

Minute of Meeting held in The
 Townhouse, Inverness on Friday
 6 February 2015 at 9.00am.

PRESENT

Cllr. James Stockan (Chair), Orkney Council Member
 Cllr. Thomas Prag (Vice-Chair), The Highland Council Member
 Cllr. John Cowe, Moray Council Member
 Cllr. John Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
 Cllr. Robert Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council, Substitute 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 Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
 Mr Bill Ross, Moray Council
 Mr Tony Jarvis, HIE
 Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council
 Mr Brian Archibald, Orkney Islands Council
 Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr David MacKechnie, The Highland Council
 Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI
 Ms Pip Farman, NHS Highland
 Ms Fiona McNally, HITRANS
 Ms Julie Cromarty, HITRANS
 Mrs Katy Cunningham, HITRANS
 Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary

APOLOGIES

Mr Stuart Black, The Highland Council
 Cllr. Duncan Macintyre, Argyll and Bute Council Member

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting
of 28 November
2014 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 was approved . |
| Matters Arising | 2 | Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that the meeting with Audit Scotland had not taken place due to difficulties in co-ordinating diaries. The proposal to establish a Finance Sub Committee would be considered as part of the Business Plan 2015/16. |

It was agreed to note the update.

FINANCE

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| Revenue Budget
Monitoring Report
1 April 2014 to 31
December 2014 | 3 | Mr Mike Mitchell submitted a Report detailing HITRANS revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2014. The Report stated that income and expenditure were both in line with the budget outturn target and it was predicted that a balanced budget would be delivered at the end of the financial year. |
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It was agreed:

- (1) **to approve the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2014; and**
- (2) **that the Partnership Director and Partnership Treasurer would monitor expenditure of the receipt of the START Grant.**

Revenue Budget 4 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the proposed Revenue Budget
proposal 2015/16 2015/16 which covered HITRANS running costs and Research and Strategy Development
Programme costs and was funded from income from Partner Local Authorities and the
Scottish Government. The funding formula for Partner Authority contributions was agreed in
2006 and was based on voting weight and population share. Population figures had been
updated to take account of the latest position shown by the General Register Office for
Scotland. The Report further stated that the budget would continue to achieve the Scottish
Governments annual efficiency target of 3%.

It was agreed to approve the Revenue Budget 2015-16 as detailed in the Report.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strateg 5 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Ranald
y/Development 5 Robertson submitted a Report detailing progress with the delivery of the Research and
Programme 2014/15 Strategy Development Programme 2014/15. The Report stated that the Programme
supported the development, implementation and delivery of HITRANS Regional Transport
Strategy and the variations to the Programme in light of changing circumstances were
detailed. The Report indicated that the Programme included provision for the contingency of
an underspend emerging on any individual Project.

**It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development
Programme 2014/15 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.**

Research 6 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Ranald
Development and 6 Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Research, Development and Delivery
Delivery activities to be taken forward by HITRANS in 2015/16. The Report stated that a provisional
Proposed Programme had been included within the current Business Plan but there was scope for
2015/16 further projects to be included and budget allocations to be adjusted. A draft version of the
2015/16 Business Plan would be considered at the next Partnership Meeting.

It was agreed to:

- (1) **Approve the budgetary allocation of £1,285,750 for Research, Development and Delivery in 2015/16; and**
- (2) **Approve the Research, Development and Delivery Programme as detailed in the Report.**

Orkney Islands 7 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report in relation to the draft Orkney Outer North Isles STAG
STAG Study 7 Study which sought to investigate future air and ferry service provision to the Outer North
Isles. The purpose of the Study was to consider transport provision to the Outer North Isles
and how best to serve these islands in the short, medium and long term taking into
consideration best value. It had been agreed that this should take the form of Scottish
Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Pre-Appraisal and Part 1 Appraisal. A STAG Part 2
Study would not be an insignificant exercise but would help to identify a preferred evidence-
based option package to take forward to implementation in the long term. A key element of
this exercise would be to carry out cost-benefit analysis of the option packages as well as
in-depth evaluations against the STAG criteria and 'SMART' Transport Planning Objectives.

