

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010

Sustainable Economic Growth Statement

HITRANS 2011/12

1. Introduction

- I. Section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year each listed public body must publish a statement of the steps it has taken during the financial year to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions.
11. HITRANS, as a statutory Regional Transport Partnership, is a listed body within the Act. This statement is intended to fulfil the requirement of the Act in relation to Sustainable Economic Growth. This statement should be read in conjunction with the statement on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy and the financial information provided on the HITRANS website that are also required by the Act.

2. Government purpose and performance framework

11. The Government in 2011 updated its Economic Strategy as originally published in November 2007. This sets out the Government's clear priority to accelerate economic recovery, with a range of measures to tackle unemployment and promote employability. The Strategy focusses action on six Strategic priorities which will drive sustainable economic growth and develop a more resilient and adaptable economy. The priorities are supportive business environment, transition to a low carbon economy, leaning skills and wellbeing, infrastructure development and place, effective Government, and Equality. Transport is recognised within the Strategy as one of the key enablers for enhancing productivity and delivering faster, more sustainable, economic growth.
12. A Purpose Framework has now been developed as part of the National Performance Framework and between them they provide a clear focus and direction for the whole of the public sector in Scotland. All public bodies are expected to align their activity in support of the Purpose, Purpose Targets and the National Outcomes set out in the Framework, and HITRANS Transport Strategy is linked through our monitoring framework with delivery of the Government's priorities.

3. Sustainable Economic Growth

11. HITRANS primary function is to produce and implement its Regional Transport Strategy. The Strategy was approved in 2008 and the monitoring framework put in place to identify our success in working with partners towards achieving its Objectives. The vision for transport is to enhance the region's viability, enhancing the region's place and competitiveness, and thereby attracting and retaining people in the region and making the Highlands and Islands a more attractive place in which to live, to work and conduct business, and to visit.
12. Transport has long been recognised as a significant contributor to sustainable economic growth. The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy was developed in conjunction with our five Member Councils.

III. The principal ethos in setting and determining the Regional Transport Strategy has therefore been to encourage and permit sustainable economic growth.

4. The Partnership Approach to sustainable economic growth through delivery of our RTS.

HITRANS is committed to working with all sectors and interests within transport in adding value to the transport services delivered across the region.

The partnership has identified eight areas in which it would aim to work towards improving service provision as follows

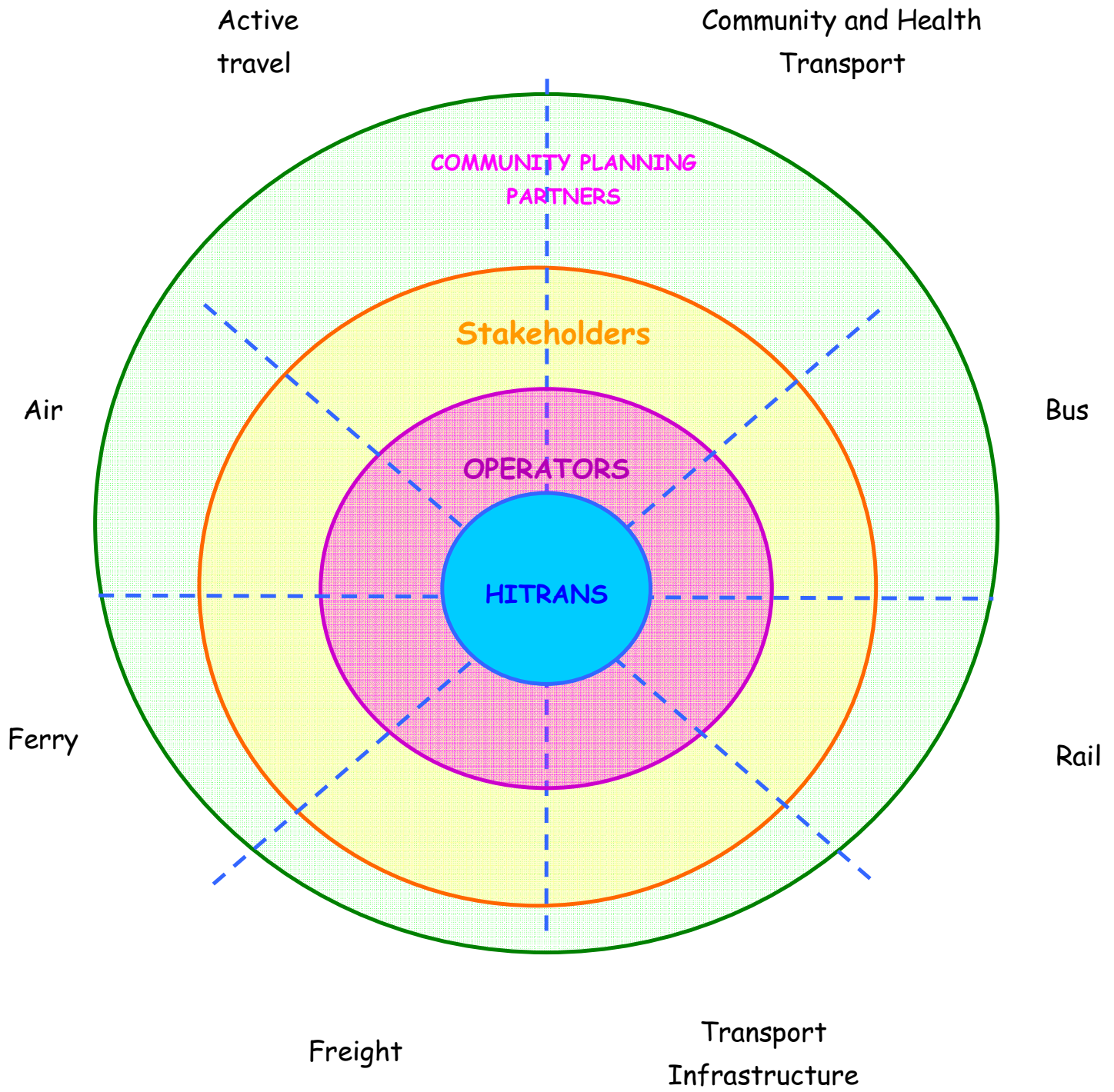
Area	Description
Active travel	Walking, cycling
Community and health transport	Third sector transport, social and health transport, car sharing schemes
Bus	Supported and commercial bus services, and taxis
Rail	Passenger and freight rail services
Transport Infrastructure	Roads (both trunk and local), Rail Infrastructure, Airports, Ports, Harbours, and Ferries
Freight	Cross modal, road, rail, ferry, air and sea
Ferry	Supported and commercial ferry services, national and local
Air	Supported and commercial air passenger services, including charter and freight

