

Minute of Meeting held in the Royal Marine Hotel, Brora, on Friday 15 November 2019 at 9.00am.

PRESENT
Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair)
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member (by VC)
Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member
Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member
Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member (by VC)

IN ATTENDANCE
Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mrs Fiona Maciver, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (by VC)
Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI (by VC)
Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (by VC)
Mrs. Nicola Moss, Moray Council
Mr Richard Gerring, The Highland Council
Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Nicky Sobey, HIE
Mr Inglis Lyon, HIAL

APOLOGIES
Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair)
Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council Member
Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member
Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
Ms Pip Farman, NHS

Declaration of Interest
There were no declarations of interest raised.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 1 It was **agreed** to approve the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 with the inclusion of Mr Mike Mitchell's apologies.

Matters Arising 2 Mr Inglis Lyon, Managing Director, Highlands and Islands Airports Limited attended the meeting to provide an update on HIAL. Mr Lyon covered:

- Air Traffic Control Dispute
- National Airport Strategy by UK Government – this included risk to London Heathrow regional connectivity
- HIAL Board Refresh
- HIAL Strategy for Highlands and Islands Aviation
- Net Zero Workshop - options paper to be prepared by Ricardo Energy; Governance; Delivery
- Innovate UK Future Flight Challenge
- Remote Air Traffic Control Centre
- Wick Airport air route support through Winter 19/20 and future options
- Loganair fleet renewal and move from SAAB 340 to ATR 42. This would mean more route capacity and we should work together with the operator to maximise the benefits of this opportunity.
- Corporate Leadership Team changes at HIAL.
- Barra Airport Terminal Development – visitor attraction as well as airport terminal

- Airport Maintenance Programme
- Inverness to Amsterdam – KLM would be more of the same as for 2019.
- FlyBe – Belfast and Birmingham routes.
- Inverness Airport Hotel – Opening December 2019
- IABP update
- Dundee Airport PSO

The Chair thanked Mr Lyon for his attendance and thanked him for updating Members.

It was agreed to note the updates.

FINANCE

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| Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 October 2019 | 3 | With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, submitted the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 October 2019. The Report stated that the annual budget had been approved at the Board Meeting held on 8 February 2019 and had subsequently been amended for the inclusion of the 2018/19 underspend of £23,389. The budget included grants received from the Scottish Government's Regional Active Travel Fund and Transport Scotland Active Travel Fund, as well as income from Highland Council, as part of the Inverness City Active Travel Network Programme, and income contributions for research and strategy development work. The summary statement was attached as an Appendix to the Report and showed the financial position to 31 October 2019 which indicated that the total income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target. |
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It was agreed to approve the revenue position for the period to 31 October 2019.

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| Statement of Internal Control 2018/19 | 4 | With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, submitted a Report which included an assessment of the adequacy, reliability and effectiveness of the Partnership's system of internal control and provided information for the Partnership's Governance Assurance Statement. The Report stated that all internal audit service providers must produce a Statement on Internal Control. The HITRANS Internal Audit Annual Report 2018/19 was provided as an Appendix to the Report. The Report stated that on the basis of the work undertaken during the year, it was considered that the key systems operated in a sound manner and that there had been no fundamental breakdown in control resulting in material discrepancy. However as no system of control could provide absolute assurance against material loss, nor could Internal Audit give that assurance, it was the audit opinion that reasonable assurance could be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Partnership's internal control systems for the year to 31 March 2019. |
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It was agreed to note the content of the Statement of Internal Control and the audit opinion provided.

PARTNERSHIP

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| Staffing | 5 | Mr Randal Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which sought approval for the recruitment of two Business Support Assistants to provide administrative and financial claims support on Project activity. The Report stated that the first role would be based within Highland Council working on the Inverness City Active Travel Network Project with the costs met fully by Highland Council and there would be no budgetary implications for HITRANS. The second would be a fixed term appointment funded from the staffing budget HITRANS had secured across multiple EU Projects and would support successful delivery of those projects. |
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It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report;**
- (2) to approve the recruitment of the Project Support Officer (ICATN) as set out in the Report and Appendix 1;**
- (3) to approve the recruitment of the Business Support Assistant (External Funding) as set out in the Report and Appendix 2 and that the Person Specification and Job Description would be finalised by the Partnership**

