

Minute of Meeting held in the
Council Chambers, Orkney
Islands Council, Kirkwall, on
Friday 26 April 2013 at 9.00am.

PRESENT

Cllr Fiona Murdoch (Vice-Chair), Moray Council Member
Cllr Graham Phillips, The Highland Council Member
Cllr John Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
Cllr James Stockan, Orkney Council 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 Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Mr Sam MacNaughton, The Highland Council
Mr Gordon Holland, Moray Council
Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE
Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
Mr Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council
Mrs Judith Ainsley, Transport Scotland

APOLOGIES

Cllr John Semple (Chair), Argyll and Bute Council Member
Mr Robert Pollock, Argyll and Bute
Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Peter Findlay, HITCOG
Mrs Katy Cunningham, HITRANS
Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI
Mr Gareth Williams, SCDI
Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland
Mrs Maggie Bruce, Audit Scotland

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting
of 8 February
2013 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2013 was approved . |
| Matters Arising | 2 | The Partnership Director provided an update on actions arising from the previous Minute. The Director confirmed that the interviews for the part time temporary Project Manager post to oversee HITRANS involvement in the EU North Sea Area Food Port Project would take place during week commencing 29 April 2013. The Director confirmed that the HITRANS response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Cycling Action Plan had been submitted and was available to download via the HITRANS website. |

It was agreed to note the updates.

- (1) **to note the presentation; and**
- (2) **that the Report on the removal of RET for Commercial Vehicles would be considered at the next round of FUG'S**

Scottish Ferries
Plan

- 3 The Chair welcomed Mrs Judith Ainsley, Transport Scotland who gave a presentation on the Scottish Ferries Plan 2013-22. Mrs Ainsley confirmed that the Report on the impact of the removal of RET from commercial vehicles would be available shortly. Members were afforded the opportunity of asking questions of Mrs Ainsley.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the presentation; and**
- (2) that the Report on the removal of RET for Commercial Vehicles would be considered at the next round of FUG'S**

FINANCE

- Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2012 to 28 February 2013
- 4 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2012 – 28 February 2013. The Report indicated that revenue expenditure was in line with management expectations and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered by the end of the financial year. A summary of the financial position was detailed in the appendix to the Report.

It was agreed to note the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2012-28 February 2013.

- Annual Audit Plan 2012/13
- 5 The Partnership Treasurer provided an update on the Annual Audit Plan 2012/13. The audit would focus on the identification and assessment of the key challenges and risks facing HITRANS when seeking to achieve its business objectives.

It was agreed to note the Annual Audit Plan 2012/13.

PARTNERSHIP

- Business Plan for 2013-14
- 6 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing HITRANS Business Plan for 2013/14. The Report indicated that the Business Plan detailed how HITRANS would support delivery of the regional transport strategy in partnership with constituent local authorities and stakeholders in order to improve transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Report stated that the business plan included a two year research and strategy development programme in response to previous discussions at the Partnership Board meeting where it was felt this would provide give greater resilience to our budgeting and improve governance particularly towards the end of the financial year.

It was agreed to:

- (1) approve the Business Plan for Financial Year 2013/14 with the inclusion of the comments expressed by Members; and**
- (2) authorise the Partnership Director to finalise the Business Plan 2013/14 taking account of the comments from Members**

- Green Transport Strategy
- 7 Professor David Gray submitted a Report detailing proposals to adopt a strategic approach towards sustainable transport within the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan in order to reconcile the economic development objectives with the Plan with managing energy use and emissions.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report;**
- (2) that Officers should embed the interrelationship between CO2 emission mitigation; green vehicles and renewables; and fuel price resilience within the RTS Delivery Plan Refresh;**
- (3) that Members and Advisors should consider the benefits of developing a headline green transport target within the RTS Delivery Plan Refresh; and**
- (4) that Members are asked to consider including 'high level' transport energy / emissions audit for the region within the Business Plan.**

Anti-Bribery and Anti-Fraud Policies and Procedures 8 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing a proposed anti-bribery policy, anti-bribery procedures and anti-bribery corruption policies. The Report stated that there is a requirement for public sector bodies to have rigorous policies covering financial management control and personnel and there was a requirement for HITRANS to establish new policies and procedures to guide the work of the partnership in managing the risk of bribery, fraud and corruption. The Report detailed the policies and procedures.

It was agreed to :

- (1) approve the Anti-Bribery Policy included as Appendix A to the Report;**
- (2) approve the Anti-Bribery Procedure included as Appendix B to the Report; and**
- (3) approve the Anti-Fraud Policy included as Appendix C to the Report.**

Equalities 9 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to equalities. The Report stated that HITRANS received advice on employee recruitment, employee policies and conditions from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar who have a requirement to comply with the requirements of the Equalities Act and by complying with this advice HITRANS already complied with the objectives of the legislation. The Report stated there was a requirement to be explicit on how this would be achieved and to demonstrate how all relevant issues had been fully considered. The Report further stated that the implementation of Equalities Policies was an ongoing process but there was a requirement to produce a mainstream Report and Equalities Outcome Report.

