

## **Report to Partnership Advisors Members 10 April 2015**

### **Research and Development**

#### **Bus Investment Fund – East Inverness**

##### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the implementation of the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor project which was awarded grant funding from The Scottish Government through the Bus Investment Fund.

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##### **Background**

The East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor project was initially successful in securing £700,000 in grant funding from the Scottish Governments Bus Investment Fund that extends to March 2015/16.

Transport Scotland subsequently agreed to increase the grant award by a further £7,922 to match fund the development of a Statutory Quality Partnership for Inverness as part of the project. This work has subsequently been awarded to AECOM through the Highlands and Islands Consultancy Framework.

##### **Progress**

A report to HITRANS partnership meeting of September 2014 outlined the allocation of an initial spend of £403,465.65.

This included the installation of over 180 new bus stop flags and display cases which following the appointment of a public transport officer we will fill with information for the forthcoming timetable changes to the city network next month. Once this is completed the intention is to roll out NFC and QR codes at these stops and to then promote the Traveline Scotland app from which passengers with smart phones will be able to obtain real-time passenger information from any stop equipped with the NFC / QR code.

The focus for the project over the summer is to roll out bus priority at several of the key junctions in East Inverness following a successful pilot of the technology at two junctions on Millburn Road, including

- Barn Church Road / Tower Road
- Old Edinburgh/Balloan Road
- Old Edinburgh/Southside Road
- B9006 Caulfield Road
- Raigmore Hospital

This roll out will be assisted by Stagecoach's investment in new ticket machines across the Group which are equipped with Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) systems. This investment by Stagecoach will help to significantly reduce future maintenance costs for real-time information and should lead to significant increase in the percentage of vehicles tracking.

The project will also help support an upgrade to the Barn Church Road / Tower Road junction which currently has one of the highest accident rates in the Council area. The new design which is currently out to tender will ensure that delays to buses are reduced to a minimum.

Two further key elements of the project which are planned for the final year of the project are to install bespoke bus shelters and information displays at Falcon Square, Inverness and also pilot traffic light priority on the City's emergency vehicle fleet using the available Traffic Light priority and AVL systems deployed on the local bus fleet.

### **Statutory Quality Partnership**

As part of this project, HITRANS, in partnership with The Highland Council and Stagecoach North Scotland, are progressing plans to introduce a Statutory Quality Partnership (sQP) for bus service delivery in Inverness. Project partners met last week and the detail of a draft sQP which can then be consulted on is currently being developed by consultants AECOM.

Delivery of an sQP which will be dependent on strong partnership working and delivery of an agreed set of standards from both the bus operator and transport authorities. Potential bus operator obligations which could be considered in a sQP are presented below alongside the transport authority standards which Local Authority and Regional Transport Partnership will need to consider.

#### **Potential Bus Operator Obligations**

Amongst the standards which can be considered within a sQP are the following:

- Vehicle requirements (e.g. minimum vehicle age, accessibility, emission standards, information and cleanliness standards);
- Service reliability (e.g. minimum frequencies, service stability, and punctuality standards);
- Staff (e.g. training and qualifications, customer care); and
- Customer service package (e.g. customer satisfaction feedback)

The level of fares, timetables and frequencies (over and above any agreed minimum frequencies) and the routes served cannot be included in a sQP and will remain wholly controlled by the operators.

#### **Transport Authority Obligations**

Within a sQP, the transport authorities (i.e. the Council and HITRANS) are required to set out which facilities will be provided over the life of the sQP. Facilities can cover route priority schemes, bus stop infrastructure, intelligent transport systems (e.g. traffic signal priority and real time information), enforcement, and information provision.

As outlined in the Bus Investment Fund bid made by partners, a number of infrastructure improvements are proposed for implementation including bus priority measures on key routes and junctions, such as a Millburn Road bus lane, improved waiting facilities and enhanced passenger information systems. However, through the city centre masterplan works and other developments across Inverness (such as the new UHI Campus), it is understood that there is the potential for additional improvements that could support delivery of further improvements to bus services.

## ERDF Tourism & Transport Smart Cities Project

HITRANS officers are currently working with colleagues at The Highland Council to develop an application to draw funding from the '8th City' smart Cities Strategic Intervention (SI) that was submitted on 9th March 2015. The lead partner in this Strategic Intervention is Glasgow. If successful, this initiative would enable the expansion of the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) elements of the Bus Investment Fund project to cover the whole of Inverness and other key settlements in the surrounding area.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report and support ongoing work with partners to roll out similar investment across Inverness and the rest of the HITRANS area.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports several strategic objectives of the RTS.
Policy	√	This work supports the development of Policies H29, H30 and H33 as set out in the RTS Delivery Plan
Financial	-	Funding to support the HITRANS East Inverness BIF project and match funding in support of member Local Authority applications is identified and approved in the 2014/15 Research and Development and Delivery budget.
Equality	√	Improvement of public transport services helps reduce social exclusion by improving access to employment and services

**Report by:**  
**Designation:**  
**Date:**

Neil MacRae  
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31<sup>st</sup> March 2015