

Minute of Meeting held in
Hamersay House, Lochmaddy,
North Uist on Friday 4 April 2014
at 9.00am.

PRESENT	Cllr James Stockan (Chair), Orkney Council Member Cllr Fiona Murdoch (Vice-Chair), Moray Council Member Cllr John Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member Cllr Graham Phillips, The Highland Council Member Prof David Gray, Non-Councillor Member Mr Wilson Metcalfe, 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 Gordon Holland, Moray Council Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE Mrs Moya Ingram, Argyll and Bute Council Mr Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mr David McKechnie, The Highland Council Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary Ms Fiona McNally, HITRANS
APOLOGIES	Cllr Duncan Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council Member Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer Mrs Katy Cunningham, HITRANS

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 7 February 2014	1	The Minute of Meeting of 7 February was approved .
Matters Arising	2	

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2013 to 28 February 2014	3	The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2013 – 28 February 2014. The Report stated that the budget included the 2013/14 portion of the Bus Investment Grant for the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project. Income and expenditure were both in line with the budget outturn target and officers were not aware of any anomalies that would distort the overall financial position.
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It was agreed to approve the Revenue Monitoring Report 1 April 2013 – 28 February 2014.

Annual Audit 4
Plan 2013/14

Mr Ranald Robertson presented an update on the Annual Audit Plan 2013/14. The Report stated that 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:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Partnership Director to make representations to Audit Scotland in relation to the assessment of the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy as a risk area when it is the partnership's view that this is a plan not a programme and that the document itself recognises that its delivery will rely upon programmes funded and managed by other organisations which are not in HITRANS control.**
- (3) Authorise the Partnership Director to raise the issue of Audit Scotland not attending Board Meetings despite their costs being presented as inclusive of travel.**

PARTNERSHIP

Business Plan 5
for 2014-15

Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report which sought approval of the HITRANS Business Plan for 2014/15. The Business Plan sets out how HITRANS will support the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) during 2014/15, working with constituent local authorities and stakeholders, with a view to improving transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Plan defined how HITRANS would promote and implement the RTS in order to improve the delivery of transport services across the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to approve the Business Plan for 2014/15, incorporating a number of textual changes gathered from the discussion with Members.

Programme of 6
Meetings

Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Programme of Meetings for 2014. In order to avoid the Purdah period for the Referendum a new date of 25 and 26 September was proposed for the third meeting of the year and, as this would mean two Partnership meetings in quick succession, it was proposed to move the date of the final meeting to 27 and 28 November. Consideration would be given to adding an additional private meeting of the Partnership Board facilitated by telephone or video conferencing in June / July 2014 to relieve the issue of the long period between the April and September meetings. This meeting would allow the Board to consider the unaudited accounts for 2013/14.

It was agreed:

- (1) that the HITRANS Partnership and Advisors meet in 2014 on the dates detailed in the Report; and**
- (2) to note that additional meetings may be called if circumstances required the Board to meet.**

Model Code of Conduct 7 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the HITRANS Code of Conduct for Members of the Partnership Board. The Report stated that the Scottish Parliament had approved a new Model Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies in December 2013 and the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life had produced a sectoral specific version of the new Model Code of Conduct for Regional Transport Partnerships. The Model Code now highlighted the need for Board Members to have an awareness of Board policies in relation to a number of areas e.g. appointments, equality, diversity, succession planning, bullying and harassment in the workplace and the Bribery Act 2010. The Code introduced a new requirement for registration of gifts and hospitality over £50 and shares and securities which may be significant to or relevant to the work of the body.

It was agreed to approve the revised HITRANS Code of Conduct

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research Development Budget update 2013/14 8 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report detailing progress with delivering the Research and Strategy Development programme and seeking approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2013/14 Business Plan. The Report stated that the Programme included provision for the contingency of a late underspend emerging on any of the individual projects by allowing for a modest overspend of £21,032 on the budget of £450,000.

It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2013/14 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Dalcross Station Update 9 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report in relation to the proposed reopening of Dalcross Station. On Network Rail advice the original intention to seek planning permission for both platforms had been changed to a single platform. The Report stated that the second platform would be listed as an aspiration for 2019-2024 as it would require the approval of funding through Scottish Ministers' HLOS for Phase 2 improvements to the Aberdeen – Inverness route in Control Period 6 including the double track section at Dalcross.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Bus Investment Fund 10 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report on the £2.7million East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor project that had been successful in receiving a grant from the Bus Investment Fund. The Report stated that the project sought to develop a Quality Partnership between HITRANS, The Highland Council and Stagecoach North Scotland to improve local bus services in East Inverness through a series of information, infrastructure and service enhancements. The focus of the project in 2014/15 and 2015/16 would be to deploy strategic bus priority at up to 13 signalised junctions in the city. The intention was to achieve this predominantly through wireless communication between the real-time information system deployed on the city bus fleet and the traffic signals rather than through expensive on street infrastructure improvements. It was anticipated that the proposed solution adopted will also provide widespread WiFi access for passengers.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Chair to make representations to the Transport Minister and Transport Scotland highlighting the importance of maintaining the Bus Investment Fund.**

