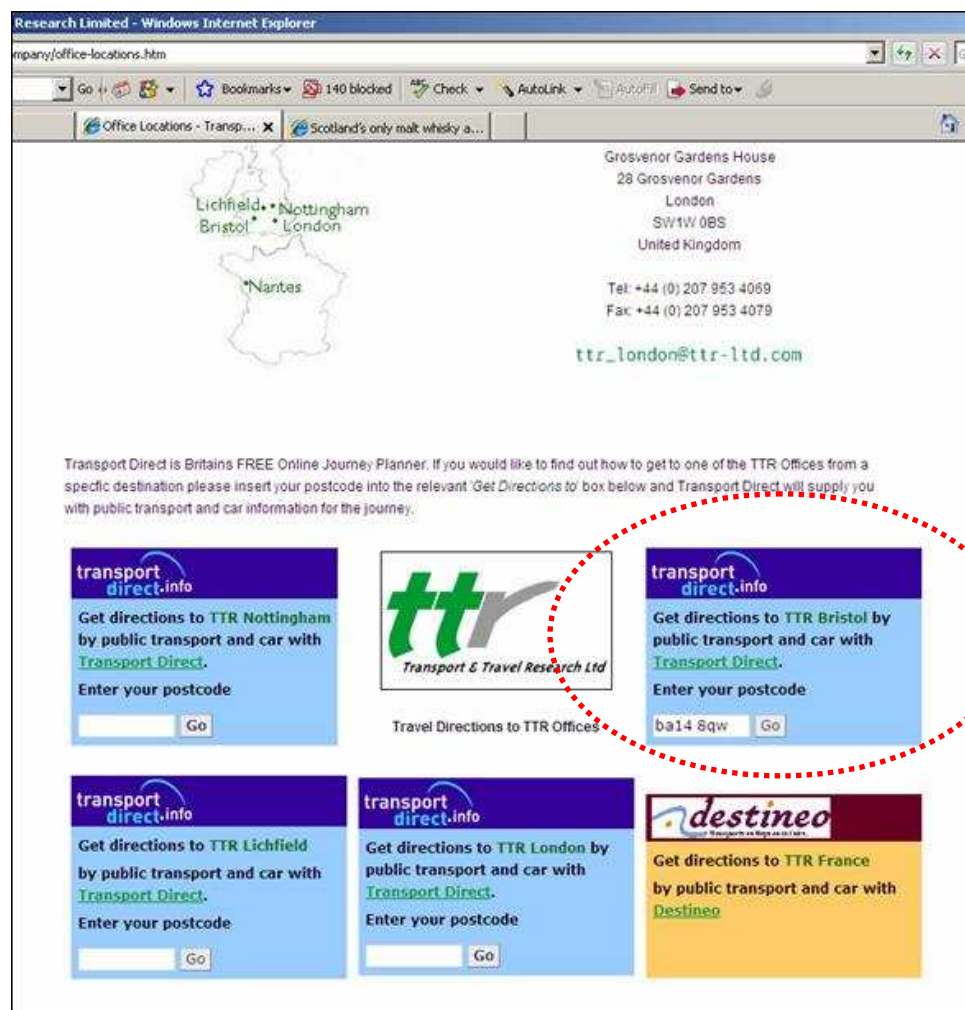
Figure 31 'White labelling' technique to Transport Direct used on the BBC Highland and Islands website

After the user types their postcode and clicks the 'Go' button, they are taken by 'page landing' functionality to the Transport Direct website. In the case of the Malt Whisky Trail, users would be taken to the Transport Direct website. The page would give the results in a journey plan with a map available, using public transport and car modes, as shown in Figure 32 for the example on the TTR website:
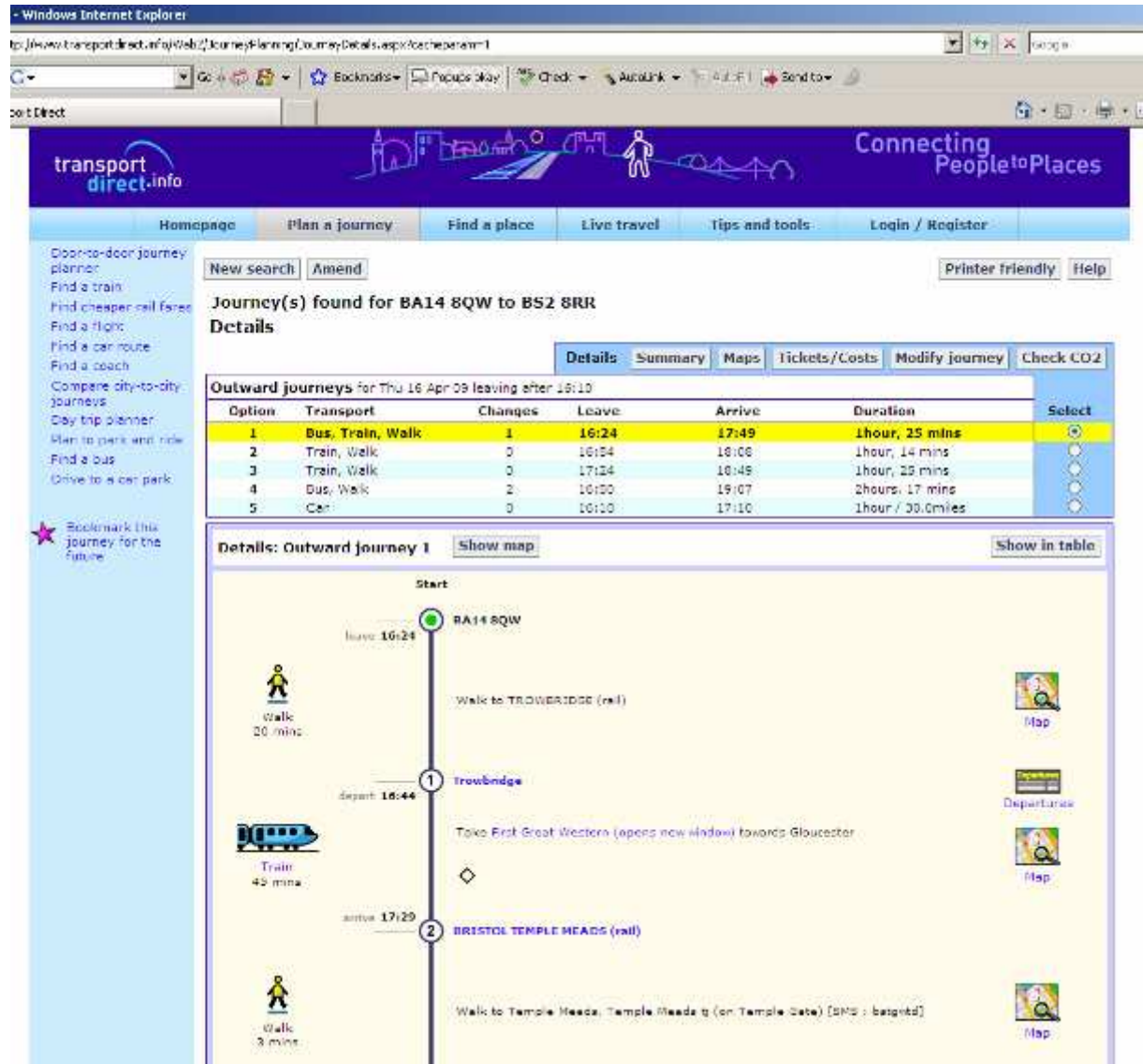
Figure 32 TTR Bristol 'Get Here' instructions supplied by Transport Direct

Using this functionality also has the advantage of including a link to the Transport Direct website within the journey plan box, so that users can plan their own journeys if desired. It is recommended that 'page landing' functionality is used for each distillery web page with pre-populated coordinates.

4   GOOD PRACTICE REVIEW

A review was undertaken by completing an internet search for similar trails to those analysed in this project. The objective of the review was to identify good practice that could be considered for use by the Gaelic Rings or Highland & Island Whisky trails. The following section contains information for eight trails identified by the study.

4.1   Natural England National Trails

Natural England sponsors the national trails website, which provides information relating to 15 trails within England and Wales (http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/), with a dedicated website for each of the trails. These trails include:

- Cleveland Way (North Yorkshire)
- Cotswold Way (Southwest England)
- Glyndŵr's Way (Mid Wales)
- Hadrian's Wall (Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyneside)
- North Downs Way (Southeast England)
- Offa's Dyke Path (England/Wales Border)
- Peddars Way/North Norfolk Coast Path (Eastern England)
- Pembrokeshire Coast Pat (Southwest Wales)
- Pennine Bridleway (Derbyshire, Peak District, South Pennines, Yorkshire Dales)
- Pennine Way (Peak District in Derbyshire to the Scottish Borders)
- The Ridgeway (Southern/Central England)
- South Downs Way (Southern England) (http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/Southdowns/index.asp?PageId=1)
- South West Coast Path (Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Dorset)
- Thames Path (Southern/Central England)
- Yorkshire Wolds Way (North and east Yorkshire)

A summary of the public transport information provided for 3 of the routes is shown below.

4.1.1   The South Downs Way

The South Downs are located in Hampshire, in southern England, with a trail existing between Winchester and Eastbourne.

This trail is promoted on the **South Downs Way** National Trail website where a number of transport related links and information are provided, including links to the online journey planner www.travelinesw.com, information for walkers and cyclists, and for those with mobility impairments. In addition, the website contains recommended starting and finishing train stations, and a downloadable public transport information leaflet/guide is available, which contains:

- A map of the local area with bus routes and numbers identified
- A list of the various public transport operators and contact details

- Contact details for taxi and coach operators

A copy of the public transport leaflet is included in Annex A.

Figure 33 The South Downs Way web site

4.1.2   The Thames Path

The Thames Path is located in Southern/Central England and stretches from Cirencester in the Cotswold to Woolwich, Greenwich South East London.

Similarly to the South Downs Way Trail, information related to transport is provided on the Thames Path National Trail website, with web links to journey planning tools of Traveline, the Transport for London online journey planner and the National Rail website, for train related inquiries. A public transport leaflet/guide has also been compiled for the year 2007/08. However, the website states that "*Unfortunately this guide is becoming increasingly out of date and we are unable to publish information for 2008/09 as we have not received any funding this year. We can only apologise and hope that we get funding to update the information next year".* This highlights one of the difficulties of providing 'static' timetabled information.

In the 2007/8 leaflet, information is provided on:

- The location and integrated map of the bus, coach, rail and boat routes;
- The frequency and times of the buses, coaches, trains and boat; and
- The operators of the buses, coaches, trains and boats.

In this respect, the promotion of the travel planning tools is essential. There is also a dedicated page relating to who operates the scheduled boat services and the routes they apply to, with links to each of their websites.

Figure 34 The Thames Path - Public Transport Information

4.1.3   The Cotswolds Way

The Cotswolds Way Trail starts in the south of the Cotswolds close to the market town of Bath, finishing at Chipping Campden in the North of the Cotswolds.

As with the South Downs Way and Thames Way website, information is made available to users about the travel planning tools Traveline and National Rail, with the CountryGoer website (www.countrygoer.org/cotswolds.html), which provides information on "*how to travel the "green way" to the countryside*".

Furthermore, the Cotswolds Conservation Board have produced an in depth booklet, which gives details about 15 places along the Cotswold Way where it is practical to start and finish your walk using public transport from nearby towns. This booklet is far more comprehensive than the 2 pages leaflets produced for the other two Trails that have been summarized, and additionally, information on the trail is available

broken down in 3 booklets, specifically for the towns of Bath, Stroud and Cheltenham.

Contained with the main booklet is information relating to:

- For each of the 15 places, bus and/or train routes and times for getting to and from each location
- Bus Operators and contact numbers, and if needed, the Traveline contact number.
- Taxi and private car hire operators at 2 locations for back up purposes.

Figure 35 Example page from the Cotswold Way Public Transport Leaflet

4.2   CAMRA Rail Ale Trails

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) have worked with a number of transport operators across the country for a number of years to provide trails of numbers of pubs by public transport.

4.2.1   Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership

The Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership (ALCRP) which was launched in 2005, working in conjunction with the South Hertfordshire branch of CAMRA launched the "Rail Ale Trail" to promote *the sensible enjoyment of real ale through reliable train journeys.* The trail is advertised on the Community Partnership's website (*http://www.abbeyline.org.uk/railale.htm*) with a downloadable 8 page leaflet, which is available in hard copies in a number of strategic locations. Within this 8 page leaflet, information is provided about:

- Fare prices for returns from Watford Junction to each rail station associated with the ale trail and frequency of trains from Watford Junction and St Albans Abbey rail stations
- Links to the Silverlink website for further timetable information
- A profile of each pub on the trail, including directions from each station, pub opening hours and access for the disabled
- A map of the pubs in the close vicinity to St Albans Abbey and Watford Junction stations

Figure 36: Extract from Rail Ale Trail South Herts.

