

Report to Partnership Meeting 3 February 2012

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Multi Modal Real Time Project

Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Members for a budget allocation of £30,000 to implement multi modal real time information projects in partnership with partner local authorities and other stakeholders.

Background

HITRANS and our partner local authorities have been working closely on developing real time information in the Highlands and Islands for a number of years. At present a significant number of buses have been equipped with real time on vehicle computers. Rail data is available in real time and it is possible to get alerts and real time updates for ferry and air services in the region. An opportunity exists to bring together multi modal real time data and where it is sensible to do so we should consider presenting multi modal travel information wherever this is possible. This may mean electronic displays with information on more than one mode of travel or the use of Traveline Scotland's smart phone applications to provide a single contact point for information on all modes of travel.

Server to Server Interface for Multi Modal Real Time Information

Through the START project HITRANS has funded the purchase of real time three TFT information panels at Oban Transport Interchange. A display will be located at the bus station stances and West Coast Motors Information Centre while the third display is to be installed in the foyer of the MV Isle of Mull to provide onward bus travel information to passengers waiting to disembark from the ferry in Oban.

The information at each of these locations, particularly on the MV Isle of Mull, would be significantly enhanced by the inclusion of real time information for rail services departing Oban Station. This can be achieved by developing a server to server interface from the ScotRail real time information system (that is managed for ScotRail by Atos Origins) and the HITRANS real time information system (that is managed by Vix Technology). HITRANS officers are investigating the feasibility of establishing this server interface using SIRI communication protocols. This project can be completed within 6 weeks of approval once all the detailed server interfaces are proven. A budget of £5,000 is estimated to be required to deliver this facility however this will make it possible to integrate rail data into the HITRANS bus real time system at no further cost.

Inter Urban Bus Corridors

The Highland Council have recently introduced real time information on the Inverness to Gairloch bus service operated under Council contract by Westerbus. This project has proven the feasibility of introducing real time information without the requirement for the on vehicle real time computer to interface directly with the electronic ticket machine. This is important as the portable ticket machines that have been favoured by a number of independent bus operators across the Highlands and Islands could not link with the real time units. This was preventing roll out of real time equipment on services operated by these operators. Now that the Gairloch project has been successfully delivered by Vix Technology we have an opportunity to investigate providing real time information on a number of important regional bus routes.

HITRANS officers have been working with officers from our partner local authorities to identify the best way of focussing the next phase of real time information in the region. In the short term the greatest benefits may derive from concentrating on services where the introduction of real time information may help improve integration between different modes of transport. Best value can be achieved on these routes by making the main method of information dissemination the use of soft measures such as web, smart phone, SMS. The following routes have been identified in an initial sift of routes that could be prioritised for real time information deployment:

- Uig / Portree to Glasgow
- Uig / Portree to Inverness
- Inverness to Thurso
- Inverness to Grantown
- Grantown to Aviemore
- Thurso to Wick
- Fort William to Lochaline
- Fort William to Mallaig
- Ullapool to Inverness
- Tobermory to Craginure
- Tobermory to Fionnphort
- Stornoway to Tarbert

The list above is not exhaustive and can be prioritised and amended in the future. A number of routes are not listed to reflect the good levels of real time coverage already being achieved in Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray and Orkney.

EPI Benefits / Open Source Data Management

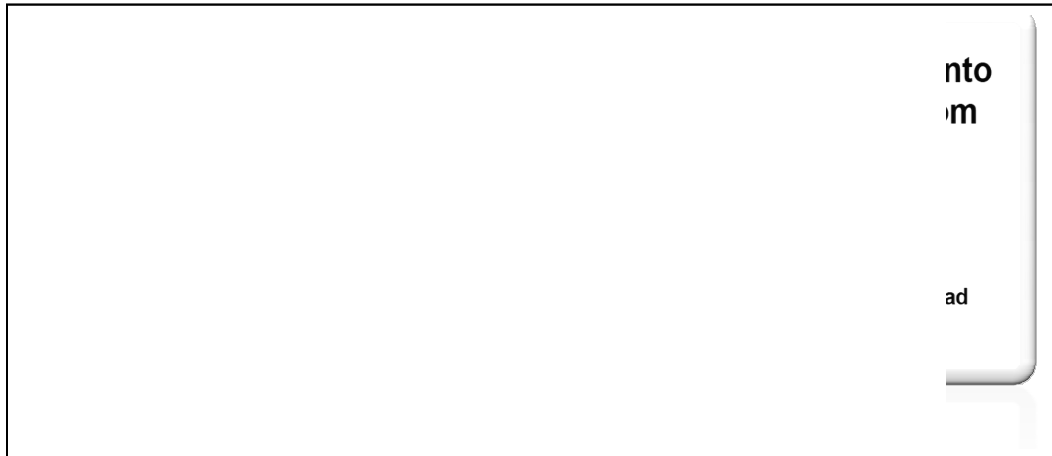
If real time data feeds are to be provided from multiple real time data sources in the long term there may be value in feeding this into a single source.

The Moray Council journey planning kiosk contract is with RSL Limited. RSL have developed an Electronic Passenger Information (EPI) system that can manage a variety of public transport data sources. This EPI system is designed to receive information from multiple sources and present it in a single point.

EPI would allow the quality of datasets to be evaluated and tested independently so for example we would have a good tool to evaluate the quality of tracking from the real time systems currently in operation in the area. This would be a useful management tool to protect the quality of information being provided from our real time information systems.

EPI would support an open source approach to data supply and management. It would allow HITRANS to remain in step with technological developments such as the use of electronic ticket machines to provide bus tracking information in the future.

HITRANS have already supported pioneering developments in the deployment of smart phone technology to support information dissemination of real time bus information in Scotland. The RSL EPI system could be utilised to support the use of QR codes as a timetabling and ticketing resource. The image below show first a QR code and below this the timetable data display that will be seen on a smart phone if the code is scanned. This is a live QR code for Aboyne bus stance in Aberdeenshire and if scanned by a smart phone this will display real timetable information.



It is proposed to investigate the development of EPI through the Moray Council contract with a view to introducing a better system for real time data management and developing QR code real time promotion across the Highlands and Islands. The budget for this should be set at £10,000 as part of the £30,000 budget proposed within the revised 2011/12 Research and Development Programme for 2011/12.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.
2. Members are asked to approve the allocation of £5,000 to develop a real time information feed from ScotRail's database to the HITRANS real time system.
3. Members are asked to approve a budget of £15,000 from the 2011/12 Research and Development budget to be made available as part funding towards the cost of equipping inter urban bus route fleet with real time on vehicle computers. This budget is based on the expectation that local authorities would offer match funding.
4. Members are asked to approve a budget of £10,000 from the 2011/12 budget towards developing an Electronic Passenger Information system that covers the entire HITRANS region that can utilise QR codes to generate real time displays.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This project will support RTS objectives for improving passenger information.
Policy	√	This project will support HITRANS transport information policy objectives.
Financial	√	This project can be accommodated within the Research/ Strategy Development programme budget. It is also expected that this project will receive partner funding from local authorities.
Equality	√	Implementation of this project will improve the accessibility of the public transport routes that would be included in the project.

Report by:
Designation:
Date:

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25th January 2012