



Minute of Meeting held in the
Town House, Inverness, on Friday
8 February 2013 at 9.00am.

PRESENT Cllr John Semple (Chair), Argyll and Bute Council Member
Cllr Fiona Murdoch (Vice-Chair), Moray Council Member
Cllr John Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
Cllr James Stockan, Orkney Council Member
Cllr Bet McAllister, The Highland Council Substitute Member
Mr Wilson Metcalfe, Non-Councillor Member
Prof David Gray, Non-Councillor Member
Mr Okain Maclennan, Non-Councillor Member

IN ATTENDANCE Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mr James MacKessack Leitch, HITRANS
Mrs Katy Cunningham, HITRANS
Mrs Chris Kendall, HITRANS
Mr Sam MacNaughton, The Highland Council
Mrs Moya Ingram, Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI
Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE
Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland
Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
Mrs Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland

Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI

APOLOGIES Cllr Graham Phillips, The Highland Council Member
Mr Gareth Williams, SCDI
Mr Peter Findlay, HITCOG
Mr Gordon Holland, Moray Council
Mr Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 5 October 2012 1 The Minute of Meeting of 5 October 2012 was **approved** subject to the following amendment:

At Item 13, paragraph 2, delete “£23k” and insert “€23k”.

Matters Arising 2 The Partnership Director confirmed that the response to the consultation on the Department for Transport’s UK Aviation Policy Framework had been circulated to all Members for comment and approval prior to submission. The Partnership Director confirmed that the April Meeting of HITRANS would be held in Orkney on 25 and 26 April 2013.

It was agreed to note the updates.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012 3 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS Revenue Monitoring position for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012. The Report indicated that revenue expenditure was in line with management expectations and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered at the end of the financial year. The Appendix to the Report provided a summary of the financial position.

It was agreed to note the revenue outturn position for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012.

Revenue Budget proposal 2013/14 4 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the proposed revenue budget for 2013/14. The draft budget detailed HITRANS running costs, the Research and Strategy Development Programme together with the income from Council's and Scottish Government. The Report indicated that partner contributions were based on a 50/50 voting weight/ population share and, as the Scottish Government's Core Grant had remained at the previous level, it was not proposed to increase partner contributions. This would allow the Partnership to continue to achieve the Scottish Government's annual efficiency target for 2013/14.

It was agreed to:

(1) approve the Revenue Budget proposal 2013/14; and

(2) note that a Report would be submitted to the August 2013 Meeting detailing the revenue and capital funding which HITRANS had delivered for the Highlands and Islands area since the inception of the statutory RTP.

Statement on Internal Control 2011/12 & Audit Matters Arising 5 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing an assessment of adequacy, reliability and effectiveness of the Partnership system for internal control and provided information for the Partnerships Governance Assurance Statement which was contained within the Statement of Internal Control. The Report stated that the Internal Audit Assessment of the Partnership's governance arrangements concluded that key systems operated in a sound manner and that there had been no fundamental breakdown in control resulting in material discrepancy. The Report detailed the Action Plan which had been agreed with Internal Audit.

The Partnership Director thanked the Internal Auditors for their positive approach in assisting HITRANS with achieving the Action Plan.

Board Members are asked to note the content of the Statement of Internal Control and the audit opinion provided.

Annual Report on 2011/12 Audit 6 The Chairman welcomed Mrs Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland to the Meeting. Mrs Bruce spoke in relation to Audit Scotland's Annual Report on the 2011/12 Audit. The Report stated that Audit Scotland had given an unqualified opinion that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the Partnership as at 31 March 2012 and of the income and expenditure for the year then ended. Mrs Bruce commented on the financial position, governance, accountability and Best Value and performance of the Partnership. Mrs Bruce thanked the Partnership Treasurer and HITRANS staff for their assistance in completing the audit.

It was agreed to note the Report.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy/
Development 7 The Partnership Director submitted a Report providing a progress update on the
Programme 2012/13 2012/13 Research and Strategy Development Programme. The Report sought approval of the amendments to the programme to reflect changes in priorities and funding opportunities that had been identified since the 2012/13 Business Plan had been approved. The Report provided a summary of key programme changes which reflected a number of new opportunities and a reduction in budget requirement for a number of Projects.

It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2012/13 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report

Research, 8 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the Research, Development
Development and 2013/14 The Report detailed a provisional Programme and confirmed that there would be scope for further projects to be included and budget allocations to be adjusted accordingly. The Programme would be finalised within the 2013/14 Business Plan, a draft version of which would be considered at the next Meeting.

It was agreed to:

(1) approve the budgetary allocation of £309,250 for Research, Development and Delivery in 2013/14

(2) to invite Members to suggest additional items or changes to the items proposed in the table by 2 April 2012

(3) Consider how HITRANS funding could best add value to Local Authority input in support of national transport project development to help make the strongest case for early action on our strategic networks.

Sleeper Economic 9 Mr Frank Roach provided a verbal update in relation to a proposed study to analyse the
Analysis 2013/14 economic impact of proposals from Network Rail with regard to sleeper maintenance. Mr Roach detailed the scope of the study and indicated that the data requirements had been identified but the relevant data was yet to be received.

It was agreed to note the Report and that Mr Roach would keep Members informed of progress.

Regional Air 10 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to proposals to undertake a
Services 2013/14 study to examine the feasibility of enhancing air services that were currently provided through the PSO instrument by Transport Scotland, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Argyll and Bute Councils. The work was designed to investigate the opportunities that could be realised by the Scottish Government's commitment to procure two new twin otter aircraft for PSO services and consider how individual service enhancements could best be delivered.