4.2.2 The Devon and Cornwall Rail Ale Trail

The Devon and Cornwall branches of CAMRA, working with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, have launched 6 rail based ale trails, based on 6 railway branches in Devon and Cornwall. These are:

- Maritime Line (from Truro to Falmouth)
- Looe Valley Line (from Looe to Liskeard)
- Tarka Line (from Barnstaple to Exeter)
- St Ives Line (from St Ives to Barnstaple)
- Atlantic Coast Line (from Newquay to Par)
- Tamar Valley Line (from Gunnislake to Plymouth)

The website itself provides weblinks to traveline, the train operator First Great Western and the Partnerships complementary website, Devon and Cornwall's Scenic Railways (http://www.greatscenicrailways.com/ttable.html). This website features information about seasonal running of services on the various line, and downloadable copies of the train timetables, with links again to First Great Western and National Rail websites.

Figure 37 Devon and Cornwall Rail Ale Trails

Figure 38 The Devon and Cornwall Scenic Railway web site

4.3   The Sandstone Trail - Cheshire

Cheshire County Council promotes the walking Sandstone Trail through the website http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/countryside/Walking/linear_trails/sandstone/. This website provides information about rail connections to the start and finish of the trail and promotes the traveline website and phone number. Disability access is provided about the walking route for those with mobility impairment. The web site also provides a link to the Babelfish web site that will translate the information into most languages.

4.4   The Red Kite Trail

In Newcastle, there is the Red Kites walking trail, an 18 kilometre (11 miles) circular walking route through the countryside of the lower Derwent Valley in Gateshead and County Durham. This trail is part of the Northern Kites wildlife initiative which aims to return breeding red kites to the region whilst providing its communities and people with an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate one of the most spectacular elements of our wild heritage.

As part of the trail website[3] detailed guides are available for users to download for the various stages of the trail, which include transport and accessibility sections, identifying the bus routes and numbers concerned and their origin. The guide also promotes the Travelwise journey planner (with contact phone number), the website of the SimplyGo transport operator (who operates the bus services in Tyneside) and national rail (website and contact number).

Figure 39 Extract from Red Kite detailed guide

4.5   The Moray Firth Trail

The Moray Firth Trail is located in the Northeast of Scotland, and is part of the North Sea Trail, which is a partnership of 26 regions in 6 European countries that share a North Sea Heritage. The trail stretches from Forres/Findhorn eastwards Cullen on the south shore of the Firth. The trail also links in with other waymarked routes such as the Great Glen Way and the Speyside Way.

The Moray Firth Trail website (http://www.morayfirth.org/howtogetthere.asp) provides information about a number of sources of information about how to travel to the trail. These include:

- The journey planners of Transport Direct and Traveline

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[3] http://www.northernkites.org.uk/redkitetrail/index.htm

- The Hi-Ways transport guide (http://highlandlife.net/transport) has comprehensive links for all forms of transport in the Highlands, as well as information about accommodation and services
- Connections from other UK and EU airports and ferries destinations
- Rail Connections to Inverness, including links to the National Rail website
- Coach operator web links including for Stagecoach, City Link, Rapsons and Megabus. It is recommended that people wishing to use local bus services are advised to use Traveline Scotland.

Figure 40 The Moray Firth Trail Web site

4.6   The Isle of Wight Food Trail

The Isle of Wight Food Trail was launched to promote the local produce of the Isle of Wight and New Forest, and the trail takes in 24 locations producing goods from meat, wine, beers and ciders, jam, honey, chutneys and juice to seafood. The trail is promoted through the Island 2000's website (http://www.island2000.org.uk/index.htm). The organisation "*explores and utilizes every element of the Isle of Wight's cultural and environmental distinctiveness in work that consistently enhances the well-being of those who live, work and visit here.*"

In the supporting leaflet that is available to download from the website, the trail is marketed as being able to be completed without the need of the car and explains that "*bus services from Southampton and Bournemouth criss-cross the New Forest, and connect with the Wightlink ferries. The New Forest Bus tour and bike trailer service operates at least 6 locations".* The leaflet identifies a number of sources of information for public transport information including:

- National Rail Enquiries
- The Isle of Wight and New Forest Tourist/Visitor information services
- 5 bus and ferry operating companies with contact numbers

Figure 41: Excerpt from the Isle of Wight Food Trail Leaflet

4.7   The Serpent Trail

The Serpent Trail was launched by West Sussex District Council to promote the work being carried out by the Sussex Wealden Greens and Heaths Project and to highlight the outstanding landscape of the greensand hills. This is promoted on the Council's website[4] and although being primarily aimed at walkers, cyclists and horse riders, contains a large number of public transport links for sources of information. These include web links or telephone contact numbers for:

- For ticketing deals: www.southdownsonline.org
- By Road: www.theaa.com

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[4]   http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/leisure-and-tourism/walking-cycling-and-horse-riding/serpent-trail.en;jsessionid=acJyRc7hbTJa

- By Rail: National Rail Enquiries Tel: 08457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk Waterloo, Haslemere, Liss, Liphook, Petersfield, Havant, Southampton. Victoria, Pulborough, Chichester, Portsmouth
- By Bus: Surrey and North Hants. Tel: 0845 121 0180. Hants and West Sussex. Tel: 0845 121 0170. www.stagecoachbus.com
- For details of other public transport options, call Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 (web link).

An in depth guide for the trail is also available from the Council website and this provides further information relating to the actual bus routes/services required.

Figure 42 The Serpent Trail web site

4.8   The Whisky Coast Trail

The West Coast of Scotland is known amongst a number of people as the Whisky Coast (http://www.whiskycoast.co.uk/travel/fort_william.asp) due to the number of distilleries on the mainland and the Highland Isles. Whilst no set trails are described, the Whisky Coast website has been set up to promote the region and the website, in a similar manner to the Serpent Trail website identifies a number of sources of information regarding making public transport journeys around the region. The information and contact sources include:

- The best way to plan any journey by car is with www.theaa.com
- The best way to plan any journey by public transport in Scotland is with www.travelinescotland.com
- By Bus:
    - Scottish Citylink buses leave Glasgow's Buchanan Street for the three hour journey to Fort William (via Loch Lomond and Glencoe) (includes web link to timetable)
    - Scottish Citylink and Highland Country Buses buses leave Fort -- William for the two hour journey to Inverness - Regular daily departures (limited on Sundays) (includes web link to timetable)
    - Scottish Citylink buses leave Inverness for the three hour journey from Inverness to the Isle of Skye – Regular daily departures: (includes web link to timetable)
- By Rail
    - First Scotrail operate train services from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Fort William -West Highland Lines (includes web link to timetable):
    - First Scotrail operate a train service from Inverness for the 2 ½ hour journey to Kyle of Lochalsh (the nearest mainland link to the Isle of Skye) North Highland Lines (includes web link to timetable)
- By Ferry
    - The six-vehicle Skye Ferry operates daily between Glenelg and Kylerhea during the summer months. It is reached via the A87 to Sheil Bridge where there are signs for Glenelg and the ferry. Drivers please note this route is along an alpine style mountain pass (More information at www.skyeferry.co.uk or Tel. +44(1599) 522273)

- Calmac operate a ferry service from Mallaig (via Fort William) to Skye (includes web link to timetables)

5 RECOMMENDED MARKETING THEMES & STRATEGIES

The mystery traveller exercise has shown that it is possible to plan public transport journeys for all of the Gaelic Rings and the Highlands Whisky trails. However, when compared to the equivalent car journeys the following factors could be considered as barriers for using public transport to travel on some or all of the routes:

- Long Journey times;
- Large waiting times between transport modes; and
- Limited alternative options (e.g. what happens if I miss my bus?).

It is felt that people willing to take on these journeys using public transport could be considered to be all of some or all of the following:

- Time rich;
- Adventurous; and
- Environmentally concerned.

5.1 Awareness raising of Public transport options

In terms of marketing the use of public transport on these routes it is felt that work needs to be done to increase awareness and use of the many available journey planning tools and if applicable develop more concise information (e.g. downloadable guides etc…). Section 3 of this document has made several recommendations on how both the Gaelic Rings and Whisky trails sites can improve their web sites in terms of increasing the profile of public transport options and linking to existing information sources.

5.2 Marketing Themes to promote public transport use

As well as increasing the awareness of public transport options it is felt that marketing strategies are needed to address the barriers to using the services instead of travelling by car. It is suggested that where possible positive angles will be attributed to the 3 main barriers as follows:

5.2.1 Marketing Themes to increase acceptability of Long Journey Times

In order to increase the acceptability of some potential visitors from some of the long journey times identified by the mystery traveller exercise it is recommended that the travelling time is presented as part of the holiday experience.

Most of the routes will take the traveller through scenic countryside allowing them to concentrate on the views instead of driving tasks. The fact that they will be using public transport services will also mean that they will be driven (i.e. shown the way) to each stage of the trail and will have the opportunity to interact with local people and other tourists using the services.

Bearing in mind these two factors a marketing theme could be developed that pictures that traveller admiring the view, relaxing on the bus, or interacting with

others on the bus (including the driver whilst boarding the bus). Such images could be used with strap lines such as:

"Take the Scenic route"
"Relax and Admire the Views"
"Meet the Locals"
"A Warm Welcome to the Highlands & Islands"
"Let Us Take You There"

5.2.2 Marketing Themes to address waiting times

The mystery traveller exercise identified that for many journeys large waiting times exist between some of the public transport services. It is recommended that suggestions of things to do whilst people wait are made to minimise the amount of time that travellers are simply waiting for the next service. This would include local tourist attractions at or near interchanges (e.g. museums, architecture etc…) and establishments where they can relax and recharge (e.g. restaurants, public houses etc…).

If the waiting location is in a relatively remote area that has little to offer in terms of tourist attractions etc… considerations should be given to making the interchange as comfortable as possible (e.g. seating and shelter) and be located in a safe place that has interesting views (for example over looking the local river or with a view of the mountains, coastline etc…).

Promotion of waiting time attractions could be achieved by providing list of recommendations of things to do at each interchange point and/or photographs to show any attractive locations that will people will be waiting in on route.

"Scenic Waits"
"You won't mind waiting here"
"A Wait off your mind"
"Enjoy some well earned food and drink"
"Spend some time with the locals"

5.2.3 Marketing Themes for the environmentally aware

The good practice review identified that many of the trails used environmental benefits to promote their use. This was particularly true for routes that travel through areas of outstanding beauty. This is clearly relevant to the Highlands and Islands where similar initiatives could be achieved. In particular the South Downs way has used the strap line **"Money isn't all that you will save"** together with images of natural beauty in the area framed in the outline of an animal footprint. Similar imagery could be used to not only promote public transport use but to advertise the local wildlife and fauna.

5.2.4 Strategies to assure travellers that they won't get stranded

The final and perhaps most important barrier to travelling by public transport is the fear of missing a vital link in the journey, leaving you stranded on route. This is particularly key for routes that have limited alternative travel options. It is

recommended that each route is assessed in terms of the traveller's vulnerability if they make a mistake on route. Where limited services are available prescribed itineraries should be recommended to the traveller that have good connection times and would minimise the risk of missing a link in the journey.

The good practice review identified that one of the National Trails provides the numbers of local taxi firms in case people get into difficulties.   For remote areas where it is possible for people to be stranded for long periods of time, and alternative taxi services are not available, consideration should also be given to providing a phone number for the local emergency services. It is recommended an emergency action plan is developed for each route to minimise the risk of travellers becoming stranded on route. The resulting plan not need be advertised to travellers, but could be drawn up in consultation with local emergency services with helpline numbers displayed at interchanges only.

6   CONCLUSION

The main focus of the scoping study was the completion of a desk based mystery traveller exercise that attempted to plan public transport routes for the 6 Gaelic rings and a route between Whisky distilleries located in the Highlands and Islands region. The exercise showed that it was possible to plan a public transport journey for all of the Gaelic Rings and between most Whisky distilleries.

Each route has been assessed in terms of suitability to a tourist and the performance of the information sources used. This information can be used to develop these routes for use by tourists and, improve information for them. The routes would also need to be marketed to address the following identified potential barriers when compared to the equivalent car journeys the following factors were significant and could deter people from travelling using sustainable modes on the routes:

- Long Journey times;
- Large waiting times between transport modes; and
- Limited alternative options (e.g. what happens if I miss my bus?).

The study has also made recommendations as to how public transport can be better presented on the tourism web sites, identified good practice examples of other tourist web sites that provides information and suggested some initial themes for marketing the public transport routes.

7   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are a series of recommendations that have been identified as part of this scoping study. Each recommendation has been categorised into each of the 3 key areas covered in this study.

7.1   Public transport tourism routes

7.1.1   Review Mystery Traveller Results

The desk based mystery traveller review has shown that it is possible to plan a public transport route for each Gaelic Ring and between most of the whisky distilleries. It is recommended that these routes are reviewed to determine whether the best itinerary has been identified. For example there may be better public transport services available for a particular leg of the journey than the mode selected by the mystery traveller.

7.1.2   Monitor/analyse hit rates for each of the tourism routes

The frequency at which each of the Gaelic Rings received the most web site hits should be monitored. This would identify the most popular ring and could determine the order in which public transport routes are developed for each ring. A similar process could be undertaken for the whisky distilleries.

7.1.3   Complete a Mystery traveller exercise

Once a public transport route has been developed a mystery traveller exercise could be completed. The exercise would send a researcher on the suggested journey and they would be tasked with assessing it in terms of how easy it is to follow. The exercise would also review information provided on route and identify any further opportunities to provide better information of improvements to services and /or interchanges that will encourage tourists to use them.

