

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Statement of efficiency, effectiveness and economy

HITRANS 2011/12

During 2011/12 HITRANS has continued implementing a number of initiatives that have improved efficiency, effectiveness and economy and these are outlined below, following on from our actions in 2010/11.

Shared Services

Shared accommodation, administration and supplies

HITRANS continues to work within a reduced level of accommodation at the Inverness Airport Office sharing the building and related costs with a private sector architect practice.

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

By improving our IT systems we have been able to reduce the number of telephone lines to our office from 5 to 4 and negotiated a new phone usage contract which reduced bills by £1,500, representing 50% of our previous cost.

In 2011/12 we have reduced the number of Board meetings from 5 to 4, reducing costs by approximately £1,500.

We have followed practice across the Public Sector and held salary rates at their 2010/11 levels, realising a saving relative to inflation of £13,900 in 2011/12.

We reduced the mileage rate payable to Employees, Members, and Advisors on HITRANS business from July 2011 by 9% during a period of increasing transport costs.

HITRANS is a member of Scotland Excel and gains from the resultant efficiencies that joint purchasing of supplies across the public sector in Scotland brings to our partnership.

Legal, Financial and HR Services

HITRANS has service level agreements covering Legal, HR, and Financial services with two of our member Councils with de minimis costs unchanged since 2008/09. 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 2011/12 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 2011/12 was £20,500.

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.

HITRANS continues to use the arrangement with Tactran and SEStran through which we use a common contract between SEStran and MVA to access accession 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.

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 Highland Council have used the outputs from the Audits as a basis for their Active Travel Highland project which has attracted ERDF support, as well as HITRANS funding, as part of the funding package.

Partnership Working

European Projects

HITRANS was involved in the delivery of three European Projects during 2011/12 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 through this 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. The Interreg funding accessed through this project, some 790,000Euros, has added significant value to improvements to the transport links serving our key transport hubs across the region.

In the Northern Periphery Region of the EU, HITRANS has continued to work 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 has continued to work 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.

HITRANS has during 2011/12 become members of Scotland Europa in an effort to access further opportunities to work with partners across the European Union to the benefit of the Highlands and Islands. We have entered into a joint membership with Tactran and SEStran significantly reducing the cost of membership which we would have otherwise incurred.

Framework Contract

HITRANS along with our 5 member Councils are now using the joint Consultancy Services Framework contract overseen by Argyll and Bute Council on behalf of all partners. This has improved the efficiency and reduced the cost both to ourselves and service suppliers in procuring contracts that fall within the terms of the Framework.

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 2011/12 HITRANS has created, updated and monitored its associated Risk Register identifying the key risks, associated controls and actions needed to minimise the impact of risk on the activities of the Partnership.

Equalities

In undertaking all of our activities HITRANS has fully considered equalities issues as required through our statutory body status as defined in the Race, Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality legislation. We have set up a system and are ready to take feedback on transport related equality issues from our Member Councils and Advisory Groups as has been agreed as the most appropriate means of capturing these issues. In addition promote the discussion of any issues at each of our regular Permanent Advisors Meetings, and ensure that the equality impacts of any proposals and actions by the Partnership as reflected in Board Reports are brought to the attention of the Board when they meet.