

Minute of Meeting held in the Town House
 Chambers, High Street, Inverness on
 Friday 7 February 2020 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair)
 Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair)
 Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member
 Cllr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member
 Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council Member
 Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member
 Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member
 Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
 Mrs Jayne Golding, HITRANS
 Mr Derek Mackay, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
 Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council
 Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council
 Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mrs. Nicola Moss, Moray Council
 Mrs Moya Ingram, Argyll & Bute Council
 Mr Fraser Grieve, SCDI
 Mr Nicky Sobey, HIE
 Mr Paul Steele, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton

APOLOGIES

Ms Pip Farman, NHS

Declaration of Interest

Mr Robert Andrew declared an interest as Stagecoach Scotland's Regional Director.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 15 November 2019 | 1 | It was agreed to approve the Minute of Meeting of 15 November 2019. |
| Matters Arising | 2 | <p>The following updates were provided:</p> <p>Item 5 – A Project Support Officer (ICATN) would be recruited by Highland Council and Business Support Assistant (External Funding) had been recruited by HITRANS. A further Report on EU Project Funding would be submitted when there was clarity on the impact of Brexit.</p> <p>Item 12– A Regional Bus Forum would be held on 25 February 2020.</p> <p>Item 17 – A Report on the Corran Narrows STAG would be submitted to the April 2020 meeting.</p> <p>Item 15 – Concerns were raised in relation HIAL's proposals in relation to Air Traffic Control. The Helios Report did not refer to the potential downgrading of Benbecula and Wick Airports and the potential economic impact on island and rural areas. The Partnership Director was authorised to engage in further dialogue with HIAL and the Partnership Advisors to consider if there was a case for additional expert advice to examine the potential impacts of HIAL's proposals for centralised Air Traffic Control.</p> |

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 31 December 2019 3 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 November 2019, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer submitted a Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 1 April to 31 December 2019. The Report stated that the annual budget had been approved at the Board Meeting 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 The 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 December 2019 which indicated that the total income and expenditure was 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 2019.**

Draft Budget 2020/2021 4 With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2019, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, presented the Draft Budget 2020/21 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 HITRANS Budget for the 2020/21 financial year.**

HITRANS External Audit Plan 5 With reference to Item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 8 February 2019, 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

Local Governance Review 6 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 26 April 2019 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which detailed the outcome of scoping research undertaken by CP1919Plus21 into the impact and potential opportunities for HITRANS arising from the t Local Governance Review. The research investigated the level of local democracy and subsidiarity of key transport services and reviewed the transport outcomes required across the HITRANS area. The Research highlighted the opportunity to deliver improved outcomes in partnership with constituent Councils whilst maintaining the principles of subsidiarity and strengthening local democracy and participation.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the Report;**
- (2) **to authorise the Partnership Director and Chair to share the HITRANS proposal with the Local Governance Matters Team for consideration as a test option for increased Local Governance in Transport and to approve the pre Phase Stage as outlined in the body of the Report; and**
- (3) **that if the proposal was well received and HITRANS were invited to work this up further the proposal would first be shared with Community Planning Partners and the five partner Councils before any further steps were taken to develop the proposal.**

Social Media Policy	7	<p>Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager and Ms Katy Cunningham, Office Manager submitted a Report outlining a proposed Social Media Policy. The Report stated that in recent years HITRANS had developed a limited social media presence primarily through the @HITRANS_RTP twitter account but was now also developing a wider social media profile to help promote the Scottish Island Passport initiative. Appendix 1 to the Report set out a proposed Social Media Policy for HITRANS that outlined both general guidance and acceptable use of social media platforms by HITRANS employees, Board Members, advisors and all other individuals and third parties who had access to HITRANS profiles on Social Media. The Report indicated that the Policy would apply to all Social Media interactions related to HITRANS, regardless of format or whether it was created within or out with HITRANS.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <p>(1) note the Report; and</p> <p>(2) approve the adoption of the Social Media Policy outlined in the Appendix to the Report.</p> <p>RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY</p>
Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2019/20	8	<p>With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 November 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.</p> <p>It was agreed to approve the amendments made to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2019/20 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.</p>
Research, Development and Delivery Draft Programme for 2020/21	9	<p>Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report to facilitate discussion on what Research, Development and Delivery activities were to be taken forward by HITRANS in 2020/21. The Report stated that the Partnership had agreed to include a provisional 2020/21 Programme within the Business Plan for 2019/20 to enable officers to take action without recourse to the Board for further approval if any project spend was cancelled between Partnership Board meetings allowing items approved within the Business Plan period to be brought forward.</p> <p>The Report detailed the provisional Programme and indicated that there was still scope for further projects to be included and budget allocation to be adjusted. The Report indicated that the Programme would be finalised within the 2020/21 Business Plan which would be considered by Members at the Partnership meeting in April 2020.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <p>(1) note the Report;</p> <p>(2) approve the draft Programme as proposed in the Report;</p> <p>(3) consider projects that could be added to the draft Programme; and</p> <p>(4) authorise the Chair and Partnership Director to finalise the Programme for inclusion in the 2020/21 Business Plan.</p>
HML Unfazed	10	<p>Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report indicating that HITRANS had commissioned SYSTRA to undertake a review of the current operation of, and investment in, the Highland Main Line (HML) between Perth and Inverness. The Report outlined the possible interventions required to address journey time and connectivity issues that previous investments had not resolved. The Report stated that the Study demonstrated that through a combination of circumstances a number of opportunities were emerging to develop a case for investment in the route to provide both a more attractive, faster and sustainable service. The Study recommended that support be sought from all potential stakeholders for a "Task Force" approach to developing a comprehensive cross-industry consensus based on local needs.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
Transport and	11	<p>Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on the</p>