7.1.4   Develop back up plans or identify help lines

A risk assessment process should be followed for each recommended route or strategy. This process will identify potential areas where things could go wrong and measure the impact this would have on the traveller's experience. The assessment would assess each risk and develop contingency plans to minimise their impact.

7.2   Improved public transport information

7.2.1   Provide separate information of starting point and for getting around

The public transport information review recommended that the journey to the starting point of each route and the route itself are separated. This will allow options for different starting points to be developed and mean that only a single route is developed to complete the route itself. The routes could be termed "getting here " and "getting around".

7.2.2   Improve links to journey planning web sites

Section 3 of this document has made the following recommendations for improving public transport information provision and its awareness on the tourism web sites reviewed in the project.

- Include a link to travel information on the introduction page of each Gaelic ring (e.g. Getting here) as appears on subsequent pages.
- Travel to route start points could be planned using the page landing technique. For example the user would enter their home postcode and Transport Direct or Traveline Scotland will provide them with a route to get there (including by car on the Transport Direct website).
- The getting here page should include public transport options and each mode should contain a link that provides more information regarding the service.
- Explore the possibility of using the Transport Direct Day Trip Planner for planning travel itineraries for the Gaelic Ring routes.

7.2.3   Provide recommended itineraries

For routes with limited choice and high risk of failure consideration should be given for providing recommended routes. This would have the advantage of taking away the hassle of planning the route form the traveller, but have the disadvantage of having to be monitored to ensure the information provided is still valid.

7.3 Recommended marketing themes/strategies

7.3.1 Develop marketing themes

A series of recommended marketing themes were made by the study and it is recommended that these are pursued to in order to have a suitable marketing campaign to support the initiative to encourage the use of sustainable transport whilst travelling along the routes.

7.3.2 Investigate "things to do" at key waiting points

A recommendation of one of the marketing ideas was to promote things to do at locations where travellers will be required to wait between public transport services. It is therefore recommended that each identified waiting location is reviewed to produce a list of attractions or places to eat or drink.

7.3.3 Interchange and route audit

One of the key aspects of the public transport journeys will be for the tourist to leisurely admire the stunning views and scenery along the route. In order to demonstrate this, key points of interest along each route should be identified. This could follow a similar method used for the photographic journey currently in place for each Gaelic ring, but would have reference to the particular public transport service (e.g. an image of someone admiring a landmark from the window of a bus or a picture of someone waiting for a bus at a stunning location). The review should also consider relocating bus stops if it is felt that they could be moved to a more suitable location.

7.4 Recommended next steps

It is recommended that the results of this scoping study are carefully reviewed with the objective of developing a public transport option strategy for each of the routes covered in this study. The strategies should include the above recommendations and once implemented monitored to establish how much they are used and evaluated so that further improvements can be made.

ANNEX A: SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL TRAIL GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

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THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

RESEARCH

Active Travel Audit Update

Purpose of Report

To update Members on progress made in 2009/10 with the Active Travel Regional Audit process.

Progress

Halcrow have recently completed Active Travel Regional Audits for Dunoon, Fort William and Thurso. The audit for Oban is underway and will be followed by Alness-Invergordon. Local authority officers will be agreeing the final reports. The suite of reports compiled over the two years will provide a list of small capital projects to be funded jointly by HITRANS and the local authorities which will enable some of the barriers to increased cycling and walking to be overcome.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note this report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 15th September 2009

Item: **12**	HI ▶ TRANS *THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP*

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8ᵗʰ October 2009

RESEARCH

HITRANS Freight Capability Study- Draft Scope

HITRANS is seeking expressions of interest from consultants to carry out a review of the Highlands and Islands Rail Freight Network. The study will be desktop-based. The output will be designed to inform the logistics industry about the ability of the railway to respond to the demand for modal shift from road.

Data for each route will include:

- Maximum train length
- Maximum trailing weight
- Route availability
- Loading gauge
- Path availability

Data for each terminal will include:

- Location
- Capability
- Access
- Control

The study should also consider planned and proposed enhancements. It is proposed to circulate the full brief in October.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 15ᵗʰ September 2009

H I ▶ T R A N S

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

RESEARCH

Station Car Parking Policy in Scotland

HITRANS Response to Consultation

1. HITRANS is the Regional Transport Partnership covering the five local authority areas of Highland, Moray, Argyll and Bute, Orkney and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and encompasses the West Highland, Far North, Kyle, Aberdeen-Inverness and Highland Main Lines.

2. All stations have car parking on rail land, with the probable exception of Falls of Cruachan, Kildonan, Roybridge, Altnabreac, Duncraig, Corrour, Achnashellach and Dunrobin. Mallaig may only have disabled parking. The car parks at Elgin and Beauly are owned by the local authority. In a number of cases station car parking is not formal.

3. Inverness has paid for parking, on the former platform 7, now shortened. This has a limited number of spaces for such a busy station, but adequate paid for parking exists nearby. Oban has paid for parking between the station and the ferry terminal.

4. All other parking is free but is rarely at capacity, with the exception of Beauly and Aviemore and Elgin. DHC's Invernet1 *-Rail Evaluation Study* (2008) found that 43% of passengers on local Invernet services arrived at the station on foot, or left a cycle at the station. It should be noted that the area has no real park and ride stations. Settlements tend to have stations well situated near centres of population.

5. At Invergordon car parking is on the up platform. Because there is no footbridge passengers must walk over 800m from the down platform to regain the car park.

6. Inverness' role as a regional railhead serving 250,000 people means that there is some all day and multiday day parking at Rose St. However, recent rail service developments with enhanced frequencies have been designed to make travel from local stations to the national gateways easier to achieve.

7. Assuming future growth is in line with the year on year double digit growth on most of our routes (and in some places, eg Dingwall, Muir of Ord and Beauly it's up over 100% in 4 years) car parking provision may become a greater priority. The partial closure of the Kessock Bridge in 2011 may highlight this around Inverness.

8. Any attempt to roll out parking charges at new locations would run counter to our efforts to promote modal shift to rail. Highland Council would like to offer free parking at Inverness Rose St to those travelling by train, and Moray Council are investigating options for increasing car parking provision at Elgin station.

9. Cycle parking including secure lockers is also a useful tool to encourage greater sustainable station access.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 25th September 2009

H I ▶ T R A N S
T H E   H I G H L A N D S   A N D   I S L A N D S   T R A N S P O R T   P A R T N E R S H I P

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Development Programme for 2009/10

Mid Term Review

SUMMARY

The Report provides the Board with an update on progress on the Research/Strategy Development programme and seeks approval of amendments to the programme to reflect changing priorities and funding opportunities identified during the year.

DETAIL

The Partnership at its meeting of 3 April agreed the HITRANS Business Plan for 2009/10 which includes a Programme for Research/Strategy Development for 2009/10 in support of development, implementation and delivery of the HITRANS Transport Strategy.

Work is progressing well on much of the content of the Programme as indicated in the Appendix to the report. At this mid point in the year the opportunity has been taken to review progress, priorities, and the level of available funding for work that can be undertaken with a particular intention on focusing expenditure on actions that support the Government in delivering the Strategic Transport Projects and Scottish Ferries Reviews, and supporting delivery of transport improvements across the HITRANS area with the aim of supporting delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy. Savings through efficiency measures have been identified within the Core Budget and this provides the opportunity to increase the level of funding available for research and development at his point in the year from

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to

1. Note progress on the Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2009/10
2. Approve the amendment to the Research/Strategy Development Programme 2009/10 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report

Report by:　　　　Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date:　　　　15 September 2009

Area	Funding	Revised Sept 09	Delivery Timescale	Lead Officer/s	Comments
Key settlement active travel audits	50000	50000	April 09 to Mar10	FR	Funding of £25K committed so scope for 2 more settlements and further if funding is increased.
Air Services Review	35000	30000	Apr-Sept 09	RR/HB	
Functions Review	50000	55000	Apr-Oct 09	DD	additional consultation added to remit
Oban Hub Ferry Study		15000	Oct-Dec 09	DD/RR	Study funded in 2008/09. As part of the review, services out of Oban to Barra and South Uist from Oban were studied. There is a close link between the Oban ferry services and those out of Uig and to facilitate HITRANS consideration and response to the up
Freight on rail - capacity	25000	25000	Sep-Dec 09	FR	
Aberdeen Inverness and Invernet 2	25000	25000	Apr-Sept 09	FR	50:50 funding offer with Nestrans awaiting response from Claire Keggie on behalf of Transport Scotland
Tourism by rail – the economic benefit (joint study with HIE)	10000	0	July-Oct 09	TJ/FR	No possibility of delivering so study postponed to 10/11.
Sustainable travel initiative/ projects	45000	25000	Sep09 to Mar 10	RR/FR	Part funding at 25% of costs of delivering ATA projects.
Bus Quality Partnership Development		0	Sept09 to Mar 10	RR –	HITRANS could support development on behalf of a member Council but no takers have emerged yet.
Off shore wind – infrastructure requirements		20000	Oct –Jan 10	HB	Study brief being prepared.
O/D survey on tourist travel habits in the H+I	15000	0	July- Oct 09	RR	Project cancelled.
Development of Regional Traffic Model Development covering all modes as an adjunct to the national LATIS model supported by Transport Scotland	15000	0	Nov-Mar 09	DD	work on Inner Moray Firth Model being progressed by Highland
Accession Tool Update		7500	Sep-Mar 09	RR	consider updating/upgrading the Accession Accessibility Model following talks with MVA if this will assist Health Service and other partners investigate how best to improve access to their services. RR to speak to MVA and Partners regarding delivery of t
Strategy monitoring and evaluation		7500	July- Sept 09	DD	
Shared Services Business Case		10000	Oct 09 – Jan10	DD	held pending outcome of Delivery Review
Sub total	**262500**	270000			

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STPR support

Area	Funding	Revised Sept 09	Delivery Timescale	Lead Officer/s	Comments
Strategic Park and Ride Development – Tore	50000	50000	Jun 09 – Mar 10	SmacN and RR	confirmation received from Highalnd that funding required in 2009/10 to promote scheme
Kessock Bridge Lane Closure Congestion Relief Measures		20000	Oct - Mar 10	FR, SMacN	Support of design by Highland Council of proposals to provide Station at Torr (50% funding)
Funding to support means by which HITRANS and the member Councils can support Government and Transport Scotland delivering interventions in the STPR	34000		Jun 09 – Mar 10	DD plus Pas from HC/ABC/MC	Funding redirected to specific action to develop the Nairn Bypass and Elgin on line improvments.
Nairn Bypass A96 study by HC		20000	Jun 09 – Mar 10	DD plus SMacN	
Elgin A96 on line improvments		20000	Jun 09 – Mar 10	DD plus GH	
Sub total	84000	110000			
Overall total	**346500**	**380000**			

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THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Highland Wide Local Development Plan

MAIN ISSUES REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members that Highland Council has invited HITRANS to comment on the Issues Report published in August 2009 for the Highland Wide Local Development Plan. This Plan will provide guidance on the development of key growth areas in the Inner Moray Firth and Caithness, as well as policies to guide development across the Council's area. Detailed comments are included in the Background section of this report.

SUMMARY

In relation to growth around Inverness and in the A96 corridor it is particularly important that active travel and public transport use is encouraged to help reduce CO_2 emissions as development proceeds. Park and ride, bus priority, transport interchanges and defined active travel routes are essential in the early stages. It is also important to advance master planning and transport modeling to ensure that development can be phased effectively with infrastructure provision.

In the Cromarty Firth the potential for a new marine/rail/road interchange should be identified. Also the industrial areas should be provided with good public transport and active travel links

In Caithness improved road and public transport links to the ferry routes to Orkney, both at Scrabster and Gills Bay, should be indentified

Generally the Plan should strengthen reference to the policies and themes of the Regional Transport Strategy and there should be ongoing opportunity for a closer consultation arrangement with HITRANS as the Plan develops.

BACKGROUND

Highland Council intends to replace its current Local Plans with four new Local Development Plans between now and 2014. The Highland Wide Local Development Plan will put in place policies to apply across the Council's area to replace those in the current Structure Plan. It will also identify the main growth areas and provide guidance as to how these growth areas should be developed. The Council has published an Issues Report setting out its preferred options for these policies and growth areas and seeking comments by 9 November 2009. The Issues Report contains three main sections on:
- the Council's Vision;
- the spatial strategy for the growth areas;
- and the policy options for the whole of the Council's area.

The main issues raised in the report have been identified following discussion with key agencies such as Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

Comment - It is unfortunate that HITRANS, as a statutory consultee, has not been involved until this publication stage. We should welcome this consultation and seek further opportunity to comment as the Highland Wide Local development Plan proceeds.

VISION

Set out in the Council's Corporate Plan the vision is by 2030 to have sustainable communities balancing growth and economic development in a fairer and healthier Highlands. The objectives of the Highland Wide Local Development Plan are based on the Single Outcome Agreement.

HITRANS has agreed to these outcomes which include:
- encouraging walking, cycling and public transport to help reduce CO2 releases;
- helping to deliver transport infrastructure improvements in line with the Council's Local Transport Strategy and the Strategic Transport Projects Review;
- using developer contributions, linked to Council and other agency programmes, to deliver the plan strategy.

SPATIAL STRATEGY for GROWTH AREAS

These are the key development areas in Highland for the period 2011 to 2021. They comprise the city of Inverness; the A96 corridor between Inverness and Nairn; Caithness and North Sutherland; Easter Ross and Nigg.