**It was agreed to note the draft Orkney Outer North Isles STAG Study and to approve
that HITRANS continues to work with Orkney Islands Council and other partners to
identify a funding package for a more detailed STAG Part 2 Appraisal that would
provide an evidenced based option package for implementation in the long term.**

- Ferry Availability Study 8 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing the executive summary of the 2014 Online Ferry Booking Availability Study and to seek approval for the undertaking of similar Study in 2015. In 2011 and 2012 the Outer Hebrides Tourism Industry Association (OHTIA) carried out research on the availability to book car spaces on the CalMac website on selected routes to and from the Western Isles. In 2013 and 2014 similar research was carried out, and included routes to Coll / Tiree and Islay. This research was financially supported by HITRANS, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Argyll and Bute Council. The Report stated that the Studies had helped to highlight the significant issue of the lack of online booking availability for vehicles on several routes operated by CalMac and also identified a concerning trend that the number and the percentage of affected sailings on has increased year on year on the majority of services.
- It was agreed to support a proposal to fund a Study of a similar scale in 2015, with the inclusion of Mull, to that undertaken in 2014 and request that officer's work with the Comhairle, Argyll and Bute Council and the OHTIA to develop a proposal for 2015.**
- Branchliner 9 With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report in relation to the Branchliner Project. The Report stated that HITRANS had been awarded £20,000 through the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) towards the £30,000 cost of the study into the feasibility of rail for transporting Flow Country timber. Over the next 10-15 years the timber industry would spend something like £80M on transporting 4M tonnes from the wider Flow Country catchment to distant markets with consequences for the fragile public road network, the environment and communities. The Branchliner-1 Study could result in far reaching local benefits, far beyond its cost, as well as informing rail development strategy across Scotland. The STTS funding award was for Branchliner-1: The Stage 1 application for the investigative study. The outputs and research from Branchliner-1 would lead on to Branchliner-2: The Demonstrator Project, in a future year.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Active Travel Progress Report 10 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Miss Fiona McInally submitted a Report providing an update on active travel projects within the HITRANS area. The Report provided an update on the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland (CAPS) Monitoring and Evaluation Sub Group to ensure that Cycling Scotland's database and monitoring information being developed for Local Authorities to track progress towards reaching the 10% vision for everyday cycling by 2020 takes into account the opportunities for active travel in the HITRANS area, especially with regard to the geographic scale and multi modal transport network.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Dalcross Station Update 11 With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on developments with regard to the proposed re-opening of Dalcross Station.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Mr Thomas Prag declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item as Chairman of the Committee that would consider the Planning Application.
- Inverness Station 12 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report providing an update on the proposals to develop Inverness Station. HITRANS were devising a blueprint for developing Inverness Station, ensuring that it would meet the demands for the future, including a substantial growth in services and passengers. The Report indicated that Abellio proposed to invest a significant sum in the station. The Report further indicated that The Highland Council had commissioned consultants to investigate improving the appearance of the three station entrances, making better use of available space and improving connectivity between Inverness bus and train station.
- It was agreed note the Report.**

Community Links Funding 13 Ms Fiona McNally submitted a Report providing an overview of current Community Links Projects and upcoming deadline for 15/16 Community Links funding. The Report stated that the HITRANS region had been very successful in gaining Community Links funding for 2014-16 through the previous funding round. In total 29 projects within the area were successful, bringing in £5.2M of funding which was matched against local funds to improve active travel infrastructure. The Report provided an update on a number of projects and provided details of the spending profile for 2015/16

It was agreed to note the Report.

Skye Air Service Development Strategy 14 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 September 2015 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report providing an update on the development strategy for the reintroduction of air services between Skye and the Central Belt. The Report stated that HITRANS, The Highland Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) jointly commissioned consultants to undertake a Feasibility Study to help establish the case for reintroducing scheduled flights to Airport on Skye. Following completion of the initial Feasibility Study a Working Group with representatives from HITRANS, The Highland Council and HIE was set up with the objective of developing a more detailed business case to a level that would enable decisions on investment to be made.