It was agreed to note the contents of the Report and approve the draft “Mainstreaming of Equality Duty” and the “Equality Outcomes” Reports as a basis for publication by 30th April 2013.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research Development Budget Update 2012/13 10 The Partnership Director submitted a Report providing an update on progress with delivery of the Research and Strategy Development Program 2012/13. The Report sought approval of 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 the reduction in the 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

Upsticks – Timber Transport Survey 11 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on the study to determine the origin and destination of raw timber within the Highlands area which would provide a clear view of the use of the public road network and the deployment of the timber transport fleet.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Skye Air Service Feasibility Study 12 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing the executive summary and key findings in relation to the Skye Air Service Feasibility Study. The Study highlighted that commencing scheduled air services from Skye would provide significant benefits to the island and adjacent region. The Report outlined the proposed steps required to establish the case for reintroducing scheduled flights to Ashaig Airport, Skye.

It was agreed to note the findings of the Skye Air Services Feasibility Study as outlined in the Executive Summary and authorise that the Partnership Director work in conjunction with The Highland Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to progress the actions identified in the ‘Recommended Next Steps’ summarised in the Report.

Regional Services Development Study Air 13 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report indicating that consultants have been appointed to undertake the Regional Air Service Development Study. The Report stated that the Study would consider any opportunities to strengthen existing timetables and how individual service enhancements could best be delivered. The Study would take account of the Scottish Government's commitment to fund the procurement of two new Twin Otter aircraft in order to identify potential opportunities to optimise the use of these assets whilst sustaining or enhancing the provision of air services within the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Oban 6 14 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing improvements to the Oban rail frequency. The Report stated that the Minister of Transport had announced the go-ahead for Oban 6 (six trains per day to and from Oban) which would see the doubling of services on the Oban line from May 2014. The Report stated that a further option, termed Oban 6.2, was being explored which would seek to convey school pupils from Dalmally through to Connel and on to Oban High School each morning and to provide an after school return terminating at Dalmally.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) to approve the allocation of £15,000 within the Network Rail Control Period 5 budget line to support the delivery of Oban 6.2.**

Rural Transport Solutions 15 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing proposals to identify innovative solutions for the provision of public transport in rural areas and on routes where long distance coach services were failing to meet the needs of local users. The Report stated that it was proposed to identify a suitable study or pilot that would help provide a better understanding of specific rural transport issues with a view to developing innovative solutions that may be applied in various contexts within partner Local Authority areas.

It was agreed to support the proposed allocation of the £10K from the HITRANS Research and Development Budget and that a further update would be submitted to a future Meeting.

Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvement /Dalcross Station 16 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on the upgrade plans for the Aberdeen-Inverness rail route. The Report stated that, as station promoters, HITRANS was required to refresh the planning permission business case in relation to the development of the Dalcross Rail Station project.

It was agreed:

- (1) approve the actions contained in the Report; and**
- (2) to approve the allocation of £15,000 within the Network Rail Control Period 5 budget line to support the work to develop the Dalcross Station project.**

HITRANS/SUSTRANS Cycling Officer 17 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing proposals for a partnership project with SUSTRANS Scotland that would involve the recruitment of a Senior Project Officer with responsibility for promoting and developing cycling across the HITRANS area. The post holder would be expected to progress the plan for a cohesive active travel network, detailed multi-year work plan development for capital projects, overall project delivery, time and budget planning and reporting. The Report further indicated that the post-holder would be expected to work closely with SUSTRANS to co-ordinate work in the delivery of the National Cycle Network route between Inverness and Campbeltown, which had recently received capital funding from the Scottish Government.

It was agreed to approve the appointment of a Senior Project Officer (initial two year contract) as part of a partnership initiative with Sustrans Scotland subject to the agreement of the job specification, line management and funding arrangements by the Partnership Director.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

Food Port Project – Lifting the Spirit Project Up-date 18 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on the Lifting the Spirit Project. The Project was being developed within the wider Food Port INTERREG IVB ERDF Project which sought to develop the North Sea Region on the best food cluster and hub in Europe for food products delivered via efficient and sustainable transport systems. The Lifting the Spirit Project seeks to find trial movements of bulk spirit by rail and HITRANS is working with the Scotch Whisky Association to devise a plan for the efficient transfer of 16-20 containers of bulk spirit to move 2-3 times per week from Elgin to Central Scotland.

It was agreed to note the Report.

TransTourism Giant Puffin – JourneyGenie Up-date 19 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS itinerary and journey planner. The project aimed to assist visitors to discover places they could visit by public transport and then help them to plan their specific journeys. The Report stated that the system would be interactive, allowing the user to plan trips around specific landmarks and destinations and register to be informed should their journey change prior to their planned travel dates. The Report further stated that the website was being finalised and would be available on smart phones and tablet devices and a maintenance agreement would be contractualised to ensure issues were dealt with promptly.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

Airports Commission 20 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing the timetable for submissions to the Airport Commission which was seeking to identify and evaluate how any need for additional airport capacity could be met in the short, medium and long term to allow the UK to remain a global aviation hub. The Report stated that the Commission would determine how the UK Government address the issue of future airport capacity in the South East of England. The important outcome for HITRANS was that the Highlands and Islands need for access to main UK hub airports in particular and London Airports generally was protected and enhanced in whatever final solutions the commission recommended.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the timetable for evidence to be submitted to the Airports Commission;**
- (2) agree that HITRANS should submit evidence to the Airports Commission; and**
- (3) agree that HITRANS work with Partners in other Regions to develop the case making on a North of Scotland; Scotland; and Peripheral Regions level for protected access to London for hub connectivity.**