City of Inverness – a number of major development sites in the current Local Plan are still to be developed. These are largely on the south and west edges of the city. Major growth areas at Ness side and Charleston and are held up by the lack of a road crossing the River Ness and Caledonian Canal linking them to the southern distributor road.

The preferred option is:
- to update the vision for the future of the city in consultation with Architecture and Design Scotland and to identify the key development sites and infrastructure pressures.
- to prioritise the phasing of the development of these sites so that the existing plans for the growth of the city to 2011 are completed before there is major expansion in the A 96 corridor.
- to support the priorities for road improvement, public transport, cycling and pedestrian facilities that are emerging in the Local Transport Strategy which is being prepared in parallel with this Plan.

Transport improvement to alleviate the Inshes roundabout bottleneck and the opening up of the Beechwood university campus site by the A96 - A9 link are other key elements for early development in the city's spatial strategy.

Comment - Although the Scottish Government has included the A96 – A9 link in the Strategic Transport Projects Review, the Council will need to fund entirely the River Ness/Canal crossing to link the southern distributor road with the A82. This funding is not in the Council's current capital programme. Development in the Ness Castle and Charleston areas should not go ahead without this link because of the pressure that this would put on the city centre road system. It is important not to delay opening up opportunities in the A96 corridor awaiting completion of these city sites. This might slacken the pressure on Scottish Government to dual the A96 between Inverness and Nairn.

A96 corridor Inverness to Nairn – this is identified in the National Planning Framework2 as an area for co-ordinated action. The Council has prepared a draft framework for development in the corridor following a substantial period of consultation during 2007 which included contributions from HITRANS

The key developments in the corridor comprise:
- expansion east of the city of Inverness;
- expansion west and south of Nairn;
- a new community, business park and station at Tornagrain/Dalcross Airport;
- a new community at Whiteness (the former Ardersier fabrication yard);
- dualling the A96 and by-passing Nairn.

The Council's preferred option is to support early (2011-16) development in the corridor before major transport infrastructure is complete, in particular A96 dualling and Nairn by-passing. This would be subject to commitments in principle from Transport Scotland to a programme for this work linked to amounts of development allowed to proceed in the programme time periods.

Comment - early development in the corridor should be subject to public transport improvements and traffic management measures including park and ride and bus priority to reduce peak time congestion. Capacity studies should be undertaken at key junctions. Transport modeling and detailed master planning of the key development sites should be progressed now to avoid uncertainty. This is particularly important for A96 dualling alignment and junction arrangements east of Inverness, at Nairn, and Tornagrain.

Developer Contributions - the Council proposes a developer contributions protocol which will be reviewed in the light of current economic circumstances.

Comment - HITRANS should seek to be involved in this protocol review because it will have wider implications and should be included in RTS Review. The economic circumstances of the private development industry are unlikely to return to pre 2008 levels for many years, therefore these contributions should concentrate on assisting with public transport rather than expensive arterial road works.

East of Inverness - a detailed plan is included for the expansion east of the city of Inverness. Key elements are:

- The delivery of the A96 – A9 link and the Beechwood campus as immediate priorities.
- Further development at the retail park and Stratton might proceed in the period 2011 – 16 prior to major improvement of A96.
- The Smithton park and ride site is included.
- Also a rail halt/public transport interchange is proposed at Beechwood.

Comment - If further development is to proceed prior to A96 dualling it is important that bus priority and park and ride are in place before any significant expansion east of the city. Also active travel links between this area and the city should be identified and progressed early in the plan programme. New developments must be designed to encourage modal shift from the car to active travel and public transport. The rail halt site may not be practical because of the gradient of the line as it climbs out of Inverness.

Nairn - a detailed plan is included for the expansion of Nairn. Key elements include:

- a preferred by-pass route.
- long term expansion south of the railway line with a new junction on to the bypass, and to the west on the seaward side of the current A96.
- priority for early development at Sandown to the west of the town and in the Lochloy/Kingsteps area to the east.

- allowing some development to take place in all the expansion areas during 2011 – 16 prior to by-pass completion.

Comment - Significant development is proposed in expansion areas to the south of the town and the railway line, inside the preferred line of the by-pass. There is only one connection between this area and the town centre via a narrow rail under bridge at the station. Better connection is required from central Nairn with its employment, retail and community facilities to this expansion area to deliver the vision of encouraging active travel and reducing CO2..

A public transport interchange should be provided at the station with improved parking, cycle and pedestrian access and cycle storage.

An options appraisal of the line of the by-pass should be undertaken by the Council with Transport Scotland.

Tornagrain – an outline plan is included and it is proposed to support early (2011-16) development phases here in advance of major infrastructure.

Comment - No details are given of the relationship between Tornagrain and the airport business park, the station at Dalcross, and the A96 dualling route. It is important that these relationships are agreed before any early development.

Good public transport provision must be available from day one.

Caithness and North Sutherland – the Pentland Firth offers huge potential for the development of marine renewable energy and the Council intends to enable and support the delivery of on-shore facilities, services and sites to help realize this potential. The main priorities of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership's Strategy will be included in the Local Development Plan. These include:

- development of Scrabster harbour to service marine renewables and west of Shetland oil.
- improvement to the A9 particularly at Berriedale.
- improved public transport journey times to Inverness.
- freight trans-shipment facility at Georgemas

Comment - Improved road and public transport access to the Gills Bay terminal for the ferry service to Orkney should be included.

Easter Ross and Nigg –NPF2 identifies the Cromarty Firth as an international gateway and deepwater opportunity. The Local Development Plan includes the Nigg yard as a strategic development site and supports the economic development of other strategic sites on the north shore of the firth.

Comment - The potential for a marine/rail/road interchange should be identified. Improved rail freight capacity and rail access to Nigg should be included. Good public transport and pedestrian and cycle routes should be provided to these strategic sites.

POLICY OPTIONS for the HIGHLAND WIDE AREA

These cover a wide range of issues for housing, sustainable communities, rural land use, the environment, energy and waste, business and industry, and transport. Policy options that are of interest to HITRANS are considered below.

Renewable Energy – it is proposed to identify broad areas of search where different types of renewable energy could take place. It is also proposed to identify potential locations for

infrastructure relating to land based support for marine renewables and manufacture, assembly and maintenance of renewables plant and equipment.

Comment - HITRANS is undertaking research into the transport requirements for renewables development and would wish to work closely with the Council in identifying these areas of search and support locations.

Waste management – the preferred option is to direct waste management facilities to industrial sites, but also to include the potential of energy from waste in major housing and commercial sites for example for district heating.

Comment - Waste management should minimize the need for long distance road transport and consider the potential of rail or waterborne transport for long distance movements. There should be an appraisal of the carbon impacts of the options for the transport of waste.

Business and Industrial land – the preferred option is to identify strategic sites for economic development and also to encourage mixed use by co-locating housing and business development.

Comment - It is important that all sites be served by good public transport links and also by pedestrian and cycle routes.

Accessibility and Transport – the pattern of development should reduce the need to travel, facilitate public transport, walking and cycling, and encourage freight movement by rail and water. The Local development Plan and the Local Transport Strategy will be taken forward together. The draft LTS is available for comment. Key points are:
- LTS objectives and policies to be included in the Plan
- Design of new development must allow for sustainable transport choices.
- The Plan should identify priority routes to improve investment opportunities
- Seek financial contributions from new developments towards transport projects in the LTS or STPR
- Maps identify key air and ferry links; the Inverness Transport Strategy; and the Highland Wide Transport Strategy.

Comment - Reference should be made to RTS policies and themes It is important that there is an understanding of how the Government's carbon reduction targets will be met during the period of this Plan. The Transport Strategy maps should be consistent with the RTS transport hierarchy and strategy maps. Key links to other Council areas should be identified with any support requirements at the Highland end. Broadford Airport should be identified in this section as a potential key air link. The findings of HITRANS air services review should be included.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to agree that a response should be forwarded to the Highland Council incorporating the comments listed above.

Report by: Howard Brindley
Designation: HITRANS Co-ordinator
Date: 16 September 2009

Item:

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HI ▶ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting of 8 October 2009

Concessionary Travel Schemes – Report

SUMMARY

The Report provides a update of the current position with regard to the provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area following the recent completion of the Review of the National Bus Concessionary Travel Scheme by the Scottish Government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to

3.   Note the current arrangements for provision of Concessionary Travel within the HITRANS area.
4.   Consider supporting the case for extension of eligibility in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme to cover all local ferry travel by passengers, and journeys using Community and Demand Responsive Transport in areas where minimum levels of bus services are not available.

DETAIL

The Partnership at its meeting of 6 June asked for a report to its next Meeting updating the Partnership on any changes to the Concessionary Travel Schemes following the recent review of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme by the Scottish Government.

The application of Concessionary Travel Schemes across the HITRANS area is delivered and funded by both Scottish Government and Councils depending on the mode and nature of travel involved. The current schemes, the funding party, and benefits are summarised in the appendix to the report.

The review of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCT) concluded

1. First the Review acknowledged the overriding commitment to retaining the scheme, in its present format, and considered that this was a significant undertaking by the Scottish Government, most particularly given the current economic uncertainties.

2. The Review concluded that, from a strict measurement point of view, there was insufficient evidence to determine the precise extent to which the NCT scheme had directly contributed to the promotion of social inclusion. At the same time, in terms of take up and usage, the NCT scheme had been a clear success.

3. The Review looked in some detail at a number of factors that could potentially impact on the long term sustainability of the scheme, including the issues of funding. While the scheme is 'free' to eligible passengers, there is a substantial cost to government and the taxpayer, which

means that issues around the financial sustainability of the scheme should always be kept under review

4. The Review recognised the implications of the Scottish Government's aspiration towards modal shift from car to bus. There is some evidence to suggest that NCT has contributed to around 12 per cent 'full modal shift' and around 47 per cent 'partial modal shift'.

5. The Review recognised the many benefits that a further extension of concessionary fares to other disadvantaged groups could bring, including positive accessibility benefits and wider economic benefits. However, costs have increased significantly and - given the demographics and how that may translate into concessionary fares - could continue to do so in the future. This was taken into account when looking at any potential extension to eligibility to the scheme.

6. One particular issue considered by the Review is the evidence around social exclusion and older persons (in this context 60 plus). Recent legislative developments and changing socio-economic factors suggest - other things being equal - that a greater proportion of the 'older' generation will be working longer. While recognising that economic factors can change, as is apparent in recent months, this could result in such people being economically 'better off' than their counterparts a decade or so ago. The Review noted that it might be appropriate to examine the current eligibility criteria based on age. The Review considered that such an approach would not be inconsistent with the wider aspirations of the scheme and that it would also be reflective of changing social factors.

7. The Review considered current eligibility and examined in detail various calls for extending eligibility. In view of the cost of the scheme, it has not recommended substantial increases in eligibility, beyond the inclusion of seriously injured ex HM Forces veterans from 1 April 2011.

8. The Review has not considered any immediate change in eligibility but has concluded that the objectives of NCT should properly be kept under review and that the continued emphasis should be on achieving the objectives of the scheme and obtaining value for money. In addition, given the importance of having robust evidence in determining compensation to the bus industry, it will be necessary to take steps to improve the specific information requirements around NCT compensation.

While it is clear that the scheme in its current form is proving difficult to manage within existing funding constraints the Partnership may wish to consider two particular areas where changes in eligibility could for very limited cost have delivered substantial improvements of equity of access opportunity across Scotland and particularly for those living in remote mainland and island areas.

The level of accessibility for those entitled to participate in Concessionary Travel Schemes varies considerably across the HITRANS area, and when compared with that enjoyed in the rest of Scotland. Whereas free travel by the least expensive form of public transport (by bus) is available for entitled mainland residents to all other parts of the Scottish mainland, this level of access provision is not currently available to those entitled Scottish residents living on islands or remote peninsulas (by ferry) or to those wishing to visit these areas.