In each area HITRANS seeks active participation from the 5 constituent Councils, our Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders, Operators, Permanent Advisors and the Board. HITRANS encourages its Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders and Operators to participate in policy development and delivery options appraisal. Operators in particular are encouraged to interact not only within their individual area of expertise but across the 8 areas and are given the opportunity individually to discuss issues with Board Members. This allows HITRANS the greatest opportunity to learn from their knowledge and experience and maximising our effectiveness in delivering sustainable economic growth.

HITRANS wishes to ensure maximum effective involvement of all groups and has devised, in each service area, mechanisms and structures that ensure that each group's views are heard and their input valued in ensuring the Partnership delivers improved transport services across the region. HITRANS has formed and continues to develop advisory and consultative groups both within and between linked transport areas, to promote improved integration across the highlands and islands.

Regular meetings of these groups have been arranged to obtain valuable input and provide information on developments and proposals.

The chart below diagrammatically reflects the approach HITRANS is taking to achieve this aim.



4. What has been achieved in 2011/12

- 1 During 2011/12 HITRANS has worked with Government in developing and inputting into the Draft Ferries Plan and co-ordinated a response from our island and peninsular communities to the consultation thereon.
- 2 HITRANS has worked with Government and Network Rail to ensure that the Rail Utilisation Strategy takes into account the needs of the Highlands in developing our railway.
- 3 HITRANS with the other RTPs raised issues the Scottish and UK Governments on the implications for the sustainable economic growth of the Highlands and Islands of the UK Government's High Speed and East Coast rail service proposals.
- 4 HITRANS has responded in detail with supporting evidence on the Government's Rail Franchise 2014 consultation.
- 5 Working with other peripheral regions HITRANS has been inputting into the scoping of the developing UK Aviation Framework to ensure that the policies thus produced have a positive rather than negative impact on the sustainability of our regions of current and future UK aviation policy.
- 6 HITRANS has been working with the Scottish Government on developing proposals for improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness and the Highland Main Line Railways.
- 7 In partnership with other European regional partnerships we have been working on the following projects in 2011/12 that are focussed on improving the economic sustainability of the regions involved.
 - The Transtourism Project is developing, through the Interreg 4C Northern Periphery Programme, a web based interactive travel tool which will encourage visitors to come to the Highlands and Islands using public transport to add value to their stay.
 - The START Project, through the Interreg 4C Atlantic Arc Programme, has facilitated improvements to access to and from our major transport hubs across the region.
 - Working with The Highland Council the Active Travel Highland Project supported by the HIPP ERDF Programme is improving infrastructure to attract greater use of active travel modes within key settlements. This project uses the output from our Active Travel Audits as core data in identifying and prioritising need.
- 8 HITRANS has part funded the initial development of the new daily air service between Inverness and Amsterdam proving business with much needed access to an international air hub, European visitors to the region with direct access to the region, and adding to the attractiveness of the Highlands and Islands for inward investment.
- 9 Working with Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd we commissioned a study into the viability of developing air freight services within the region aiming to identify opportunities to add value to produce from the region in terms of reducing delivery times to market, and to improve delivery times into the region for components used in manufacturing.
- 10 To input effectively on behalf of the Highlands and Islands into the developing UK aviation framework we have been working with Nestrans in gather evidence to support the case for the north of Scotland to have adequate levels of access to the London hub airports, in particular Heathrow, to allow this part of Scotland, critical to the future of the UK economy, to maximise its economic potential.
- 11 In working to improve the reliability of road based transport, critical to business development, within the area, we have funded the installation of live eye cameras on a

number of regional routes not currently covered by the Traffic Scotland network, particularly to improve knowledge of winter conditions for all road users.

- 12 Working with the private sector we have supported the significant enhancement of the Campbeltown Glasgow coach service providing major improvements to the most remote UK mainland community, increasing its attractiveness as a centre for investment.
- 13 To support development in the renewable energy sector we carried out an internal transport infrastructure study of the Caithness area to ensure there are no significant constraints therein which would mitigate against marine energy development in the Pentland Firth.
- 14 Working with Scottish Government, The Highland Council and Network Rail we have further developed the design for the reopening of Conon Bridge station to increase the opportunity for sustainable commuting into Inverness.
- 15 HITRANS has input into the Scottish Government's Draft Ferries Plan and Rail Franchise 2014 consultations representing the views of key stakeholders across the region on the need for improvement in services on both these critical modes of transport. In addition we carried out a number of pieces of research on options for rail service improvements both within and to and from the region to support Transport Scotland's options development and through this the attractiveness of the region as a place to live, work and set up businesses.

