

Report to Partnership Meeting 26 September 2014

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

A95 Route Action Study

Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the progress made on delivering a route action study in partnership with Moray Council / Moray Economic Partnership considering the opportunity for making strategic interventions along the route of the A95 between Keith and Aviemore.

Background

HITRANS has allocated budget to support the delivery of feasibility work to identify interventions on strategic routes in the region. The initial budget allocation has been for design / study work on the A95 Keith to Aviemore and Western Isles Spinal Route.

The Moray Economic Partnership has established a task to review transport conditions on the A95 and prepare a range of options for possible improvement of conditions. The route comprises the A95 trunk road and the communities directly served and accessed along the routes. It has been agreed to proceed by commissioning consultants Jacobs to prepare a STAG pre-appraisal Report which will identify the problems along the corridor, establish a set of transport planning objectives aimed to overcome these problems and develop a range of options for more detailed assessment and appraisal. Jacobs are the Moray Council transport planning framework consultants.

The task will involve partnership working between Moray Council, HITRANS, Highland Council and Transport Scotland.

Study Aims

As an outcome of the investigations the study will aim to ensure that all information gathered is both relevant and proportional to providing sufficient and reliable data for use in establishing an adequate understanding of existing transport conditions using the A95 trunk road as a whole or sections thereof.

Recommendations on taking forward transport proposals shall meet the transport planning objectives established as part of the study and shall be realistically implementable and shall provide value for money.

Throughout the duration of the task, achieve successful completion of the various deliverables identified within this brief within agreed timescales and within agreed budgets.

General Requirements

The Consultant is required to provide the services of suitably qualified and experienced staff and others to carry out the study in relation to the STAG pre-appraisal methodology with the aim of:-

- Analysing the existing transport conditions and needs of the corridor as a whole by bringing together the disparate work which has been undertaken so far on specific modes and discrete locations;
- Assessing and identifying current and future transport problems and opportunities;
- Establishing a set of transport planning objectives clearly linked to the identified transport problems and transport policies for this corridor;
- Generating and sifting from a wide range of options that have the propensity to deliver some or all of the transport planning objectives and complement the Government's core objectives of the environment, safety, economy, integration and accessibility and social inclusion.

Throughout the study it will be necessary to consult with a wide range of interested and affected stakeholders which shall include but may not be limited to local authorities, local communities, business interests, freight transport industry, and public service providers.

WORK PACKAGES

Development of the STAG Report

A report based on the methodology outline in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) up to the pre-appraisal phase shall be prepared and submitted to the Client within the agreed timescales. The various tasks required to complete such a report shall be as follows:-

Task 1

Collation and analysis of all existing transport studies and available information within the corridor scope to identify any gaps or shortcomings in available information. This will involve drawing together the information held by various organisations and authorities including the Scottish Government, HITRANS, Local Authorities and transport operators.

Task 2

Large new surveys are not envisaged for this high level assessment and any new information to be gathered shall be in proportion to the nature and requirements of the study. However, the Consultant shall be satisfied that the information required to fill any gaps shall permit a reasonably robust assessment of:-

- The general condition of the infrastructure and transport modes along the corridor;
- Current transport usage and needs on the corridor by all modes and the potential to accommodate growth within existing boundaries or constraints;
- Identification of current real and perceived transport problems on the corridor with an indication of the underlying causes;
- Transport planning objectives and policies which have already been established within the route scope including approved Development plans, monitoring updates and scoping for emergency plans and Local Transport Strategies. Cognisance will also need to be taken of the Regional Transport Strategies;
- Current commitments for improving transport provision along the route to provide a robust do-minimum and /or reference case

Task 3

The forward projection and assessment of transport demands for the corridor and the analysis of future potential problems and opportunities that this will create or generate. The timescale for future projection will be around 2030.

Task 4

The development and agreement with the Steering Group of a set of SMART transport planning objectives for the corridor.

Task 5

Having established and agreed the study specific transport planning objectives this task will require the generation and sifting of a wide range of options to identify those proposals that are likely to make a significant contribution towards achieving the established transport planning objectives and are likely to provide value for money and be consistent with the Government's five objectives for transport. The outcome of this task should result in an agreed list of potential options along this corridor.

Task 6

Consultation with interested and affected stakeholders will be essential at key stages as the study progresses in the identification of the problems, the preparation of the study specific transport planning objectives and the generation and sifting of options.

It is envisaged that at least one consultation forum/workshop event will be held with key stakeholders to assist with the development of the study. This consultation forum/workshop must be managed by an experienced facilitator and the Consultant must ensure that relevant organisations or individuals are invited and given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the study. The list of stakeholders to be invited shall be agreed with the Client.

A clear and concise report of each consultation form/workshop will be prepared and issued. The report will identify those present and the key issues discussed with a summary of the outcomes and findings.

Task 7 – Main Deliverable / Reporting

The preparation of a report will be the key deliverable from this task. The report shall be in the form of a STAG pre-appraisal report which shall clearly and succinctly identify the problems and opportunities identified, the study specific transport planning objectives established and how these are linked to the problems, opportunities and relevant local transport policies and strategies. The report shall also clearly identify the transport infrastructure options identified that are likely to make a significant contribution towards achieving the established transport planning objectives.

Budget

HITRANS awarded an initial budget of £20,000 for the development of this work to Moray Council in 2013/14. The 2014/15 Business Plan allowed a further £40,000 to support Regionally Significant Project Development and it is recommended to approve the award of £10,000 to support this project taking the total project budget to £30,000 across both 2013/14 and 2014/15. This allocation was already identified within the Business Plan and Members are asked to approve the final sign off of this workstream.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

- (i) Note the report.
- (ii) Approve the award of a further £10,000 in the 2014/15 Business Plan Research and Strategy Delivery Programme for the A95 Route Action Study.

Risk	impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	The study fits with HITRANS RTS in terms of supporting improvements to regionally significant transport corridors.

Policy	√	The report will have a positive policy impact and helps develop HITRANS commitment to partnership working through the community planning process.
Financial	√	The study costs have been identified within the 2014/15 Business Plan.
Equality	-	No Equality implications.

Report by:
Designation:
Date:

Ranald Robertson / Stephen Cooper
Partnership Director / Head of Direct Services (Moray Council)
5th September 2014