It was agreed to:

(1) note the Report; and

(2) authorise the Chair to make representations to the Transport Minister to ensure that Transport Scotland were committed to the study outcomes

Oban Rail Service 11 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing work undertaken by HITRANS to make a
Enhancements 2013/14 case for enhancements to rail services between Oban and Glasgow on the West Highland line. The Report stated that HITRANS had commissioned consultants to investigate timetable options for enhanced Oban line services and the options to achieve 4, 5 and 6 train services per day were explored.

It was agreed to:

(1) note the Report; and

(2) approve the allocation of £15,000 in the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme to support West Highland Line service enhancement.

Active Audits Report Travel Progress 12 The Chairman welcomed Mr Neil MacRae and Mr James MacKessack-Leitch to their first meetings of the Partnership. Mr MacRae and Mr MacKessack-Leitch provided an update on the Active Travel Audit Programme 2012/13. The Report stated that Active Travel Audits had been completed for 17 key regional settlements within the HITRANS area and identified areas of potential interventions where there were opportunities to achieve modal shift or where there was the greatest need to improve infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. They have also established a core network for pedestrians and cyclists that provides direct, convenient, safe, attractive and coherent links between journey origins and journey attractions. The Report stated that the Active Travel Audits had provided an invaluable evidence basis for securing significant amounts of external funding.

It was agreed to note the Report and to support the proposed allocation of £40K from the HITRANS Research and Development Programme.

Network Strategic Plan Rail's Business Plan 13 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing Network Rail's proposed spending plans for 2014-19 and how these plans would impact on the HITRANS area. The Report detailed Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan and highlighted the proposed enhancements to rail infrastructure within the HITRANS area.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Scottish Services: Plan (2013 - 2022) Ferry Ferries 14 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the Scottish Government's Ferries Plan which represented the final output from the Scottish Government's Ferry Review which had commenced in 2008. The Report summarised the key elements within the Plan and identified areas where members would wish to seek further dialogue with Transport Scotland. The Report indicated that there was a great deal of positive action proposed within the Ferries Plan and, subject to the availability of adequate finance, there should be real improvement to the connectivity of islands and peninsular communities within the HITRANS area. The Report stated that there were a number of areas where clarification was required as to what the principles set out in the Plan would mean in terms of practical delivery and HITRANS would aim to work proactively and positively with the Scottish Government, Ferry Operators, Local Authorities and other stakeholders to support the development of the proposals set out in the Scottish Ferries Plan.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) approve the proposal to invite a representative of the Ferries Division within Transport Scotland to attend the next HITRANS Partnership meeting to discuss the implications of the Scottish Ferries Plan;**
- (3) authorise the Chair and Partnership Director to make representations to the Scottish Government in relation to change that was made to the Charing of the Working Group investigating Ferry Fares for commercial vehicles mid way through the Working Group's term.**
- (4) note that Transport Scotland would be invited to attend the Ferry Users Groups to be held during March 2013; and**
- (5) Mr Ranald Robertson would engage with Orkney Islands Council to investigate the options for establishing an Orkney Ferry Users Group.**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

Food Port Project – Lifting the Spirit Project Up-date 15 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on progress with the promotion of a trial project to move whisky products by rail between Moray and the Central Belt through the Food Port Project which had been developed as part of the North Sea Region INTERREG IV Programme. The Report stated that HITRANS had been granted an additional €50k support, matched by HITRANS funds which would give a longer time frame to run trials and a total budget of €297k. The Report further stated that the tenders for preferred bidder status for a Rail Freight Operator would be progressed and it was proposed to engage a part-time Project Manager to oversee the project and liaise with the Logistics Manager and Rail Freight Operator.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the budget increase and the appointment of a part-time temporary Project Manager.**

CONSULTATION

Cycling Action Plan for Scotland – Refresh Consultation Response 16

Mr Neil MacRae submitted a Report seeking approval of a proposed response to the Scottish Government Consultation and the refresh of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. The Report stated that the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland had been launched by the Scottish Government in 2010 to provide a framework for delivering the vision that “by 2020, 10% of all journeys taken in Scotland would be by bike”. The Report further stated that currently just over 1% of all trips in Scotland were made by bicycle despite a third being for journeys less than two miles. The figure varied significantly across the country but some of the highest levels of cycling were to be found in settlements within the HITRANS area including Inverness, Elgin and Nairn. The Report and proposed consultation response stated that with the support of its partner Local Authorities and increased ring-fenced funding, there is an opportunity for HITRANS to play a lead role in increasing levels of cycling by implementing the Active Travel Audit Action Plans and working with other public bodies

It was agreed:

- (1) that Members would submit comments on the draft response to Mr Neil MacRae by 13 February 2013; and
- (2) that the Partnership Director, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to submit a HITRANS response to the Scottish Government’s consultation of the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland as detailed in the Appendix to the Report and taking account of the comments from Members.

PARTNERSHIP

Information Management Policy 17

The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing a draft Information Management Policy for the Partnership. The lack of a formal Information Management Policy had been identified as a risk by Internal Audit and the Policy would ensure that staff were aware of their responsibilities in relation to the retention, sharing and construction of business information and would assist in fulfilling HITRANS obligations in relation to Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation. The Report indicated that the Policy was in line with the guidance provided by Internal Audit.

It was agreed to approve the adoption of the HITRANS Information Management Policy detailed in the Appendix to the Report in accordance with the recommendations of the Internal Audit Report 2011/12.