Director with advice from HITRANS Human Resources Advisor at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar; and

- (4) that potential uses of the remaining budget would be reported back to the Board when there was greater clarity on the Brexit situation and once project workload as better understood**

NTS Consultation Response 6

With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS response to the draft National Transport Strategy consultation. The Report stated that the Scottish Government had issued the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) a Draft Strategy for Consultation on 31 July 2019 and had requested views on the proposed draft NTS2 by 23 October 2019. The consultation was discussed by Members, Advisors and Officers at the September Partnership Board meeting and it had been agreed that the final submission would be shared electronically with members following preparation by Officers with input from the Partnership Advisors.

The Report indicated that the HITRANS response welcomed the NTS vision of a sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system and embraced the Governments leadership in setting ambitious targets to tackle climate change. The full response to the consultation was detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Risk Management: Risk Register Update – November 2019 7

With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report for the Partnership Board to review the Strategic, Management/Operational and Financial Risks faced by the Partnership and through doing so ensuring significant risks were identified, evaluated and controlled. The Report stated that the risks reflected in the Risk Register continued to be monitored by HITRANS Officers and Advisors and were subsequently presented to the Partnership for monitoring and approval on at least an annual basis.

It was agreed to approve the adoption of the HITRANS Risk Register November 2019 as included in the Appendix to the Report.

Programme of Meetings 2020 8

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report advising Members on the final dates for Partnership Board and Permanent Advisors meetings in 2020 and invited Members to indicated acceptance or changes to the dates.

It was agreed that HITRANS Partnership and Advisors meet in 2020 on the following dated and locations:

DATE	PARTNERSHIP MEETING	ADVISORS MEETING	LOCATION
23 January 2020		Morning	Inverness
7 February 2020	Partnership Board Meeting Only		Inverness
2 April 2020		Morning	Inverness
23 and 24 April 2020	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning		Eilean Siar
27 August 2020		Morning	Inverness
10 and 11 September 2020	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning		Argyll and Bute
29 October 2020		Morning	Inverness
12 and 13 November 2020	Evening meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning		Highland

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/ Strategy
Development
Programme for
2019/20

9 With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which provided an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development Programme and sought approval of amendments to the Programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2019/20 Business Plan. The main Programme change was as follows:

- Add £5,000 in the Aviation section to support the Programme for Government Commitment to make the Highlands and Islands a Region with zero carbon impact from aviation. This budget would support related research in partnership with HIAL, Councils, Academia and Transport Scotland.

It was agreed to:

- (1) **approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report; and**
- (2) **arrange a meeting with HIAL to consider how the PSO mechanism could be better used to secure appropriate air services in terms of cost to user and frequency as part of the national transport system.**

Midnight Train to
Georgemas

10 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 April 2019, Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the proposal to operate an overnight train service between Caithness and Central Scotland. The Report summarised Transport Scotland's response to the four Reports commissioned by HITRANS (Feasibility, Economic, Rolling Stock and Timetabling) for the MT2G original version- overnight sleeper train to Caithness using Mk3 sleeper vehicles. £2.5m pa subsidy, £4.2m benefits. Transport Scotland had raised concerns about demand, subsidy, rolling stock condition and refurbishment costs, compliance with PRM TSI and other safety requirements and depot access.

The Report further stated that Transport Scotland had reviewed the Report produced by Systra on 23 August 2019 and had concluded that whilst there was some merit, at a conceptual level, in having an overnight connection between the North of Scotland and the Central Belt the proposals as presented generated a number of substantial issues regarding patronage, subsidy level and a range of operational risks consequent on using older rolling stock and accordingly the Agency was not in a position to support the proposition as presented.

Members considered the Report and agreed that the Project remained an important RTS deliverable.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the Report;**
- (2) **that the Reports should be completed and published; and**
- (3) **HITRANS would publish the Report and seek to engage with key stakeholders including Transport Scotland and elected representatives for the constituencies on the route.**

Inverness Airport
Dalcross Station

- 11 With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 24 November 2017 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on progress on the Inverness Airport Dalcross Station Project which HITRANS had been developing since 2005. Planning consent had been granted in 2017 for a single platform station for a single platform station with car park, and the nearby Petty (Dalcross) level crossing was to close. Transport Scotland had taken over responsibility for the Project in order to close the funding gap, however as the original applicant HITRANS may have to renew the existing planning permission in order to prevent it from lapsing.