The level of access to health and social services, shops and other facilities available through the scheme in remote parts of Scotland is significantly less than that enjoyed in the areas of the country with frequent bus services. The great majority of the cost of the scheme is incurred in providing compensation for travel in urban and suburban areas, With the continuing and increasing pressures on Council budgets this situation in remote areas will inevitably be further challenged. When local bus services cannot be supported by Councils, the expectation falls on the Community Transport Sector to meet the transport needs of the most vulnerable sections of the community, including those eligible for free bus travel in terms of the Scheme. The Scottish Government funds eligible travel on a bus service, but does not fund the cost of

the Community Transport Operators providing a comparable journey where the bus services do not exist. Many communities are already involved in providing transport to fill the gaps in local public transport provision. For the most part these services are funded through grants, and service level agreements along with the local fund raising initiatives by the local community. These grants are now supplied through local authorities and will increasingly be under pressure within individual Council's spending reviews in the years ahead. The Scottish Government is now encouraging the voluntary sector to move away from reliance on grants and to become more enterprising creating sustainable solutions. Including Community Transport Services within the scheme as with other operators on a non profit basis would have provided a clear opportunity for this sector to meet the Governments wishes in a way that supports the Scottish Government achieving its overall Purpose.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 15th September 2009

Appendix Item 16 - Current Concessionary Travel Provision

Mode	area	Benefit	Funding source
Bus	Whole area	Free bus travel within Scotland by bus with the following eligibility – **Older People -** over 60 years of age and live in Scotland **Disabled People** Eligible disabled people who meet the criteria on the following categories – people who receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance receive the higher/middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance receive Attendance Allowance live in a care or residential home or hospital and require 24 hour supervision hold a Disabled Persons Parking Badge (Blue Badge) are profoundly or severely deaf have been told not to drive on medical grounds or would have a licence application refused on the grounds of physical fitness whether 17 years old or not suffer from a mental illness, learning disability or personality disorder are terminally ill suffer from a progressively degenerative disorder have suffered a loss of limbs are visually impaired	Scottish Government, managed by Transport Scotland

		Companion Entitlement If a person's mobility is such that they require to be accompanied when travelling, their companion is entitled to travel free of charge with them for the same journey	
Rail	General	Within Scotland visually impaired travel free With a Senior Citizen and Disabled Rail Card (£24 annually) those eligible for concessionary bus travel obtain a 34% discount on fares.	Scottish Government
	Argyll and Bute	Travel within the West of Scotland Concessionary Travel area for those West of Scotland residents eligible as for the bus concessions at a rate of 40p for the first 10 miles then 50% discount beyond. In addition the flat fare zone card allows travel between Oban and Helensburgh Upper for a 80p single fare.	12 Councils in West of Scotland
	Highland	50% discount on standard class rail travel within the Highland area for those eligible for concessionary bus travel.	The Highland Council
Ferry	Argyll and Bute	Free passenger travel for island and peninsular residents on their local ferry service for those registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	12 Councils in West of Scotland
	Western Isles	2 return passenger trips per annum to the mainland for Western Isles residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	Scottish Government
	Orkney	2 return passenger trips per annum to the mainland for Orkney residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	Scottish Government
		8/12 return trips to Orkney Mainland annually for local non Orkney Mainland residents registered for the national concessionary bus scheme , the number depending on the remoteness of the island.	The Orkney Islands Council
	Highland	Free passenger travel for Highland concessionary card holders on all ferry services within the Council area. 50% discount on passenger travel for all Highalnd concessionary card holders on Oban Craignure	The Highland Council
Air	Orkney	2 return trips to Kirkwall for residents of Papa Westray and North Ronaldsay registered for the national concessionary bus scheme.	The Orkney Islands Council
taxi	Highland	Subsidised Taxi travel on some specific routes for concessionary card holders	The Highland Council

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HI ▶ TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

Inverness-Aberdeen Additional Sunday Services Update

1. HITRANS and NESTRANS engaged timetable consultants to look at options for improving the frequency of Sunday services on the Inverness-Aberdeen route. The current Sunday service is less than 50% of the weekday service. There is synergy with the planned hourly faster service which appears in STPR.

2. Two new through services each way plus one Inverurie and one Keith terminator were proposed. Connections at both ends of the route are a priority. The plan uses existing rolling stock and traincrew. Costs are therefore limited to additional unit mileage/fuel, crew wages and track access. No additional infrastructure is required.

3. Economic analysis (TEE) of the extra services was carried out and demonstrated a benefit-cost ratio of 8.5 optimistic, 4.2 pessimistic, with passenger uplift of 3.9% in Sunday demand. This represents very good value for money. Actual demand may well be higher.

4. HITRANS and NESTRANS have offered £25k each as revenue support for an experimental first year of operation. Transport Scotland are evaluating the proposal.

5. The Board are invited to note content of this update.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 16th September 2009

HI▶TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY
High Speed Rail

1. High Speed Rail has recently become the subject of much political and industry debate. The Transport Minister, Lord Adonis, has appointed Sir David Rowlands and Prof Andrew MacNaughton (Network Rail's Chief Engineer) to head up High Speed Two, to investigate the case for a new railway to the north of London. It will report at the end of the year.

2. Network Rail has just produced its own study ' *The case for new lines*' (actually carried out by SDG) to enable it to plan for future growth once current capacity has been reached. The study proposes a High Speed route to Scotland via Preston with termini in Edinburgh (reached in 2h09) and Glasgow (2h16), with new city centre stations located close to existing city centre stations. Spurs to Heathrow, and Liverpool are included. It has a £34bn price tag, and a BCR of 1.8.

3. In mid-September, Greengauge 21, the lobby group headed by Jim Steer and Julie Mills, reports on its proposals. This may well put forward a plan for other HS routes from London.

4. At the HSR Conference in London on 09.09.09, Theresa Villiers restated Conservative commitment for HS2 to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, commencing in 2015, driven by congestion on the classic rail network and concern over aviation emissions.

5. At the same conference HSR UK was launched, a campaign group comprising 11 cities including Edinburgh and Glasgow.

6. 2M, a consortium of local authorities opposed to Heathrow expansion, proposes a single spine route paralleling the M1/A1 to Edinburgh , accessed via an approach south of Arthur's Seat to Waverley, then to Glasgow.

7. For HITRANS, our interest is in seeking good interchange with half hourly interval HS services in central Scotland, via a perhaps electrified, hourly frequency 3hr Highland Main Line and enhanced West Highlands services to Glasgow. Once delivered, the current East Coast Inverness-London through service will no longer be the quickest way to London.

8. Cities connected to the HS network may no longer require slots at Heathrow, potentially freeing up capacity for regional air services.

9. The Board are invited to note the contents of this report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 16th September 2009

HI ▶ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY

HITRANS Response to CAPS- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland

General comment:
The questions are designed for responses from individuals, and favour the would-be cyclist. A corporate response follows.

Q1 Are there any actions or activities on planning and design that are missing and that would encourage you to cycle more often?

Transport planners and engineers must fully engage with the land use planning process in order to ensure cycle-friendly development. The 10% modal shift target (though this is unclear it may be supposed to be 10% of all trips) and physical health indicators should have parity of status with other environmental policies on construction standards including energy conservation.

Recreational routes whilst providing healthy lifestyle opportunities are often themselves generators of car traffic. HITRANS would wish to see a concentration of effort on utility cycling for work and education. This can only occur with full buy-in from schools, colleges and employers as well as targeted investments to make the bike journey safer and quicker, including training for young and returning cyclists.

Transport interchanges and journey-attractors must have safe secure cycle parking to overcome the acknowledged difficulties in meeting demand for cycle space on trains and buses.

Travel plans for new developments should be refreshed/reinforced with follow up visits.

Q2 How do we achieve these actions effectively? Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

Local Authority Single Outcome Agreements should include measures to increase cycling. In order to avoid a mis-match between trunk road and local road provision, Cycling Scotland could be fully integrated in Scottish Government to provide expertise, advice and funding to both LAs and Transport Scotland. LAs should have officers dedicated to green travel planning/cycling and walking.

Less than 1% of the Scottish transport budget goes on cycling. This must increase if we are to seriously hit the 10% target.

Q3 Would an improvement in local facilities for cycling encourage you to cycle more often? If not, what else could be done to change your mind?

Without doubt improved facilities encourage an increase in cycling (NCN usage increased 9% last year). But other factors also come into play, evidenced by the upsurge in London following on from increased congestion (and the C Charge itself), the suspension of transport networks after 7/7 and the rollout of cycle to work schemes. Cost and convenience are significant factors: the bicycle is the ultimate demand responsive transport, free at the point of use.

Retro fitting segregated facilities in both urban and rural environments should occur as part of a rolling programme but will rarely apply to the totality of an individual's journey. What is important is the need to make the potential cyclist feel part of the mainstream.

Concerted action is required to overcome the cyclist's greatest area of risk- the roundabout.

Q4 How do we achieve these actions effectively? Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

SG must ensure that the health and sustainable transport agendas are embedded all policy areas. In a relatively small country the lead is best taken by a cycling agency, perhaps involving Regional Transport Partnerships. This agency can provide technical expertise, training, advice to employers and quality control of facilities.

Q5 If your employer introduced the Bike to Work Scheme would this encourage you to take up cycling? What else could your employer do to encourage you to cycle?

Bike to Work schemes encourage an uptake in cycling, although actual trips are not necessarily recorded. Places of work should also provide secure parking and storage for personal gear. The non provision of showers does not preclude cycling, but the risk of bike theft does.

Given the positive impact of cycling on staff absenteeism and morale, and the saving on car parking provision, a business case already exists to encourage participation. This is particularly important across the Highlands and Islands where 90% of business employ 10 people or fewer.

Green Travel Planning including auditing of all staff activity to, from and during work will be key in SG's CO2 emissions reduction programme. 43% of the UK's CO2 emissions come from private motor transport.

Q6 Did you know that the route you drive to work may not be the same route you would use if you were cycling? Would free local maps encourage you to cycle? What other information do you think is missing?

This question assumes a drive to work. Many people walk, get lifts and use public transport. Utility riding demands fast transit- it's one of the bike's strengths. Therefore routes must follow desire lines. Local free cycle maps can help inform the would-be cyclist.

Q7 Would you use a public bike hire scheme in your town or city such as those running in successfully in Paris and Munich?

Public bike hire is a good way to increase visibility on the ground. However most settlements in our area are too small to support such a scheme, and heavy Paris-style bikes may represent a challenge. Folding and pool bikes are both lower cost alternatives, but the cheapest form of bike provision is nearly always DIY.

Q8 Which organisation/s in your opinion are best placed to deliver the actions in this section?

An enhanced Cycling Scotland could take the lead, both encouraging and reinforcing the message, building on some of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places experience.

HITRANS, in conjunction with its local authority partners, has been undertaking Active Travel audits in the key H&I settlements, identifying where investment can be targeted to enable new trips to be generated.

Q9 Should liability laws be changed to give cyclists (and pedestrians) more protection? If so, how?

Cyclist should be offered the same legal protection as in, for example, Holland, where the onus is on the motorist. The current hierarchy of road users (CAPS p14) is not matched in law. This is vital in the early days before critical mass in cycling can be achieved which will of itself generate compliance.

Q10 Should all road users pay road tax? If so, how much should it be for cyclists and how could it be enforced?

The Road Fund was introduced in 1920 to receive all Vehicle Excise Duties to pay for roads. Hypothecation came to an end in 1937, and now Vehicle Excise Duty, which is increasingly based on environmental impact, goes straight to the Treasury.

Cycle impact is negligible, and any revenue collection costs would outweigh income. Additional bureaucracy would only serve as a disincentive to would-be cyclists.

Q11 Should current powers of enforcement be better used? If so which ones and how?

Pedestrians and cyclists require greater legal protection, and the police should ensure compliance with all road traffic legislation.

Q12 Should local authorities make greater use of their powers to re-determine the use of roads which are footways/pathways to create cycle tracks which can be used by both cyclists and pedestrians, where it is suitable to do so? Would this encourage you to cycle more?

Re-determination can provide low cost cycleways but care must be taken in highly trafficked areas where conflict may arise between cyclists and pedestrians. Re-allocation of road space may overcome this, as in Oxford.

Q13 Who is best placed to deliver these changes?

Scottish Government should enact changes following recommendations by LAs and Transport Scotland.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: September 2009

HI TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

EUROPEAN FUNDING

CEARCAILL NA GAIDHLIG

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to Members on the ERDF application submitted by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar on behalf of the Cearcaill na Gàidhlig partners and seek approval for HITRANS to continue as a funder of this project until 2012/13.

BACKGROUND

Cearcaill na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic Rings) is a tourism marketing initiative which seeks to create an authentic Gaelic-based cultural tourism experience along routes throughout the Hebridean Islands and West Coast Mainland of Scotland.

Cearcaill na Gàidhlig links a transport journey to the language and cultural heritage of the area, to create the concept of "Gaelic Rings". Cearcaill na Gàidhlig aims to ensure that improvements in transport infrastructure and services are integrated and accessed in order to boost cultural tourism and Gaelic language-related visitor activity, and to offer an innovative marketing opportunity to businesses undertaking cultural or Gaelic-related activity. Following a pilot in 2007, five new Cearcaill na Gàidhlig journeys were developed in 2008, allowing wide coverage of the Outer Hebrides and West Highland mainland.

PROPOSED ERDF PROJECT

Through their Economic Development team Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have acted as lead partner in the development and management of Cearcaill na Gàidhlig up to now. The Comhairle have managed and chaired the stakeholder steering committee of which HITRANS are also members.

In considering how to further develop Cearcaill na Gàidhlig the Steering Group has agreed that the next three years are critical to the long term sustainability of the project if it is to really deliver the economic benefits to the Western Highlands and Islands that it could achieve. The Steering Group has approved the preparation of a funding application to be submitted for ERDF funding and this has now been prepared and submitted by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar.

ERDF funding would allow Cearcaill na Gàidhlig to undergo a step-change in its activities during 2010-2013, focusing on new areas of activity to achieve a higher level of impact:

- Wider marketing efforts, particularly in relation to targeting and reaching out to the Scottish Diaspora.
- Acting as a support mechanism to develop the 'Gaelic-rich' product and experience offered by local businesses in relation to their own marketing, promotion, events and customer service, in order to ensure an authentic visitor experience, increase visitor spend and length of stay.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The following activities would be supported through ERDF investment:

- Employment of a Project Co-ordinator
- Marketing and promotional activity.
- Engagement with the international travel trade and key organisations relating to the Diaspora.
- Advertising, advertorials and travel competitions.
- Targeted attendance at trade and consumer shows.
- Website innovations in relation to interactive mapping and user participation.
- Development of Cearcaill na Gàidhlig 'through ticket' for each Gaelic ring, and involving relevant travel partners.
- Working with private sector tour operators to encourage the development of Gaelic Rings tour packages.
- Working with the local tour guide network to develop short tours relating to the various Gaelic Rings and branded accordingly.
- Cearcaill na Gàidhlig Business Champions would support local businesses to develop the Gaelic provision they offer to visitors.
- Passport incentive scheme relating to the Cearcaill na Gàidhlig area. This would be integrated into the through-ticketing project.

