

Minute of Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Town House Chambers, High Street, Inverness on Friday 8 February 2019 at 10.00am.

- PRESENT**  
Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair)  
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member  
Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member (by VC)  
Mrs. Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Member (by VC)  
Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member
- IN ATTENDANCE**  
Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director  
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager  
Ms Vikki Trefer, Active Travel Officer  
Mr David Thomson, KTP Associate, HITRANS / RGU  
Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer  
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary  
Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council (by VC)  
Mr David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council  
Mrs. Nicole Wallace, The Highland Council  
Mr Richard Gerring, The Highland Council  
Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI  
Mr Nicky Sobey, HIE  
Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton (by VC)
- APOLOGIES**  
Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Roderick McCuish, Argyll and Bute Council Member  
Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member  
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager  
Mr Iain Mackinnon, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Mrs. Nicola Moss, Moray Council
- Declaration of Interest**  
Mr Robert Andrew declared an interest as managing Director, Stagecoach Bus in Scotland.
- Tribute**  
The Chairman extended condolences to Mrs Nicola Moss whose father had passed away.

### **MINUTES**

- Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018      1      The Minute of 16 November 2018 was **approved**.
- Matters Arising      2      Mr Ranald Robertson provided an update in respect of the following:
- Item 2 – A response from Inglis Lyons on potential dates to meet with the Board was awaited.
- Item 8 – It was intended to commission a Consultant in respect of Corran Narrows.
- Item 13 – A meeting of the Air Services Stakeholder Group had been held and options for electric planes had been discussed.
- Item 15 – A meeting had been held with two bus operators to discuss the scheduling assistant. The system would be available for all operators to utilise.
- It was agreed to note the updates.**

## FINANCE

- Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 December 2018 3 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, presented the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 December 2018 and Year End Projection. The Report stated that the annual budget had been approved at the Board Meeting of 2 February 2018, subsequently amended for the inclusion of the 2017/18 underspend of £24,458. The budget also included grants received from the Scottish Government's Green Bus Fund, as part of the G-PaTRA Project, Press'n'Ride, a Network Rail Joint Project and the Inverness Station Project. The Report further stated that there were no major issues of variances to highlight and that income and expenditure were broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

### It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and
- (2) approve the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2018.

- Draft Budget 2019/2020 4 With reference to Item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 February 2018 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, presented the Draft Budget 2019/2020 which detailed the Partnership's running costs, Research and Strategy Development Programme costs, and the income from Partner Councils and Scottish Government to cover those costs.

### It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and
- (2) approve the Budget for the 2019/2020 financial year.

- HITRANS External Audit Plan 5 With reference to Item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 2 February 2018 Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton LLP submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS External Audit Plan. The Report detailed the overarching principles of the audit, the audit approach and risk based audit methodology.

### It was agreed to note the Report.

## PARTNERSHIP

- National Transport Strategy/STPR Update 6 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report providing an update on the National Transport Strategy and second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). The Report stated that Ministers had announced in August 2016 that the National Transport Strategy (NTS) would be the subject of a comprehensive review that intended to develop a successor strategy setting out a compelling vision for transport over the next 20 years. The NTS Review was currently working towards a formal public consultation on the draft strategy with a view to publishing the successor strategy in late 2019 or early 2020. Members were informed that the NTS would be an agenda item on the next meeting of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands and HITRANS would contribute to the Report.

Transport Scotland had written to local authorities, RTPs and National Parks seeking views on a proposal to establish Regional Transport Working Groups to inform government transport policy and strategic transport interventions. It was stated in the Report that HITRANS did not consider the proposed geographical groups to be the most appropriate approach for the HITRANS region. The HITRANS response to the Transport Scotland letter was detailed at Appendix A of the Report.

### It was agreed to note the Report.

**It was agreed to invite Transport Scotland to a future Partnership Board meeting to update Members on the progress of delivering NTS and STPR2.**

## RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

- Research and Strategy Development Programme 2018/19
- 7 With reference to item 8 of Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which provided a progress update on delivering the Research and Strategy Development Programme and sought approval of amendments to the Programme to reflect commitments made, changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since the approval of the 2018/19 Business Plan in April 2018. The amendments to the Programme were detailed in the Appendix to the Report. The Report provided a summary of the key Programme changes as follows:
- Add Regional Active Travel Grant budget allocation (confirmed in December 2018) of £133,400.
  - Add budget of £10,000 for RTS / NTS study on Local Governance Review opportunities for HITRANS
  - Allocate £10,000 from Electric Vehicle Strategy budget to feasibility study and funding identification for EV Connected and Autonomous Vehicles Project focussing on Inverness Airport.
- It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2018/19 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report**
- Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20
- 8 With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report detailing a draft Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20 which would be included within the 2019/20 Business Plan. The Report stated that, as with previous years, a projected overspend on the estimated budget was included to allow for the contingency of Projects not being progressed.
- It was agreed to:**
- (1) **note the Report;**
  - (2) **approve the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20; and**
  - (3) **authorise the Chair and Partnership Director to finalise the Programme for inclusion in the 2019/20 Business Plan which will be tabled at the April 2019 Partnership Board Meeting.**
- Williams Review
- 9 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, presented a Report which provided an update on the Rail Review established by the Transport Secretary. Keith Williams, the former chairman and chief executive of British Airways had been appointed to conduct the Review. The Report stated that the Review had been established to recommend the most appropriate organisational and commercial frameworks to support the delivery of the government's vision for the railway. The Review sought written contributions to inform its work on any or all of the review principles, as set out in its terms of reference and would look at the whole rail industry, including:
- increasing integration between track and train;
  - how to improve transport services across UK regions and devolved nations, including exploring options for devolution of rail powers; and
  - improving value for money for passengers and taxpayers.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Branchliner – Wood You Use Rail
- 10 With reference to item 19 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, presented a Report which provided an update on the progress of the Branchliner/Wood you Use Rail workstream. Following a meeting between HITRANS and Fergus Ewing MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy, it was agreed to hold a round table meeting at Scotland House, London on Monday 25 March 2019 to discuss opportunities for transporting Scottish Timber by rail, which all Freight Operating Companies would be invited to attend. The role of HITRANS was to sell the business opportunity to the Freight Operating Companies, focusing on Crianlarach, Rannoch, Altnabreac, Kinbrace, Aberdeenshire, Keith etc.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**

Press'n'Ride 11 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report which detailed progress with the Press n Ride Scheme, which had been developed to improve performance and reliability of trains at request stops. It was stated in the Report that £115k had been awarded by Transport Scotland which had been matched by Smart Cities funding and Network Rail had adopted the Scheme as part of the Far North Line Review team work but were now focusing on signaling rather than on a railway communications solution.

It was proposed to use the funds to pump prime the creation of a new Token Exchange Point on the Kyle line near Stromferry which would increase the capacity of the line which was constrained by a long single track section between Strathcarron and Kyle.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Active Travel Update 12 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018 Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer, and Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report which provided an update on Active Travel Projects. Details of Projects funded to date in the current financial year including Ebikes and storage at Barra Airport, Garadh a Bagh a Tuath, Barra, installation of bike and people counters in Inverness and the development of tender documents for the next stage of the Active Aviemore Project were outlined in the Report.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Regional Active Travel Fund Award 13 Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer, and Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report which provided an update on the Regional Active Travel Fund which awarded funds to Regional Transport Partnerships through an allocation of the increased Active Travel funding announced in the Programme for Government for streamlined delivery at a local/regional level.

The Report stated that the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland had set out ambitious targets to get more people making active travel choices for short everyday journeys wherever possible to improve health and the environment. The Scottish Government had also confirmed that it would maintain levels of funding for Active Travel for the duration of the current Parliament with spending to increase from £40m in 2017/18 to £80m in 2018/19 and for the remainder of the current parliamentary term.

The Report further stated that Transport Scotland had selected the following projects that they had approved HITRANS to take forward:

- Active Travel Service Points (£15,000)
- Bikes on Buses (£25,000)
- Cycle parking at Transport Interchanges (£75,000)
- Active Travel Masterplan Action Plan (£45,000)
- Active Travel Project Design and Feasibility (£53,400)

Transport Scotland would pay 50% toward the costs of the first four projects detailed above, with HITRANS funding the remaining 50%. The Active Travel Project Design and Feasibility would be funded at 100% grant.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**

Orkney Connectivity (Internal/External) 14 With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 14 September 2018 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report which provided an update on the progress of the work to undertake an Outline Business Case STAG Part 2 Appraisal of transport connectivity to the outlying islands of Orkney and the procurement of the next Northern Isles Ferry Services (NIFS) Contract. The Report stated that Peter Brett Associates had been commissioned to undertake Outline Business Cases in relation to inter-island transport to the Outer North Isles and Rousay/Egilsay/Wyre island groups. It was further stated in the Report that the scope included the undertaking of an Outline Business Case for the revenue budget for the Orkney Network as a whole with ZetTrans undertaking a separate Outline Business Case for inter-island transport within the Shetland Islands Council area.

**It was agreed to:**

- (1) **note the Report; and**
- (2) **authorise the Partnership Director to work with partners to identify a funding solution that would enable the essential Outline Business Case work to be completed.**