Access to Health
and Social Care

Study which HITRANS were commissioning on behalf of the Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross (SLSWR) Transport and Access Group which was set up as part of the NHS service re-design process considering the provision of Health and Social Care services in the area. The Report stated that a budget of up to £10,000 exclusive of VAT had been made available for undertaking the work with 50% of the funding provided by HITRANS and 50% by the Scottish Governments NHS Directorate.

The Report indicated that following a tender evaluation process, Derek Halden Consultancy had been appointed to undertake the commission, with the Study expected to be completed in March 2020. A Report on the Study outputs would be taken to the next Partnership meeting.

It was agreed to :

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) consider how the impacts on transport and access to health and social care services might be better assessed and how those with responsibilities for transport services could better input into decision making around proposed changes to service provision in the future.**

Rural Rail Reviews 12

Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update in respect of the Far North Line Review Team which had been established in December 2016 with a remit to identify potential opportunities to improve connectivity, operational performance and journey time on the line. The Consolidation Report detailed in the Appendix to the Report was published in Autumn 2019 and provided a high-level overview of achievements, work in progress and future opportunities. Since then an officer from Transport Scotland had been appointed as sponsor for the project, and Network Rail were being funded through CP6 2019-24 Enhancement Funds to develop signalling and other capacity solutions. The Report highlighted that the exercise had been an excellent example of collaborative working by all parties involved.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Active Travel Update 13

With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 November 2019, Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. The Report stated that the Fund was due to be fully committed for the 2019/20 financial year, with projects delivered under five budget headings:

- Bikes on Buses
- Cycle Parking
- Active Travel Service Points
- Active Travel Masterplan Action Plan
- Active Travel Project Design

The Report indicated that suggestions were being sought for projects which could be taken forward in the next financial year and potential projects for 2020/21 were detailed within the Report.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) consider opportunities for advancing projects within the different Active Travel funding streams which would support HITRANS wider policy objectives and priorities.**

- 14 With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019 Mr Randal Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report providing an update on the HITRANS application to the Mobility as a Service (Maas) Investment Fund. The Report stated that the Maas Investment Fund was officially launched in June 2019 with a closing date for round 1 of 5 September 2019. The Report indicated that HITRANS had applied for funding and in December learned that the application had been successful for the first round.

The Report stated that the fund aimed to encourage people out of cars and onto sustainable forms of transport. The Report indicated that the pilot project would deliver a new unified Maas Platform (website and app) with a range of functions including journey planning, booking and payment for public transport services. The benefits of the Platform were detailed in the Report and included:

- Improved awareness of travel options
- Modal shift to sustainable and active travel
- More travel options
- Consistent fee across multiple modes removing the 'interchange cost' of moving between modes
- Ease of planning, booking and paying for integrated journeys
- Improved travel experience
- Reduced need to travel by car
- Improvements in public health
- Makes mobility more accessible (where users didn't know their travel options)
- Reduce congestion in urban areas
- Reduce pressure on the road network

The report noted the opportunity through the MaaS funding and Stronger Combined project to appoint a fully funded project officer.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) support the appointment of a project officer to manage the workstream if it can be fully funded from external sources.**

- 15 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on ongoing rail activity. The Report provided Members with an update on the following:

- ScotRail franchise
An update was provided with regards to the ScotRail franchise awarded to Abellio (Dutch Railways). Scottish Ministers announced in December 2019 their intention not to extend the contract with Abellio past March 2022.

UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps had announced his intention to end the Northern franchise there were mayoral calls for Abellio to be stripped of the West Midlands franchise. Great Western were under scrutiny as their current Direct Award was due to finish in March.
- Branchliner
Some early cost modelling had been completed, and a preparatory bid may be made to the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme for funding to investigate the feasibility in terms of wagon availability, train scheduling and market interest. This would require some match funding from HITRANS.
- Inverness Airport Dalcross Station
A renewed planning application for a major scheme incorporating a long loop and a two platform station was likely to be submitted in Summer 2020. The shift from a single platform was welcomed as it would help to create capacity for a full hourly Aberdeen-Inverness service.
- Skyefall
Network Rail, HITRANS and Highland Council were working on a draft Report investigating options for operating on the shared road-rail corridor. Once completed, further discussions would be held with the Office for Road and Rail on safety matters.

It was agreed to note the Report.