Highlands Integrated Transportation Provision Pilot Project 11 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Highland Integrated Transport project which had secured funding from the Scottish Government as one of two pilot integrated transport projects designed to explore new approaches to the provision and integration of health and social care transport. The scope of the project incorporated the key sectors of health and social care and, in addition, the requirement to support social inclusion and to consider aspects of home-to-school transport delivery in rural areas in developing an overall integrated transport service capable of meeting the project objectives.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Active Travel Update 12 Ms Fiona McNally submitted a Report providing an overview of current and upcoming projects, and their associated budget related to active travel. The Report stated that HITRANS had been awarded £100k per year for 2013/14 and 2014/15 from Sustrans to develop and enhance active travel projects within the area. Discussions between HITRANS and SUSTRANS had enabled the budget to be allocated for certain projects in addition to capital spending, including the creation of Active Travel Maps to link into the audits for the main towns within the area. The Report further stated that HITRANS would continue to work alongside Partners to provide added value to local projects where possible.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Public Transport Information 13 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report in relation to the proposal to create a new post with responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area. The Report stated that the provision and promotion of accurate timetable information underpinned the public transport network. However, it was an area that both operators and public bodies had found increasingly difficult to set aside sufficient staffing resources to meet overall expectations from customers and stakeholders. By combining existing resources allocated to the provision of public transport information there was an opportunity to create a single position with responsibility for this function across the whole HITRANS Region which would be designed to be cost and resource neutral to member local authorities.

It was agreed to approve in principle, the creation of a new two year post with the responsibility for the centralised co-ordination of public transport information provision across the HITRANS Region, subject to the approval of funding contributions from Partners.

Hydrogen Bus Project Feasibility 14 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Scotland wide Hydrogen Bus Project feasibility study being developed through the Scottish Cities Alliance in partnership with local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships. The Report stated that through the European Commission's Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCHJU), Scotland's seven cities had been invited to become members of the coalition that would participate in the study for the commercialisation of fuel cell buses in Europe. The purpose of the study was to bring forward 5 - 10 commercial scale hydrogen fuel cell bus business cases including concept engineering for a total of 500 - 1000 buses.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Ferry Online Booking Availability Study 15 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report on the findings of the 2013 Ferry Online Booking Availability Study, the resulting dialogue with key stakeholders on the issues it identified and proposing to undertake similar research in 2014. The Report stated that the research identified consistently high numbers of sailings in the peak season that were unavailable to book online often from several days or even weeks in advance and there was widespread concern that this may be discouraging potential journeys to the islands. Since the publication of the Report, HITRANS and its partners had positively engaged with CalMac, Transport Scotland and other stakeholders to address the various issues identified. The Report stated that CalMac had acknowledged that while operational issues often dictated how much space on any sailing could be made available to book online they were currently making a substantial investment in their booking systems in order to address the discrepancy between the online information available to the public and the actual availability on each sailing.

It was agreed to:

- (1) support a proposal to fund a study of a similar scale in 2014 to that undertaken in 2013 in order to help identify the trends in demand and to help engage with CalMac to improve the service available to potential customers booking their sailings online; and**
- (2) authorise the Chair to make representations to Transport Scotland and Calmac in relation to the concerns surrounding capacity issues on the Stornoway-Ullapool route, the undertaking of the trial on the Mallaig-Lochboisdale route during the winter rather than the summer and the number of technical breakdowns across the Calmac fleet.**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

REPUTE 16 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report on the INTERREG IVB Atlantic Area REPUTE Project. The Report stated that the Project would create an Atlantic Area framework for encouraging innovation in promoting the use of renewable energy in public transport and built on the work done in previous transport projects concerning energy, to support interoperability, intermodality and continuity of existing transport networks. The areas which HITRANS work was focussed on were Renewable Energy Powered Transport Information Signs and Personalised Travel Planning.

It was agreed to note the Report

SPARA 2020 17 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report detailing progress made in developing the SPARA 2020 INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme project that had secured funding from NPP's preparatory fund. The Project sought to address various challenges faced by peripheral and remote airports. The Report provided an update on the work undertaken to date and outlined the Project Work Plans.

It was agreed to note the Report.