

Item:

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## Report to Partnership Meeting 8 February 2019

### PARTNERSHIP

### National Transport Strategy / STPR

#### Purpose of Report

To update the Partnership Board on the National Transport Strategy and second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR 2).

#### Summary

In August 2016, the Minister announced that the National Transport Strategy (NTS) will be subject to a comprehensive review. The review is intended to develop a successor strategy that sets out a compelling vision for transport over the next 20 years.

Government have set out an approach that is focused on collaborative working with partners, developing a robust evidence base and engaging with stakeholders and citizens across Scotland to give them a greater say in the development of transport policy. This collaborative approach involves a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, who will meet regularly to develop the successor NTS through working groups and partnership forums.

HITRANS Partnership Director Co-Chairs the Tackling Inequality thematic group and sits on the NTS Partnership Group. RTPs are also represented across all but one thematic working group and are represented by the Chair of SESTran on the NTS Review Board (which is Chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and Connectivity).

Transport Scotland have delivered a wide programme of engagement across Scotland to ensure that transport users also have an opportunity to feed into the NTS process. There have also been calls for evidence to broaden public engagement.

The NTS Review is now working towards a formal public consultation on a draft strategy in summer 2019 with a view to publishing the successor strategy in late 2019 or early 2020.

#### NTS / STPR Status

Transport Scotland wrote to the lead officers / chief executives of all local authorities, RTPs and National Parks in an email sent on 8 January 2018. The letter sought views on a proposal to establish Regional Transport Working Groups to inform future government transport policy and strategic transport interventions. This followed an earlier communication in 2018 that set out this intention but not any detail on the shape or geographic coverage of the regional groups. The aim of these groups is to undertake consultation at a regional level on both NTS and STPR2.

The Transport Scotland letter has suggested the establishment of Regional Working Groups based on the emerging Economic partnerships where this is an option. Where it is not a number of hybrid proposals have been made that suggest a grounding in Growth Deals or in some cases an alternative set of arrangements devised by Transport Scotland. However, the letter acknowledges that there are alternative models to the Economic partnerships including the Regional Transport Partnership areas and structures. Where organisations hold a different view to that proposed they are invited to respond to the letter setting out these thoughts. The Transport Scotland proposal would involve the establishment of five separate regional working groups splitting up all the HITRANS partner Councils on the following basis:

- Argyll and Bute – Growth Deal based
- Highland – City Regional Deal Based
- Moray – Growth Deal Based
- Eilean Siar – not based on Economic Partnership or Growth Deal
- Orkney - Northern Isles group across both Orkney and Shetland not based on Growth Deal (Islands Deal) or a planned Economic Partnership.

HITRANS do not consider the proposed geographical groups to be the most appropriate approach for our region and after discussion with the Partnership Board Members (Council Board Members as this pre-dated approval of the Non Council Members) have responded in writing. See enclosed Appendix A. This letter sets out HITRANS position that the HITRANS boundary affords the best geography to engage partners within this area on NTS / STPR2. This will ensure that shared transportation challenges have a united voice across our five partner Councils. It will mean that due regard is taken of strategic routes in one partner Council area that are of a lifeline nature for a neighbouring Council. It will underline the strategic nature of investment in our regionally significant transport networks and services. Moreover this will slot in to the fabric of mature partnership working and collaboration that has been fostered through the RTP but exists in other respects across the Highlands and Islands through umbrella bodies and forums where the collective greater good is well understood and the importance of cross boundary strategic routes have on enabling inclusive and sustainable growth to be achieved. The important role HIE and SCDI should play in any Regional Groupings is underlined in the HITRANS letter.

A contract to support the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) has been awarded to a combined team of consultants from Jacobs and Aecom. Details of this announcement can be found at the following

link: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/strategic-transport-projects-review-update/>

## **RISK REGISTER**

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – RTP input to the NTS process and the co-production approach that Transport Scotland have given to the work facilitates an opportunity to provide a link from the refreshed RTS of the NTS development process. However the risk of losing a strong multi local authority collaborative voice in this process risks common issues not being given the level of import that they should have should they be considered local missing their regional significance.

### Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – The NTS will give greater consideration to key policy areas for HITRANS including aviation than has been the case in earlier NTS development and the light touch refresh completed in 2016.

### Financial

Impact – Neutral

Comment – No financial implications at this stage.

### Equality

Impact – positive

Comment – The NTS will link to the Equality Act and offers an opportunity to support the implementation of measures related to the Accessible Travel Framework and to ensure that organisations involved in the delivery of transport services and functions reflect gender and equality duties.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to note the report.

<b>Report by:</b>	Ranald Robertson
<b>Designation:</b>	Partnership Director
<b>Date:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
<b>Background Papers:</b>	Appendix A – HITRANS response to Transport Scotland letter

**Appendix A - HITRANS response to Transport Scotland Letter**

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15 January 2019

Mr David Torrance  
Head of Regional Transport and Development Planning  
Transport Scotland  
Buchanan House  
58 Port Dundas Road  
Glasgow  
G4 0HF

Dear David,

**Re: Regional Transport Working Groups**

I write following receipt of the letter from Alison Irvine setting out the proposed arrangements for Regional Transport Working Groups to support the next stage of the National Transport Strategy and the second Strategic Transport Projects Review. I welcome this positive step forward in the process of delivering these important policy documents. HITRANS welcome the opportunity to play an active role in the arrangements moving forward.

The letter sets out the current proposal from Transport Scotland to establish groups either on the basis of emerging Economic Partnership arrangements, Growth / City Region Deals or in the case of the Northern Isles an alternative hybrid model. While I can understand the rationale that has seen this conclusion arrived at for parts of the country I do not think it is the optimal set of geographic groupings for the Highlands and Islands and am therefore taking the opportunity to respond to you as per the suggestion in Alison's letter in the hope that this can be revisited. In doing so I confirm I have the full authority and support of the HITRANS Partnership Board for this short submission.

HITRANS believe the HITRANS boundary affords the best geography to engage partners within this area on NTS / STPR2. This will ensure that shared transportation challenges have a united voice across our five partner Councils. It will mean that due regard is taken of strategic routes in one partner Council area that are of a lifeline nature for a neighbouring Council. It will underline the strategic nature of investment in our regionally significant transport networks and services. Moreover this will slot in to the fabric of mature partnership working and collaboration that has been fostered through the RTP but exists in other respects across the Highlands and Islands through umbrella bodies and forums where the collective greater good is well understood and the importance of cross boundary strategic routes have on enabling inclusive and sustainable growth to be achieved. We appreciate this will represent a departure from your proposal and understand that

it is not something you can consider on the basis of a single submission from HITRANS. I understand the concern I outline may very well be shared by partner Councils and will leave it to them to make any separate representations on the subject. If it would be helpful to facilitate further consideration on the geographic coverage of the regional working group arrangements for the Highlands and Islands I would be happy to include a session with Transport Scotland and/or your appointed consultants (Jacobs/Aecom) at the HITRANS Partnership Board meeting on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> February?

Should a change to the Regional Grouping be agreed HITRANS already have dates in the calendar when the senior Council officers and other key stakeholders will be available for HITRANS meetings on eight dates in 2019. The four HITRANS Partnership Board meetings will enable engagement with the five partner Councils lead Councillor on Strategic Transportation to be engaged on the NTS / STPR process.

I note that the letter from Alison was addressed to Local Authorities, RTPs and National Parks. The Cairngorms National Park Authority covers parts of Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Perth & Kinross Council which could require them to attend a large number of Regional Groups even if the suggestion to reduce to a single group for the HITRANS area is agreed so this could be a challenge for the CNPA to cover the number of groups proposed.

Given the emphasis placed on economic development in the letter I would suggest it is important that any, and all, Regional Transport Working Groups established within this region have strong representation from Highlands and Islands Enterprise. I would add that Scottish Council for Development and Industry are a valued partner in the region providing an important bridge between the public and private sector and it would be good to ensure they are part of any arrangements within the Highlands and Islands.

I would be happy to discuss this response if that would be helpful and emphasise this is intended as constructive input designed to make the best use of time and resources to get the best input possible from the Highlands and Islands to the NTS / STPR process?

Yours sincerely,



**Ronald Robertson**  
Partnership Director