It was agreed to support the proposed Development Strategy for the re-introduction of air services to Skye.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

START Project Windfall Spend 15 With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the START Project Windfall Programme which was approved by Members through electronic mailing in December. The Report stated that the Programme was developed to fit with the Regional Transport Strategy. Details of the projects and estimated costs were outlined in the Report.

It was agreed to:

- (1) Note the Report; and**
- (2) Approve the budget allocation set out in the Report with a total spending commitment of £185,000.**

PARTNERSHIP

Review of HITRANS Financial Regulations 16 With reference to item 20 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 February 2015 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to the Financial Regulations of the Partnership. The Report stated that the Regulations were based on The Highland Council's Regulations which were subsequently revised with effect from June 2014 with mainly minor changes. The changes related to the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Public Sector Organisations; made appropriate reference to anti money laundering procedures; referred to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and referred to new SOLACE performance indicators.

It was agreed to the application to HITRANS of The Highland Council Financial Regulations June 2014.

Transport Integration Forum 17 With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2015 Mr Neil Macrae submitted a Report detailing the draft report and proposed Action Plan developed following the Transport Integration Forum held in Oban which HITRANS hosted in partnership with Caledonian MacBrayne on 30 October 2014. The aim of the Action Plan was to provide a framework and focus for tackling the challenges that were identified on the day. Each issue had a proposed action or actions attributed and an indicative timescale for it to be addressed. Several of the actions were already being implemented through current projects which HITRANS or partners were implementing such as the HI-TRAVEL and East Inverness Bus Investment Fund projects, through our Active Travel budget and also opportunities presented by recent European funding. A copy of the final report and Action Plan would be sent to the new Transport Minister and would also be incorporated into the update of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy. HITRANS proposed to engage with transport operators, transport bodies and other partners to identify how some of the more complex and strategic actions could be addressed.

It was agreed to approve the draft Report and Action Plan developed following the Transport Integration Forum.

Extended Leave Request 18 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report in relation to a request for a period of Extended / Unpaid Leave made by the Inverness Office Manager covering the period from 3 April to 5 October 2015 inclusive.

It was agreed to approve the application for a period of Extended / Unpaid Special Leave to the Inverness Office Manager covering the period from 3 April to 5 October 2015 inclusive.

Adopt an Intern 19 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report detailing an opportunity to consider the temporary employment of an Intern by HITRANS through the Centre of Scottish Public Policy (CSPP) 'Adopt an Intern' Programme. The Programme was set up with the aim of helping talented graduates struggling to find employment in the current economic crisis by creating internships for them to gain much needed work experience and thus improve their CVs and their chances of full-time employment. The Programme was supported by The Scottish Government. The costs of employing a Graduate under the 'Adopt an Intern' Programme over a 6 month term would be met from the cost saving in the staff salaries budget during the period of unpaid leave taken by the Office Manager.

It was agreed to consider the merits of HITRANS participating in the CSPP 'Adopt an Intern' Programme and to agree the Partnership taking on an Intern on the terms included in the Report for a period of 26 weeks.

CONSULTATION

Ferry Fares Consultation Freight Review 20 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 28 November 2014 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report detailing the draft HITRANS response prepared by officers following discussion with Transport Scotland's consultants working on the Review of Options for Ferry Freight Fares on the Clyde and Hebrides and Northern Isles ferry services contracts.

It was agreed to approve the HITRANS response taking account of the comments from Members.

ICI Freight Inquiry 21 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS response to the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee inquiry into freight transport in Scotland. The response highlighted that freight in the Highlands and Islands utilised all four modes- road, rail, sea and air- to enable even the remotest island communities to participate in the economic life of the country. Because of the geography, transport links had a lifeline nature and infrastructure resilience in the face of climate change was key to ensuring that networks operated around the clock.

It was agreed to note the Report.