PROJECT FUNDING

To deliver this significantly enhanced Cearcaill na Gàidhlig will require funding of £354,546. The opportunity of ERDF funding is available at a 45% intervention rate meaning project partners are being asked to provide match funding of £195,500. The table below details the proposed funding breakdown by project partner and Members will note that HITRANS are being asked to contribute £45,000 over the three years of the project from 2010/11 to 2012/13.

CNG ERDF Match Funding Breakdown	Total	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
ERDF	159,546	55378	56290	47879
Comhairle	75000	30000	25000	20000
HITRANS	45000	15000	15000	15000
Highland	30000	10000	10000	10000
Argyll and Bute	30000	10000	10000	10000
Bord na Gaidhlig	15000	15000	0	0
Total	**354,546**	**135,378**	**116,290**	**102,879**

Officers consider Cearcaill na Gàidhlig to be a strong project offering the potential for significant economic benefits for the communities served. There is also real potential to look at similar projects for other parts of the Region where other cultural and heritage characteristics could for the basis of a portal. This has been investigated separately by HITRANS in the Regional Access Scoping Study (see agenda item 7). It is the recommendation of this report that HITRANS agrees to support Cearcaill na Gàidhlig with support of £15,000 per annum for the three years commencing 1st April 2010. It is our expectation that this period will develop Cearcaill na Gàidhlig to the point that it becomes sustainable without further funding from HITRANS beyond this period. The development of revenue generating opportunities is a key performance indicator of the success of this project and the Steering Group will monitor this closely over the three years to 31st March 2013

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note the report.
2. Members are asked to approve the continuation of HITRANS support to Cearcaill na Gàidhlig with £15,000 being allocated by HITRANS each year in 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 from the Partnership's Research and Development budget.
3. Members are asked to approve HITRANS continued membership of the Cearcaill na Gàidhlig Steering Group until 2012/13.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 10th September 2009

H I ▶ T R A N S

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

EUROPEAN FUNDING

START PROJECT INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To share with HITRANS Members and Advisors the first START Project Brochure produced by Transport and Travel Research on behalf of the ERDF INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area START project partners.

BACKGROUND

START is a transnational project relevant to cities and regions throughout the Atlantic Area and the whole of Europe. It deals with the broad issue of the improvement of accessibility and internal links (Priority 1) by promoting interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality. This is critical to the success of regional and national sustainable development policies and is one of the key supporting pillars underpinning the European Spatial Development Perspective.

Furthermore, the convenience of travelling around the Atlantic Area using sustainable modes of transport is made difficult by differences in how the services are run by operators (e.g. ticket types), lack of knowledge of the local area (e.g. knowing when to get off the service), and language barriers (e.g. not being able to communicate with the driver).

HITRANS has secured funding for a projects totalling Euro688,101 through our participation in START. The START Project commenced on 1st January 2009 and will cover a three year period to 31st December 2011.

DISSEMINATION PLAN

The Dissemination Plan supports the START project actions by defining in full detail **who** the target audiences are and **how** they will be reached. The information needs of different target groups will require different approaches to be used, in terms of the message to be communicated and the tools and methods of communication applied.

Dissemination concerns all activities, promoting project issues towards other potential users of the findings. Several initiatives will be launched during the project in order to raise interest from other city managers, users and suppliers of technologies and vehicles.

Different supports of dissemination will be used for promotion of the project during the various phases:

> ➢ Printed Material:
>> • Initial Project brochure;
>> • 4 Project newsletters;
>> • Final Project brochure;
>> • Press releases and targeted literature in each city;
>> • Journal articles and conference papers (6 articles and/or conference papers); and

- Final Project report.

- ➢ Electronic material:
  - Website, linked to other sustainable mobility websites and information resources;
  - Project Newsletters;
  - Contact mail box;
  - Seminars and conference proceedings.

- ➢ Organisation of:
  - Transnational and international Forum and Conferences;
  - Technical site visits;
  - Regional and national seminars

- ➢ Participation in congress and conferences.

INITIAL PROJECT BROCHURE

The initial project brochure has now been produced by TTR and appended as a background paper to this report. The project brochure provides useful background on the project including the aims and objectives of the partnership. It also introduces the project partner regions showing the good spread of EU member state representation through the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Members are asked to note the report.
5. Members and Advisors are invited to share the brochure with colleagues from their respective organisations.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 14th September 2009
Background Papers: START Project Brochure

Connecting People & Places Across Europe
*Seamless Travel across the Atlantic Area Regions using Sustainable Transport*

What is START about ?

A new INTERREG IVB project has recently been launched to encourage and promote *Seamless Travel across the Atlantic area Regions using sustainable Transport*.
The project contains 14 partners from the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal.

The primary aim of the project is to **make it easy to travel to, from and around the Atlantic Area using sustainable and collective modes of transport**.

This implies making improvements to the services and information provided by Regional Gateways (i.e. regional airports, ports and rail interchanges) in the Atlantic Area.
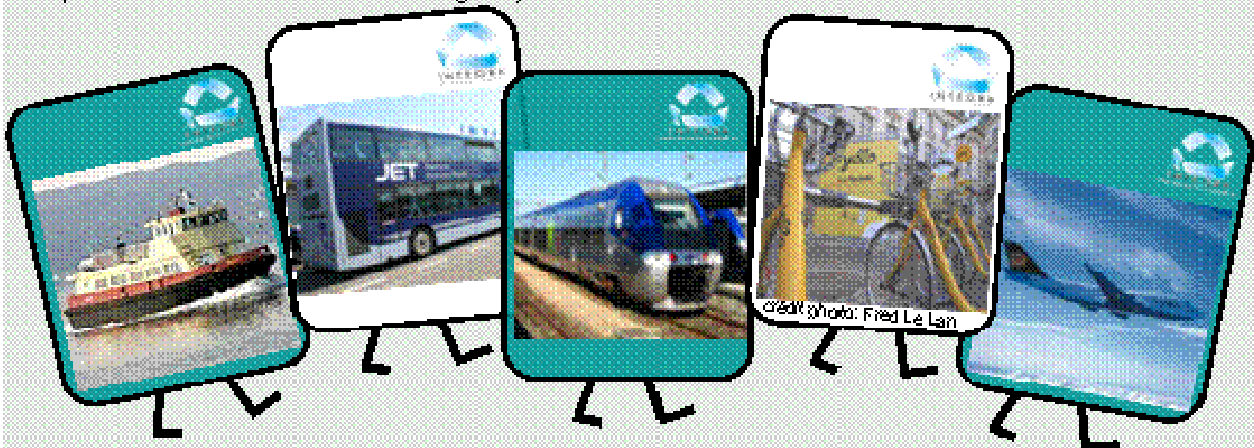
With a global budget of 7.5M Euro, the START project began in January 2009 and will be completed in December 2011. Its main objectives are:

- To improve the accessibility of regions and the interconnection of passenger transport networks; and
- To establish a transnational network of regional & local authorities and other relevant actors to promote enhanced accessibility.

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

« Investing in our common future »

ATLANTIC AREA Transnational Programme
ESPAÇO ATLÂNTICO Programa Transnacional
ESPACE ATLANTIQUE Programme Transnational
ESPAÇO ATLÂNTICO Programa Transnacional
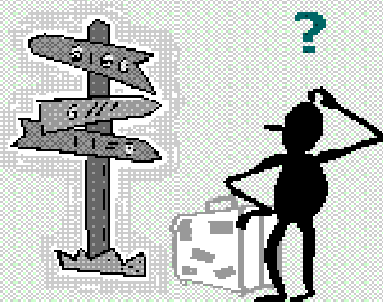
ACESSIBILITY & TRANSPORTS

START
Connecting People & Places Across Europe

Why START ?

It is often difficult to find information on how to travel from one Atlantic Area region to another.

There is a need for a one-stop-shop that provides options as to how you can travel from one AA region to another.

? Public transport systems vary from country to country, region to region or even city to city! As a result a traveller visiting a region for the first time has to answer many questions in order to use the local public transport services:

- Is there a Bus? Where does it depart?
- How much does it cost? How do I buy a ticket?
- Do I need the exact money?
- When should I get out of the bus to reach my destination?

Therefore, if good public transport services are not available and/or information to address these questions is not provided then the use of taxis or hire cars can be seen as more convenient and attractive to visitors.

credit photo: Fred Le an
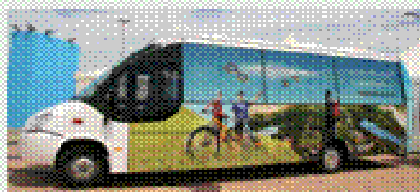
START proposes to address these barriers focusing on three axes !

JOIN

A European Transnational Cooperation Project

Three main axes for the START Project:

1. INFORMATION: to provide high quality and accessible information services (complete, integrated, understandable and legible):

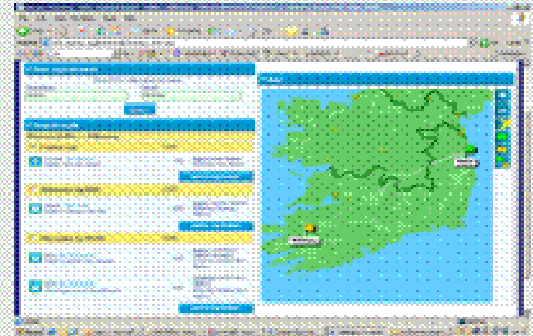- **Offer** to the transnational traveller a complete multi-lingual web portal www.integra-travel.eu[1] that provides sustainable transport options in the AA Region,
- **Develop** multi-lingual and interoperable regional web sites and journey planners,
- **Implement** multi-lingual information services on the ground to assist travellers on route.

2. LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS: to improve local accessibility and economical development of the AA region:

- Better **interconnect** local public transport to inter-regional transport services,
- **Design** and **implement** advanced ticketing systems as smart cards,
- **Improve** the quality and convenience of local public transport services.
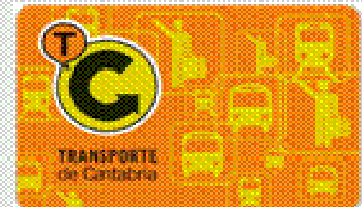
3. NETWORK: to develop the Transnational AA region accessibility:

- **Establish** and **spread** a common standard for seamless travel

OUR NETWORK !

For further information please contact:
Mike.Freeman@ttr-ltd.com
www.start-project.eu

[1] Integra was a concept developed in the INTERREG IIIB PARTNER Project, and included a prototype of a multi-lingual web portal as well as high quality common standards for information provision.

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START will build on an existing network of interested practitioners across Europe.

START will invite associate partners to join the project, so as to strengthen its impacts. Members of the **START** network will not be expected to make any financial contributions directly to the project.

They will receive regular communication from its progress and be invited to join transnational events that will discuss the challenges it addresses.
The first Transnational Forum will be in Lisbon in spring 2010.

PHOTO
BUS or TRAIN
MERSEYTRAVEL

The **START** consortium consists of the following 14 partners across each of the following 4 Atlantic Area countries:

United Kingdom:
- Merseytravel – Passenger Transport Authority and Executive for Merseyside (Lead Partner);
- Hitrans – Highlands & Islands Transport Partnership;
- SPT – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

France:
- Région Haute-Normandie – Regional Authority for Higher Normandy;
- Conseil Général de Seine-Maritime – County Council for Seine-Maritime ;
- Région Basse Normandie – Regional Authority for Lower Normandy;
- Région Bretagne – Regional Authority for Brittany;
- Communauté d'Agglomération de La Rochelle – Urban Community for La Rochelle;
- EIGSI – School of Engineering for the University of La Rochelle.

Spain:
- Foundation Innovation Centre on Integral Logistics Cantabria (CTL) – Representative of the Regional General Directorate of Transports and Telecommunications of Cantabria.

Portugal:
- Fundação Museu Nacional Ferroviário – The Railway National Museum Foundation responsible for promoting rail in Portugal;
- CP Caminhos de Ferro Portugueses, EP – The public rail operator in Portugal ;
- ISEL – Instituto Superior de Engenharia de Lisboa – The school of engineering for the Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon;
- Entroncamento Municipality – Local Authority for Entroncamento.

HI ▶ TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

EUROPEAN FUNDING

START PROJECT

ELGIN TO INVERNESS AIRPORT JET BUS ROUTE EXTENSION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to Members on the progress made by officers developing and delivering the extension to the JET bus service to Inverness Airport to include hourly links to Elgin. The extension of the JET service to Elgin was approved by Members for inclusion in the START Project Programme at the Partnership meeting in Kirkwall in April 2008.

BACKGROUND

HITRANS secured funding from the Scottish Government's Bus Route Development Grant Scheme in March 2007 for a £2.1Million upgrade of bus services operated by Rapson's Group in Inverness with a particular focus on upgrading links to Inverness Airport.