- Ferry Timetable Study 15 Mr David Thomson, KTP Associate, submitted a Report which provided details of the Executive Summary of the 2018-2019 Ferry Timetable Study. The Report recommended developing a Scotland wide, long term Strategy which would take into account the progress made against the proposals in the Ferries Plan and also recommended that the Strategy should set out its intended benefits of subsidised ferry services and how these contributed to National Outcomes and how these would be measured, monitored and reported. The Report stated that ferry users were generally happy with services but there was variation across routes and some frustrations existed. It was also recommended that processes to involve and consult ferry users could be improved given the complicated nature of ferry operations where responsibilities and accountabilities were unclear to ferry users. Proposals for further study were outlined in the Report.
- It was agreed to support the proposal for further study and the development of tools to facilitate analysis.**
- A82 Update 16 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, provided an update on the Fort William Strategic Transport Study taken forward by the Fort William Congestion Group which provided a comprehensive and evidence based pre-appraisal in compliance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. Mr MacRae detailed the key findings from the Study and indicated that the Group were seeking commitments from Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government
- It was agreed to note the update.**
- SCDI Rural Commission 17 Mr Fraser Grieve gave a presentation on the SCDI Rural Commission which had been established to identify the challenges and opportunities that existed outwith central urban Scotland in order to improve competitiveness and address barriers to growth in the rural economy. The presentation detailed the themes and priorities that the Commission would explore.
- It was agreed to note the presentation.**
- EUROPEAN PROJECTS**
- FASTER Project 18 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report which provided an update on the recent submission of the FASTER Project to the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) working with Partners from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. The Report stated that the key objective of the FASTER Project was to install 73 rapid chargers in the INTERREG VA region by 2023 to assist with the development and expansion of the cross border electric vehicle public charging network. The Project was a joint proposal across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems and demonstrated how the three countries could provide learning in relation to the electrification of transport. The Report further stated that the project aligned closely with the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy and allowed HITRANS to deliver practical projects contributing towards the greening of transport in the area and also allowed HITRANS to learn best practice for deploying charge points and promoting sustainable transport in the region. HITRANS were leading on the Design and Procurement work package and it was expected that HTRANS would install 24 rapid chargers across the HITRANS proportion of the INTERREG VA programme area.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- Stronger Combined Project 19 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which provided an update on the recent announcement that the Stronger Combined Project had secured funding in the latest round of funding from the INTERREG VA North Sea Region. It was stated in the Report that HITRANS would work closely with the IBI Group to develop a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platform which would have an initial pilot focus on the Cairngorms National Park and would build on the existing work towards the creation of a Connected Cairngorms MaaS platform. HITRANS would be responsible for UK wide communication and dissemination through media channels and at events. Details of the Project Budget were outlined in the Report.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**

MOVE Project 20 With reference to item 20 of the Minute of Meeting of 14 September 2018 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report which provided an update on the receipt of notification that the MOVE North Sea Region project had been successful in securing funding and HITRANS, as a partner in the Project, would work closely with Partners including NHS Highland. The Report stated that the overall objective of MOVE was to enhance accessibility of small and medium sized cities and towns and their rural surroundings by developing, testing, validating and disseminating sustainable mobility initiatives that were responsive and tailored to local needs. MOVE supported the greening of the transport sector by offering solutions aimed at reducing the use of individual vehicles or by using alternative greener transport options. It was indicated in the Report that the proposed role of HITRANS in the Project was to lead one of five pilot area projects that would develop the MOVE hypothesis, working through co-creation to develop and implement a pilot with other partners and it was anticipated that this would involve close working with fellow MOVE project partner, NHS Highland. The five pilot areas were outlined in the Report.

**It was agreed to note the Report**

### **CONSULTATION**

Aviation 2050 21 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report which provided details of the Department of Transport's consultation on a new Aviation Strategy – Aviation 2050 and proposals to develop a response with other key partners in the area. The Report stated that the Department for Transport had now developed its greener paper which outlined proposals for the new aviation strategy. The Strategy would set out the challenges and opportunities for aviation to 2050 and beyond and would emphasise the significance of aviation to the UK economy and regional growth. The Strategy would focus on:

- (1) developing a partnership for sustainable growth which meets rising passenger demand, balance with action to reduce environmental and community impacts;
- (2) improving the passenger experience, including through technology and innovation, a new passenger charter and action to reduce delays at the border;
- (3) building on the UK's success to establish new connections across the world and create greater choice for consumers.

The Report further stated that HITRANS were working with colleagues in Highlands and Islands Airports and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to engage a suitable consortium to assist with preparing a response to the Department for Transport Green Paper. The successful consortium would be expected to build on recent work undertaken to ensure that the key priorities for Aviation within the region were suitably represented within a co-ordinated consultation response from regional partners. Among the key priorities which the response should seek to include were:

- the importance to the Highlands and Islands of securing guaranteed access to important International Hub airports such as London Heathrow and Amsterdam Schipol;
- to ensure that regional air connectivity to the rest of the UK and Ireland was maintained and improved, and that the value of these important links provided was better understood and quantified;
- to ensure that national aviation policy supported the safeguarding and enabled further development of Highlands and Islands' intra-regional routes and routes to other parts of Scotland – many of which were 'Lifeline Services';
- the need for appropriate formal indices of connectivity to be incorporated into government policy (at appropriate levels – whether national or devolved) in order that changes in the region's connectivity could be tracked, protected and enhanced against measurable criteria;
- identify opportunities where the Highlands and Islands were well placed to be at the forefront in developing and implementing future technologies that would help support the decarbonisation of Aviation and improved efficiency within the Aviation sector.

**It was agreed to note the Report.**