National Planning Framework 4

- 16 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report which provided an update on the early engagement being undertaken for the development of the National Planning Framework 4. The Report aimed to facilitate discussion with regards to regional priorities and also how HITRANS could best support partner organisations input to National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The Report stated that the NPF was a long term spatial plan for Scotland that would set out where development and infrastructure was required to support sustainable and inclusive growth. The Report indicated that the Scottish Government had started work to prepare the NPF4 which would look to Scotland in 2050. It would guide spatial development, set out national policies, designate national developments and reflect regional spatial priorities.

It was agreed to

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) consider the transport related regional priorities highlighted in the Report and authorise the Partnership Director to work with colleagues within partner Local Authorities in responding to the Early Engagement on the National Planning Framework 4.**

Far North Rail App

- 17 Mr David Gray, Non-Council Board Member, submitted a Report providing an update on a proposal to develop a Highlands Railway Heritage App, led by Robert Gordon University (RGU) in collaboration with HITRANS and ScotRail. The App would enable passengers to explore the natural and cultural heritage of the communities served by the Far North, Kyle of Lochalsh and West Highland Lines. The App and website would draw on an online repository of content in different forms and media.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) to consider options for match funding to support development of the Highlands Railway Digital Heritage App.**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Funding Consolidated Update

- 18 Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on HITRANS involvement in European Funded projects which included Horizon 2020, Interreg North Sea Region (NSR) and Interreg VA Cross Border Programme. The Appendix to the Report included details on all European projects HITRANS were involved in, including current status, timelines and a description of main activities. To support involvement in European projects a Business Support Assistant had been recruited to facilitate the administration and preparation of claims, reporting and project progress.

It was agreed to note the Report.

FASTER Project

- 19 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 September 2019, Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer submitted a Report which provided an update on the recent approval of the FASTER project being funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The application was first submitted in November 2018 but required an in-depth review from expert consultants due to the technical aspects of the project. The project was approved by the Steering Committee on 14th January and would officially commence once the Grant Offer letter was received.

The Report stated that the key objective of FASTER was to install 73 rapid charge points across the INTERREG VA region by 2023 to assist with the development and expansion of the cross-border electric vehicle public charging network. The programme area covered parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland, with the aim of increasing the number of EV car registrations in the area.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City Update

- 20 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on procurement of a new real-time passenger information contract which was a key element of the ERDF Smart Mobility project being undertaken in partnership with The Highland Council under the Smart Cities workstream – a collaborative ERDF funded Strategic Intervention entitled 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City'. The Report stated that Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth and Stirling were all members of the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), along with the Scottish Government. The Report indicated that the SCA was focused on three workstreams including low carbon, infrastructure, and smart cities. A smart city used data and technology to enhance the delivery of city services, promote economic growth, increase sustainability and engage more actively with its citizens. To further the smart cities workstream, Scotland's cities, led by Glasgow City Council, were undertaking a collaborative ERDF funded Strategic Intervention entitled 'Scotland's 8th City – the Smart City'.

The Report stated that the purchase of a new Real-time Passenger Information system for the HITRANS region was the last remaining substantial project under the Phase 1 workstream which included the installation of 238 smart bus stop units in Inverness that meant there was public transport information at every bus stop in the city for the first time. Also included in this initial £1,000,000 package of projects was a wireless mesh network for the city which facilitates real-time communication and management of traffic signals across Inverness including the implementation of adaptive bus priority at those junctions.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

RECC Ferry Procurement Inquiry

- 21 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report to allow members to consider and comment on the draft response prepared by officers to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee Inquiry into the Procurement of Vessels for Scotland's ferry services. The Report stated that on 20 December 2019, the Scottish Government's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee (RECC) launched an inquiry into the construction and procurement of ferry vessels in Scotland. The remit of the inquiry was to identify and address current and future challenges and opportunities in the procurement of new vessels to support Scotland's ferries network. Interested individuals and organisations were invited to submit evidence in writing by 7 February 2020.

A draft response to the enquiry was detailed in the Appendix to the Report. Members were invited to comment on the draft response and officers would update the document as necessary prior to submission.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) authorise the Partnership Director and Chair to finalise the HITRANS response which would factor in comments made by members at the meeting**

Infrastructure Commission for Scotland – Key Findings Report

- 22 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Director submitted a Report providing a summary of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland's Key Findings Report with respect to transport infrastructure in the Highlands and Islands. The Report stated that the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland (ICS) was tasked with advising on the priorities for investment over the next 30 years to meet economic growth and societal needs and how that might be delivered. The ICS would support Scottish Government's delivery of its National Infrastructure Mission and the development of its next Infrastructure Investment Plan to run until 2023. The ICS would advise on the key strategic and early foundation investments that were needed to significantly boost economic growth and support the delivery of Scotland's low carbon objectives and achievement of its climate change targets. The Report indicated that the Advisory Commission published its Phase 1 Key Findings Report at the end of 2019. A copy of the Sector Summary section on Transport was attached as an appendix to the Report.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) authorise the Partnership Director and Chair to submit a response to the Key Findings Report on behalf of HITRANS.**