The Report stated that the station would now have two platforms and a passing loop from day one which would increase capability for future capacity with further potential passenger and freight service requirements. As the station would have a larger footprint it would be classed as a major planning application, with revised impact assessments and the Stopping Up Order for the road at Petty (Dalcross) level crossing may need to be reset, delaying the opening of the station until later in Control Period 6 2019-2024. .

It was indicated that Kintore Station was reaching completion, and was due to open in 2020.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Programme for
Government: Bus
Priority

- 12 With reference to item 22 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the Scottish Government's commitment to invest over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impact of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage as announced within the 2019/2020 Programme of Government. Among these commitments was a "Mission Zero" for Transport as part of Scotland's journey towards net zero emission. The Report highlighted that funding for operating bus services and basic supporting infrastructure was key to increasing patronage in much of the HITRANS area.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) to engage with the Scottish Government and make the case for funds to be made available to support rural bus services with appropriate investment in rural and island areas.**

Public Transport
Information Shared
Services Update

- 13 Ms Julie Cromarty, Public Transport Information Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on the shared service approach for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area. The Report stated that across the partner Councils the Shared Service Project delivered the following at bus stop information in addition to real time information and Traveline Scotland data:

- Highland Council 850 bus stop timetable displays.
- Moray Council 800 bus stop timetable displays.
- Orkney isles Council 50 bus stop displays - work continued to be done manually by council officers on the displays produced by Novus FX which had caused delays and currently council officers were making some changes within the system working both with HITRANS and Novus FX development. HITRANS officers would get a new run of timetables produced in the next few weeks which would be sent to OIC for distribution.
- Argyll & Bute Council 340 bus stop locations had been agreed for display. However no displays had been placed at stops yet although HITRANS had produced a full print run and sent these to the Council. HITRANS officers would continue to engage with council officers to take this forward and ensure that this was a priority to move the project to full implementation.
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – data migration stage with initial roll out of 100 stops planned. There were several issues found with source data during test phases and much resource from HITRANS was allocated to resolve this. There remains a concern in the completeness and accuracy of information in the database. HITRANS officers would continue to engage with council officers and look to complete this as a priority. To ensure some progress HITRANS officers would produce static timetables for Barra and ensure these were posted at stops by the end of the calendar year.

It was agreed to note the Report.

- Active Travel Update 14 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 Miss Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer submitted a Report detailing HITRANS delivery of Active Travel Projects. The Report set out project deliverables through the Regional Active Travel Grant budget which saw Transport Scotland directly fund HITRANS and Sustrans Active Travel Partnership programme. The Report provided an update on the work of the Active Travel Advisory Group.
- It was highlighted at the meeting that there was an opportunity to complement local authority small works schemes as an eligible match if HITRANS were made aware of any ongoing Council programmes.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- RTS Monitoring Report 15 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 24 November 2017 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report prepared by Mr David Thomson, KTP Associate detailing the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Monitoring Report 2018/19. The Report summarised a number of changes that had been implemented as part of the RTS Monitoring Process to reflect the revised draft RTS. A copy of the full Report was provided and would be made available on the HITRANS website following approval by the Partnership Board.
- The Report highlighted that there would be a great benefit to HITRANS, partner local authorities and other RTPs if the data necessary to produce the statutory Reports was published at its origin in an automatically updating format. Dialogue with Scottish Government was taking place to try and resolve this issue.
- It was agreed to:**
- (1) note the Report; and**
 - (2) authorise the Partnership Director and HITRANS Chair to finalise the Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring Report in advance of inclusion in the HITRANS Annual Report.**
- Fair Exchange 16 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2019 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report concerning a new Token Exchange Point near Stromeferry. The Report stated that the Project would create additional capacity , improved resilience and better maintenance access on the Kyle railway line between Strathcarron and Kyle. The Report detailed the key objectives and benefits and stated that the Project would see the installation of lineside equipment to enable the train to communicate with the signaller in Inverness which would increase the capacity of the line. The Report further stated that HITRANS had accessed £115k ERDF Smart Cities Funding, matched with £115 and that the Project would be considered for National Rail funding to take the budget to the estimated £460k required.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**