At the outset a key aspiration of this project was to establish access to Inverness Airport for residents of Moray who in the past were better served by bus links to Aberdeen Airport rather than the nearer Airport at Inverness. Rapson's Group were unwilling to operate a direct service to Inverness Airport from Elgin and opted instead to include a new service from Nairn to Inverness Airport that was timed to link with buses operated by Stagecoach to points in Moray and beyond. With the sale of Rapson's Group bus companies to Stagecoach in 2008 the opportunity arose for the Inverness to Inverness Airport service to extend to Elgin.

Stagecoach withdrew direct links from Moray to Aberdeen Airport in 2008 on the basis that the impact of the detour from the A96 to the Airport could not be justified by passenger carryings as the number of people using the service to the Airport was low when compared to those travelling from end to end of the route. Following this decision Moray Council called a productive meeting where it was agreed that the Council and HITRANS would look at options to improve access to Airports for people in Moray.

HITRANS and Moray Council officers met with Stagecoach to discuss options for improving bus links to Moray from both Inverness and Aberdeen Airports. Stagecoach agreed to strengthen connections with Service 10 coaches to re-establish a link, albeit through a service change, to Aberdeen Airport. Stagecoach also agreed to look at how they could deliver a direct service from Moray to Inverness Airport and at what cost. To maintain fairness and openness in the process discussions were also held with the other operator who provided a limited service between Moray and Inverness to establish if there could be potential for an alternative operator to establish a link to Inverness Airport. These discussions established that this operator did not wish to bid for funding to establish a service to Inverness Airport.

HITRANS success in securing ERDF funding through the START project has provided funding to allow an Inverness Airport to Moray bus service to be established. This project was included in the list of START projects approved by the HITRANS Board in April 2008.

SERVICE UPGRADE

In partnership with HITRANS and Moray Council, Stagecoach developed an option that saw the existing JET 11 service extend from Inverness Airport to Elgin on an hourly basis. This package of improvement also included reducing a gap in the timetable between services in the afternoon and extending the timetable through additional early morning and evening services. This timetable was approved by HITRANS and Moray Council officers as satisfying our aspirations for this service. A particularly welcome element of this project has been the commitment of Stagecoach to procure two new low floor Enviro 300 buses from Alexander Dennis Limited to deliver the initial service. These buses will be branded in the JET livery and will also offer passengers a high quality environment for their journey with leather seats and safety belts installed in the new vehicles.

The improved service also benefits passengers travelling between towns on the route as it offers the option of low floor buses for the journey that did not previously exist. Now passengers travelling between Elgin, Forres, Nairn and Inverness can do so on super low floor buses offering easy access for wheelchairs and parents with pushchairs. These buses are also very popular for anyone whose mobility makes it difficult to negotiate the steps on a coach.

The kick start project that establishes the new link to Elgin on the existing JET 11 bus service requires a total estimated investment of £310,000. The majority of these costs are to be borne by Stagecoach Bluebird who will fund the purchase of two new high specification buses for a total cost of £250,000. The remaining £60,000 is the additional operating costs less new revenue generated for the first 12 months of operation and this cost will be met by HITRANS through the START project. The service is expected to become commercially viable at the end of this 12 month period.

The service commenced operation on 18th May 2009 and the new buses are scheduled to enter service in October 2009. The new link was launched by local MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Richard Lochhead.

The investment by HITRANS complies with EU State Aid rules and details of the process through which kick start funding is permitted is included as Appendix A of this report. This information is taken from the guidance to applicants produced by the Department for Transport in relation to their £25Million Kick Start Bus Funding Competition 2009 which is available to English local authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities. Full details of this are available at http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/busgrants/kickstart/.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

The enhanced JET 11 service with its expanded route will be subject to the same management and monitoring of the service that is already in place for the services funded through the original bus route development scheme. Stagecoach will add this information to their monthly reporting and invoicing processes and they are also required to submit passenger and revenue information to HITRANS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note the report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 15th September 2009
Background Papers: *Appendix A – Extract from Annex B of the Department for Transport Guidance on the Kickstart Bus Competition 2009*

Appendix A – Item 22 – Extract from Annex B of the Department for Transport Guidance On the Kickstart Bus Competition 2009

Tendering and Kickstart, EU State Aid and Procurement Rules

Note: The contents of this Annex broadly set out the relevant legal provisions which need to be considered by authorities and operators when preparing Kickstart bids. It is not, and should not be taken to be, a definitive statement of the law. It is not legal advice and does not represent the views of the Department for Transport (save where this is made explicit). You are strongly advised to take independent legal advice when preparing your bids and before submitting proposals.

1. A local authority's financial commitment to a Kickstart project is likely to involve one or more of the following:

revenue support for the initial years of the route's operation;

a contribution to the costs of provision of new vehicles for use on the route;

other investment, most likely to be in terms of capital expenditure, related to the improvement of the route.

The first two of these raise issues in terms of the requirements of the tendering provisions of the Transport Acts and EU rules on state aid and procurement.

Revenue Support

2. Where an authority enters into an agreement with an operator that requires the local authority to make payments to the operator, in return for which the operator provides a bus service that constitutes an "agreement providing for service subsidies" for the purposes of the Transport Act 1985. Consequently, entering into an agreement for revenue support for a Kickstart route is covered by the tendering provisions of the Transport Acts 1985 and 2000 (i.e. specifically, sections 89-92 of the 1985 Act, as amended by section 152 of the 2000 Act). The Local Transport Act 2008 (sections 67-70) has also extended the circumstances under which subsidy can be used to secure passenger transport services (e.g. to obtain improved standards of service), and has changed the maximum length of subsidised services agreements (from 5 to 8 years).

3. The tendering provisions require that any revenue support arrangement should be the subject of a contract with the operator concerned and that contract should be competitively tendered except where it has been awarded under the provisions of the *de minimis* regulations. The *de minimis* provisions were significantly broadened in April 2004 (by the Service Subsidy

Agreements (Tendering) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 .SI 2004 No 609.

4. However all cases where authorities grant revenue support to operators are potentially subject to the prohibition on state aid. It is important to note the effect of European Regulation 1191/69 (see paras 16-24 below.) The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (which implement EU Directive 2004/18/EC on the co-ordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public services contracts) may also be relevant (see paras 5-10 below). The 2006 Regulations repealed and replaced a number of earlier Regulations, in particular the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993 (SI 1993/3228) and the Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/201).

The Public Contracts Regulations 2006

5. The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (S.I. 2006/5) ("PC Regulations") implement EU rules on the co-ordination of procedures for the award of various forms of public contract, and they must be complied with whenever an authority awards a public contract for the provision of certain services. However the PC Regulations do not apply to public contracts which are excluded by regulation 6 (certain specified types of contract) or regulation 8 (thresholds, on which see paragraph 8 below).

6. Some common forms of revenue support arrangements between an operator and an authority will not be "public contracts" for the purposes of the PC Regulations. Specifically, the PC Regulations do not apply to offers in relation to a services concession contract awarded by the contracting authority.[1] The European Commission issued an Interpretative Communication on Concessions under Community Law in 2000 (OJEC C121 29.4.2000).

7. The Communication identifies the distinguishing features of a public service concession contract:

(a) The operator bears the risk involved in operating the service in question (establishing
and exploiting the service). The way in which an operator is remunerated is a factor which helps to determine who bears the exploitation risk – the risk is probably transferred where the operator obtains significant part of revenue from operating the service, particularly by charging fares in any form.
(b) The nature and purpose of the activities that are the subject of the contract are likely to be the State's responsibility and may be subject to exclusive or special rights.
8. Contracts which are likely to be concession contracts are contracts where the operator bears the revenue risk of providing the service, that is, contracts where the operator receives a net subsidy from the authority and retains the revenue from the service (often termed "net cost", or "minimum subsidy", or

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[1] Public Contracts Regulations 2006, regulation 6(2)(m)

ensures that revenue risk lies with the operator - and where the authority has not entered into any other arrangement to protect the operator from revenue risk (such as an indemnity clause) - are therefore not likely to be subject to the requirements of the PC Regulations. Specifically, they are outside the need for contracts of above the threshold set by the EU rules (these thresholds are set out in detail in regulation 8 of the PC Regulations) be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Community (OJEC).

2 See, for example, Article 16 EC.

9. Authorities will wish to consider the implications of the above for contract procedure under a Kickstart project. For example, a net cost contract awarded to a Kickstart operator under *de minimis* rules that falls within the definition of a public service concession contract would not be subject to the requirement to advertise in the OJEC or to conduct a competitive tender. Net cost contracts may be particularly relevant to Kickstart where the assumption is that the service is on its way to commercial viability.

10. Although the PC Regulations do not apply to the award of public service concession contracts, authorities should bear in mind that concessions are subject to the provisions of the EC Treaty and the principles of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality, equality of treatment, transparency, mutual recognition and proportionality. Further guidance on these principles, and compliance with them, is provided in the Commissions Interpretative Communication on Concessions referred to above in paragraphs 6 and 7.

11. In the context of developing Kickstart procedures, we recommend that authorities adopt an open process of consulting bus operators about the possibility of Kickstart initiatives in their area, and inviting proposals. In doing so, authorities should indicate whether for example they would be prepared to consider contributing to the cost of vehicle acquisition as part of a Kickstart proposal. This consultation process will contribute to transparency, as well as ensuring that no potential ideas are overlooked. Reference in public documents, such as Council committee papers, and policy statements, to the intention to consider proposals and to the subsequent decision-making process, will also contribute to demonstrating transparency. However, authorities should note that the degree of transparency required is an uncertain area of EU procurement law. Commission guidance has emphasised the role of open competitive tendering.

State aid rules

12. State aid is, in principle, incompatible with the common market as it is said to distort competition between Member States if a benefit is conferred on a domestic undertaking/business. However, EU law also recognises that Member States must be able to provide public services and further legitimate aims such as enhancing social cohesion which may conflict with the prohibition on state aid.2

13. The state aid rules only apply to measures if all the criteria listed in Article 87(1) of the EC Treaty are satisfied. They are:

a transfer of state resources
economic advantage
selectivity
effect on competition and trade between Member States.

3 See "Vademecum – Community law on state aid" (30 September 2008) available at
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/state_aid/studies_reports/vademecum_on_rules_09_2008_en.pdf.
4 Case C-280/00 *Altmark Trans GmbH v Nahverkehrsgesellschaft Altmark GmbH* [2003] ECR I-7747.
5 There is a wealth of further information on state aid rules on the web sites of the Department for Business
Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/businesslaw/state-aid/index.html) and the
European Commission (Competition section) (http://ec.europa.eu/comm/competition/index_en.html).

"Incompatible" state aid can still be permitted if it falls within either of the exemptions listed in Articles 87(2) and (3). The most common exemption clauses are those in Articles 87(3)(a) and 87(3)(c). These cover, respectively:

"aid to promote the economic development of areas where the standard of living is abnormally low or where there is serious underemployment";

"aid to facilitate the development of certain economic activities or certain economic areas, where such aid does not adversely affect trading conditions contrary to the common interest".

14. Various "sectoral" rules have been devised by the European Commission (the guardian of state aid requirements). In the transport sector most general state aid rules apply. However, the *de minimis* ceiling is decreased to EUR 100,000 for the road transport sector and transport equipment is in general not eligible for aid.3

15. The European Court of Justice case of *Altmark*4 has ruled that compensation for public service does not constitute an "advantage" within the meaning of Article 87 provided four cumulative conditions are satisfied:

the recipient has a clearly defined public service obligation to discharge

there is an objective and transparent system, established in advance for calculating compensation

compensation does not exceed the costs incurred in discharging the obligation, taking account of the relevant receipts and a reasonable profit margin and

where the provider is not chosen through public procurement procedures, the level of compensation is determined with reference to the costs which a typical undertaking would incur.5

Council Regulation (EEC) 1191/69
***NB**: Regulation (EEC) 1191/69 is to be repealed from 2 December 2009, and will be replaced by Regulation (EC) 1370/2007 ("Regulation 1370/2007") on*

public passenger transport services by rail and road.6 As Regulation 1370/2007 does not enter into force until 3 December 2009, it is unlikely that its terms will directly affect the 2009 Kickstart competition, but participants are advised to familiarise themselves with the Regulation well in advance.

Regulation 1370/2007 provides a framework on the awarding of contracts for "services of general interest" and sets out the rules which apply to awarding public service contracts in the field of passenger transport services. The requirements for the contents of public service contracts is covered by Article 4. Article 5 deals with the awarding of public service contracts. Local authorities are permitted to provide passenger transport services themselves or by "direct award" to a public service operator over which the local authority exercises a degree of control (Article 5(2) and Article 2(h) on the definition of a "direct award"). Where a third party (other than an internal operator) is used, a public service contract must be awarded following a competitive tendering process, subject to 3 exceptions. The exceptions are: low-level contracts (annual value of less than €1m or which supply less than 300,000 km of public passenger services); emergency measures and regional or long distance rail transport: see Article 5(3-6). Member States are required to gradually come into line with the requirements of the Regulation, with the end of the transition period set for 3 December 2019.

