

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Statement of efficiency, effectiveness and economy

HITRANS 2010/11

During 2010/11 HITRANS has implemented a number of initiatives that have improved efficiency, effectiveness and economy and these are outlined below.

Shared Services

Shared accommodation, administration and supplies

HITRANS has reduced its accommodation at the Inverness Airport Office and now shares the building with a firm of private sector Architects.

This has resulted in a saving to HITRANS of £12,413 per annum

Legal, Financial and HR Services

HITRANS has service level agreements covering Legal, HR, and Financial services with two of our Member Councils. The services provided are outlined below.

Legal and HR Services

Legal and HR services are provided by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar. Legal Services include legal advice, contractual advice and provision of clerking for the Board. HR Services include drafting and review of HR policies and procedures, monitoring any changes in legislation, and support in dealing with staff matters. Day to day routine HR matters are managed directly by HITRANS employees. The quality of support is excellent and rates are considerably lower than comparative rates in the private sector. The cost of this service in 2010/11 was £8,000

Financial Services

Financial services are provided by The Highland Council. Services covered include invoice and payment processing, financial ledger, regular reporting to the HITRANS Board, internal audit, liaising with external audit, budget preparation and control, pension fund management, accountancy and audit support for EU projects and investment management. The quality of support is excellent and again rates are considerably lower than in the private sector. The cost of this service in 2010/11 was £22,500

Accessibility Modelling

HITRANS has developed an accessibility model covering the Highlands and Islands using Accession and this has been available to Member Councils for a number of years, operating mainly through consultants MVA. The model gives a graphic presentation of the accessibility of specific locations to other locations, including areas of employment, healthcare, education, retail and leisure, by various modes.

One of the recent uses of Accession by HITRANS, has been the assessment of the areas from which patients can access the main hospitals in their area for morning and full day appointments using public transport, which we have shared with the local Health

Boards. We have by doing this been able to identify the areas where other forms of access need to be developed.

Due to the high level of knowledge required to use the model HITRANS has entered into an arrangement with Tactran and SEStran through which we use a common contract between SEStran and MVA to access accessions software with the benefit of reduced fees as a result of the larger volume of work, single licence fee for all three RTPs and regular updates for all. In addition we have saved the cost of procurement by using the SEStran contract.

Sustainable Development

HITRANS has carried out active travel audits of all the key settlements across the region in partnership with the five authorities in the HITRANS area and provided the results to the partner authorities. The central provision of these services has saved the partner authorities significant costs in developing an effective methodology and undertaking individual audits when compared with the local development option. The completed Audits provide a valuable tool for Council Planners and Local Developers to understand sustainable travel patterns within communities, and to ensure that new developments complement existing walking and cycling networks, add value to communities, and focus developer efforts on critical areas for action.

Partnership Working

European Projects

HITRANS was involved in the delivery of three European Projects during 2010/11 which each achieved efficiencies and economies while working towards improvements in the effectiveness of delivery of transport services and related infrastructure both within the Highlands and Islands and at wider national and international levels.

Working with Partners in the Atlantic region of the EU the START European Project aims to make it easy to travel to, from and around the Atlantic regions of Europe using environmentally friendly public transport. The Project involves regions from elsewhere in the UK, France, Spain and Portugal. HITRANS working with public and private sector local partners has within the project added significant value to the development of the award winning Jet bus service to and from Inverness Airport and the development of real-time bus information in towns across the region.

In the Northern Periphery Region of the EU, HITRANS is working with partners from Iceland, Sweden, Northern Ireland and Eire on the TransTourism project. The TransTourism partnership is developing and implementing solutions for transport services adapted to rural tourism areas in the Northern Periphery. Tourism is important to the economic and social sustainability of many communities in the Northern periphery area. The services developed in the project will facilitate development of tourism in the project area whilst reducing carbon emission and local congestion from private cars at peak season. HITRANS through this project is working with HIE, Visit Scotland, and Aberdeen University in developing an interactive website for travel planning for visitors in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Both these projects are funded through the Interreg 4B Programme which facilitates partnership working across the EU with intervention rates of up to 65%.

HITRANS worked in partnership with The Highland Council to access ERDF funding to deliver a series of infrastructure improvements to deliver increased active travel in key settlements as identified through our Active Travel Audits mentioned above, and these are now being delivered on the ground.

Real Time Passenger Information

HITRANS has been a member of the CHRONOS project consortium developing the CHRONOS Solar Powered Information Systems along with Nexus Alpha, Moray Council, ScotRail and JMW. With funding from the Technology Strategy Board and seed funding from the partners, a cost-effective passenger information display for rural and low footfall areas has been designed and rolled out to four bus stop locations in Moray. Phase 2 will see displays installed at 10 rail stations in Highland and Moray. This trial project if successful will bring opportunities for commercial development of market leading technology in the UK which will bring benefits to the travelling public not only within the Highlands and Islands, but in many other areas where mains electricity to power real time information is not accessible at transport access points.

Risk Management

To support our development of sound management of risk a formal Risk Management Strategy has been developed and implemented by HITRANS. The Strategy describes the constituent parts of good Risk Management, our overriding Risk Management Aims, the range of risks we face, the processes we will put in place, and the actions we are taking. During 2010/11 HITRANS Officers and Partnership Advisors have discussed how effective risk management should be formalised within HITRANS monitoring and reporting systems and it was agreed that a paper based Risk Register covering major strategic, corporate and financial risks should be developed. Preliminary work on developing this Risk Register approach, based on the Risk Management Strategy has been undertaken and key risks, associated controls and actions have been identified to minimise the impact on the activities of the Partnership. Regular updates on the most significant risks to the authority will now be provided to the Board as part of HITRANS commitment to ensuring efficient, effective and economic delivery of our functions.