Corran Narrows STAG Study 17 With reference to item 2 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2019 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the progress of work to undertake a Scottish Transport Pre-Appraisal (STAG) of the Corran Narrows in Lochaber. The Report stated that funding had been allocated within the HITRANS Business Plan for 2018/19 to undertake STAG based appraisal of transport connectivity across the Corran Narrows which was linked by a Council operated ferry with the second highest volume of vehicles carried by a ferry service within Scotland. The Corran Ferry STAG Appraisal carried out in 2018 had focused on capital options and delivery modes to ensure the short to medium term sustainability of the ferry service.

The Report intimated that Stantec had been appointed to undertake the commission and the costs of the study were being shared equitably by The Highland Council, HITRANS and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The Report outlined the aspirations of the final reporting of the study which would allow the three project partners to take an informed decision on the future of the Corran Narrows and the prospects of progressing a fixed link option via Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2). Partners would make efforts to ensure that all key stakeholders were engaged in the work and feed in as required into STPR timelines.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) authorise HITRANS officers to ensure that the findings of the Appraisal feed into the STPR development process.**

Fastline Faslane 18 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 April 2019 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing the Interim Report from consultants PBA who had been appointed to appraise transport opportunities for accessing HMNB Faslane. The Report stated that a data analysis had been undertaken on all available data including: population data; socio economic data; traffic and transport data including rail industry MOIRA data; and employment data.

It was agreed to note the Report.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Funding – Consolidated Update 19 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 Ms Jayne Golding, Project and Policy Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded Projects including Horizon 2020, Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Area (NPA), North Sea Region (NSR), and the Cross Border Programme. Details of all European Projects that HITRANS was involved in was provided in the Appendix to the Report and included current status, timelines and a description of main activities. The Report stated that HITRANS were currently involved in seven ongoing European Projects and one Project at application stage. A Table consolidating all Project budgets and a Gantt Chart showing involvement up to early 20120 was also included in the Appendix to the Report.

It was agreed to note the Report.

OHM G-PaTRA 20 With reference to item 21 of the Minute of Meeting of 16 November 2018 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the progress to study the outline business case for running a battery powered train service between Wick and Thurso. The Report provided background information, a Project overview and highlighted that the Key objectives of the Project were to:

- 1 enhance the capacity for local authorities to reduce CO² from remote, rural and Islands transport by embedding more zero emission vehicles in rural transport systems and improving, optimising and better integrating available passenger resources; and

- 2 identify green, innovative, integrated transport services and new organisational and ownership models to allow transport operators to deliver on the Project aims of providing a sustainable rural public transport network.

The work was supported through the North Sea Region INTERREG G-PaTRA Project in which HITRANS was a partner. The conclusions from the Draft Study were included in the Report detailing a number of strengths and weaknesses from the proposals and concluded that:

- Wick to Thurso would be a good test area for battery trains.
- Only 13 people shifting to the battery train service from car would make it operationally cost neutral.
- There would be a capital cost of approximately £3M to introduce the new service.

Based on the conclusions the Systra report recommended that if a Thurso – Wick battery train was to be pursued then it should be done so on the basis of acting as proof-of-concept with a view to battery technology having a wider role across railways in Scotland and other locations where battery technology could be used should also be considered, for example on services around Inverness.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

Islands Plan – RECC Call for Views

- 21 Mr Randal Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report detailing the HITRANS response to the Scottish Parliament Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee's Call for Views on the Proposed National Islands Plan. The Report stated that the Plan was a component of the implementation of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and set out 13 Strategic Objectives in relation to housing, population levels, sustainable economic development, transport and a range of other areas which were critical to improving the quality of life on our islands. The Report further stated that the HITRANS response focused on transport but the comments made were also cross cutting and had relevance in other areas such as sustainable and inclusive growth, access to health, education and employment.

It was agreed to note the Report.