16. Council Regulation (EEC) 1191/69 ("Regulation 1191/69") establishes a particularly favourable state aid authorisation scheme for urban, suburban and regional passenger transport services. In summary, Regulation 1191/69 authorises an authority to pay compensation to operators in return for the operators assuming obligations to provide bus services. These arrangements are exempt from the prior notification procedure **provided** that the requirements of the Regulation are met. That is, arrangements that comply with the Regulation are effectively exempted from the scope of the state aid rules. The key requirements are described below.

17. Regulation 1191/69 distinguishes between two types of arrangements between an authority and an operator for the provision of bus services: "public service obligations" and "public service contracts". It is necessary first to determine whether the funding arrangement involves a "public service contract" or a "public service obligation", as the requirements of the Regulation are different for each arrangement.

18. It is the Department's view that the term "public services contract" has the same meaning in Regulation 1191/69 as it does in the PC Regulations (see paragraphs 6 to 8 above which discuss this term). Therefore, a revenue support arrangement that is a public services concession contract is not a "public service contract" and it falls into the category of a "public service obligation". All other arrangements for revenue support of bus services under the Kickstart scheme fall into the category of "public service contracts".

Public services concession contracts: the "public service obligation" requirements

19. As noted above in paragraph 8, where a contract is a public service concession contract, the PC Regulations do not apply to the making of that contract and (assuming that the tendering provisions of the Transport Act 1985 also do not apply) there is no requirement to advertise or conduct a competitive tender. However, as noted in paragraph 10 above, the EC Treaty and principles must be complied with. Additionally Regulation 1191/69 requires that any compensation paid to the operator must comply with the common compensation procedures set out in articles 10 to 13 of the Regulation.

20. Different compensation procedures apply depending on the type of obligation that the operator assumes under the arrangement. There are 3 types of obligations set out in the Regulation: the obligation to operate, the obligation to carry and tariff obligations.
(a) "the obligation to operate" is any obligation imposed on an operator, in respect of a route, to ensure the provision of a transport service satisfying fixed standards of continuity, regularity and capacity.
(b) "the obligation to carry" means any obligation imposed on an operator to accept and carry passengers or goods at specified rates and subject to specified conditions.
(c) "tariff obligations" means any obligation imposed upon transport undertakings to apply, in particular for certain categories of passenger, for certain categories of goods, or on certain routes, rates fixed or approved by any public authority which are contrary to the commercial interests of the undertaking and which result from the imposition of, or refusal to modify, special tariff provisions.

21. Article 10 of Regulation 1191/69 concerns the calculation of compensation for a non-tariff "obligation", (i.e. compensation paid where an operator that has assumed an obligation to carry or an obligation to operate). The compensation should "be equal to the difference between the reduction in financial burden and the reduction in revenue of the undertaking if the whole or the relevant part of the obligation in question were terminated…" Article 11 sets out the amount of compensation that may be paid in respect of a tariff obligation. Article 12 applies to calculation of compensation for all 3 types of obligation and says "costs resulting from the maintenance of obligations shall be calculated on the basis of efficient management of the undertaking and the provision of transport services of an adequate quality". There are further provisions concerning the calculation of compensation for these obligations and any authority determining the compensation to be paid under a contract should consult the Regulation.

22. The practical implication of these Articles is that the authority must satisfy itself that the price it negotiates for a contract is justified in terms of the costs to the operator of meeting the particular requirements of the contract and

does not involve a risk of over-compensating the operator for meeting those requirements. This of course is no more than good practice and best value principles anyway require. In this regard, authorities should consider including in an agreement with the operator provision that, if the financial success of the project turns out to have been significantly greater than forecast in the initial projections, the operator will contribute in cash or kind to the further development of the project. If this contribution is in the form of a commitment to continue to provide the service, Regulation 1191/69 may apply. If in another form, Regulation 1191/69 may not apply and state aid rules would need to be considered in that case. (see also paras 29-30 below)

23. In the context of revenue support for a Kickstart project, an authority should, on the basis of its negotiation with the operator and its knowledge of the bus tendering market, be satisfied that the support involved is no greater than is necessary to cover anticipated and justified losses in operating the route during the period of Kickstart funding.

Requirements for public service contracts

24. Where revenue support arrangement between an authority and an operator is a public contract (and is not exempted), the provisions of the PC Regulations apply. In addition, Regulation 1191/69 requires that a public service contract must cover the following points[7]:
(a) the nature of the service to be provided, notably the standards of continuity, regularity, capacity and quality;
(b) the price of the services covered by the contract, which shall either be added to tariff revenue or shall include the revenue, and details of financial relations between the two parties;
(c) the rules concerning amendment and modification of the contract, in particular to take account of unforeseeable changes;
(d) the period of the contract; and
(e) the penalties in the event of failure to comply with the contract.

Requirements that relate to public service contracts and public service obligations

25. Any decision to enter into a public service contract, or impose public service obligations by means of a public service concession contract must:
(a) state the reasons on which the decision is based; and
(b) be published in the appropriate manner[8].

26. It is the Department's view that the above requirements are met where;

(a) an agreement is subject to the tendering provisions of sections 89-92 of the Transport Act 1985 (as amended), including the publication requirements of sections 90(3) and 91(7) of that Act; and

(b) a contract has not been tendered. i.e. *de minimis* rules have been applied, but where the decision to award the contract has been recorded in a document which is open to public scrutiny.

Contributing to the costs of vehicles as part of a Kickstart project

27 A number of the earlier Kickstart projects involved authorities contributing to the costs of vehicle acquisition, though the Department does **not** see this as a necessary feature of all, or even most, proposals. Outside Kickstart, some authorities have considered purchasing vehicles which are then made over to operators for use on a route as part of a service subsidy contract, thus reducing the subsidy costs of enhancing the route by a requirement for higher vehicle standards.

28. In considering such proposals, authorities may wish to check their statutory powers governing these arrangements and ensure that all agreed terms are set out in a signed, written agreement.

29. There are a number of scenarios for an authority's involvement with vehicle acquisition. The implications of EU rules for different scenarios are quite complex and need to be carefully considered in each case. What follows summarises the main factors to take into account in a number of likely scenarios. In (a) to (c) case below it is assumed that the authority purchases all, or some, of the vehicles involved, and retains ownership.

(a)
The operator leases the vehicles from the authority. In this case state aid and procurement rules will generally be satisfied where the vehicles have been purchased at the market price following an appropriate procurement exercise **and** the operator pays a commercial rate to lease the vehicle.

(b)
The vehicles are made over to the operator in return for the operation of the service. This arrangement probably constitutes an agreement providing for service subsidies under the Transport Act 1985. In that case the requirements of that Act apply and the PC Regulations and the Regulation 1191/69, as described above, may also apply.

(c)
The arrangement for the operator's use of the vehicles involves a payment by the operator "in kind" (for example promotion and marketing of services) other than the operation of the service as such, i.e. there is not a service subsidy agreement under the terms of the 1985 Act. In this case the favourable state aid treatment available under Regulation 1191/69 (see para 16 above) probably does not apply and the authority will need to consider the applicability of the state aid rules.

(d)
A possible variant of the above scenarios is where the authority retains ownership of the vehicles for a period but subsequently transfers ownership to the operator. Any terms for such a transfer which involve terms which are more favourable than normal commercial terms (taking account for example of the age of the vehicles) will involve state aid issues. An alternative would be to make the transfer subject to a service subsidy agreement, in which case the considerations set out in (b) would apply.

30. There are also possible scenarios where the operator purchases and owns the vehicles and the authority contributes to the costs of the acquisition. Any such contribution will involve state aid issues. If the arrangement is covered by the terms of a service subsidy agreement the considerations set out in para 29(b) above apply.

HI ► TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting – 8th October 2009

EUROPEAN FUNDING

START PROJECT

ARGYLL AND BUTE REAL TIME INFORMATION PROJECT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to Members on the progress made by officers developing and delivering the extended coverage of Real Time Passenger Information in Argyll and Bute which will be part funded through HITRANS share of the INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area START project. The Argyll and Bute Real Time Information Project was approved by Members for inclusion in the START Project Programme at the Partnership meeting in Kirkwall in April 2008.

BACKGROUND

Funded through the RTP Capital Grant allocation HITRANS tendered for the provision of Real Time Information (RTI) services in Argyll and Bute in 2005. The contract was awarded to Tandata Ltd who initially equipped 14 buses and coaches operating from Campbeltown, Ardrishaig, Oban and Glasgow depots with on bus computers and automatic vehicle location (AVL) tracking equipment. In addition to this bus stop countdown displays were fitted at 10 locations to give passengers waiting at bus stops information in real time relating to their bus services.

The Argyll RTI system was expanded in 2007 with a further 10 buses equipped with on bus computers and AVL tracking. This allowed the routes operated by RTI ready coaches to extend to the Oban to Glasgow service. The 2007 extension also saw HITRANS increase the scope of the real time information provision in the region to include web and SMS access to real time data so passengers could find out what was happening with their bus services without having to leave their homes or workplace. This facility has been delayed in its delivery as difficulties with the supply of data to the system from bus operators have been more problematic that we anticipated but this issue has now been resolved making expansion of real time coverage a much more simple process in the future.

ARGYLL AND BUTE REAL TIME INFORMATION PROJECT

As a result of the success of the START project in securing funding allowed HITRANS officers to enter into discussion with Argyll and Bute Council officers and members to establish where the maximum benefits could be achieved from the roll out of further real time information coverage of bus routes in Argyll and Bute. The 24 buses and coaches included in the earlier roll out of real time passenger information on bus services in Argyll and Bute provided good coverage on the key routes to and within Mid Argyll and Kintyre. Having considered a number of areas it was agreed that the next phase would focus on completing real time information coverage of the Oban bus fleet and introducing the technology to the buses serving the Cowal peninsula.

Oban

Coverage in Oban was limited to a handful of routes with the only guaranteed coverage being the route to Glasgow and the interurban service to Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig. To bring the benefits of real time information to the largest market in Oban it will be necessary to equip 10 more buses with on bus computers and AVL.

Oban acts as a key transport interchange serving the West Highlands and Islands where modal interchange is a regular occurrence particularly for passengers requiring onward travel to and from the ferry terminal. The Scottish Government is working towards agreeing protocols with First ScotRail and Caledonian MacBrayne to minimise the risk of passengers missing connections as a result of delays to the ferry service. However there will still be times where it is not possible to delay the train and the coach offers greater flexibility in the event of late arrival of the ferry either to hold the service back or provide a duplicate vehicle. To give ferry passengers the best possible information on arrival at Oban it is proposed to install an electronic display at Oban Ferry Terminal in the arrivals area. A provisional item that will be included in the RTI tender is the installation of electronic information screen on the MV Isle of Mull, MV Clansman and MV Lord of the Isles to display bus and rail service information to passengers before the vessels berth alongside Oban pier. This will help passengers decide what their best option is for onward travel at the earliest opportunity.

In addition to the screens at Oban Ferry Terminal and on board the Caledonian MacBrayne vessels countdown displays will also be provided at Oban Bus Station.

Cowal

The original roll out of real time information in Argyll through HITRANS capital grant funding did not extend into Cowal. Instead earlier rounds of HITRANS funding in this area concentrated on upgrading bus infrastructure, including a contribution to a new transport interchange in Dunoon, and upgrading the standard of the bus fleet serving the peninsula.

To bring the benefits of real time passenger information to the modern fleet of buses serving Cowal would require 10 buses to be equipped with on bus computers and AVL. In addition to this it is proposed to install countdown displays at the main bus stops in Dunoon.

PROJECT FUNDING

Funding has been identified to deliver complete coverage of the bus fleet serving Oban and the bus fleet serving the Cowal peninsula. HITRANS identified £50,000 from our START budget to deliver this project and the HITRANS contribution is being matched by Argyll and Bute Council who will also contribute £50,000 for a total budget of £100,000.

PROJECT TIMESCALE

A delivery timetable has been developed for the Argyll Real Time Information Project with the following key milestones identified:

- Advertisement for expression of interest to supply the Argyll Real Time Information Project through Public Contracts Scotland portal – October / November 2009
- Invitation to tender for Argyll Real Time Information Project to be sent to selected bidders – December 2009
- Tender returns – January / February 2010
- Award of contract – February 2010
- Installation of 10 on bus computers in Oban – April 2010
- Installation of 10 on bus computers in Dunoon – May 2010
- Installation of electronic passenger information displays in Oban – June 2010
- Site approval testing and system launch in Oban – July 2010
- Installation of electronic passenger information displays in Dunoon – July 2010

- Site approval testing and system launch in Dunoon – August 2010

The timescale is an estimate and is subject to delays that could result from external factors such as difficulties in getting utility companies to provide electrical supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members are asked to note the report
2. Members are asked to approve the project scope and delivery timescale.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 14th September 2009

H I ▶ T R A N S
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 8 October 2009

PARTNERSHIP

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2010

Recommendation

The Partnership is asked to:

1. agree that the HITRANS Partnership meet in 2010 on the dates and at the locations identified in the table below.
2. decide on which venues to adopt for the April and September Meetings
3. note that additional meetings may be called if circumstances arise that so warrant.

Date	Partnership Meeting	Location
4 and 5 February 2010	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning	Inverness
1 and 2 April 2010	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning	
3 and 4 June 2010	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning	Inverness
2 and 3 September 2010	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning	
2 and 3 December 2010	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning	Inverness

Author: Dave Duthie
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 14th September 2009