

Minute of Meeting held via
Microsoft Teams on Friday 5
February 2021 at 9.30am.

PRESENT		<p> 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 Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member </p>
IN ATTENDANCE		<p> Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer Mr Richard Gerring, The Highland Council Mrs Anne Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mr Gavin Barr, Orkney Islands Council Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council Mr Nicky Sobey, HIE Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council Mrs Yvonne Maciver, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar </p>
APOLOGIES		<p> Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary </p>
Declaration of Interest	of	<p>Mr Robert Andrew indicated that he had retired as Stagecoach Scotland Regional Director in June 2020 and was employed on a part-time basis as a Director of Scottish Citylink.</p>
MINUTES		
Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020	1	<p>It was agreed to approve the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020.</p>
Matters Arising	2	<p>Item 6 - Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that a presentation had been circulated to all Members in relation to Transport and Access to Health and Social Care.</p> <p>Item 7 - Civtech 5.0 – Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that demo week of Civtech had been a success and stated that a response to the funding application was awaited.</p> <p>Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that all actions had been completed following the last meeting of the Partnership on 13 November 2020.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the updates.</p>
FINANCE		
Revenue Monitoring Report	Budget Report	3
		<p>With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer submitted the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020. The Report stated that the annual budget was</p>

– 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2020

approved at the Board Meeting held on 7 February 2020 and had subsequently been amended for the inclusion of the 2019/20 underspend of £7,072. The budget also included 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 detailed the financial position to 31 December 2020 which indicated that in total income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

It was agreed to note the Report and the attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 December 2020.

Draft Budget 2021/22 4

With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 7 February 2020, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, presented the Draft Budget 2021/22 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 2021/22 financial year.**

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/ Strategy Development Programme for 2020/21 5

With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020, 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 at the Partnership meeting on 24th April 2020. The Report indicated that the Programme had been amended to reflect changes that had been identified to the circumstances surrounding some projects.

It was agreed to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2020/21 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Research, Development and Delivery Programme for 2021/22 6

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing Research, Development and Delivery activities to be taken forward by HITRANS in 2021/22. The Report stated that the Partnership had agreed to include a provisional 2021/22 Programme within the Business Plan for 2020/21 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.

The Report indicated that the Programme would be finalised within the 2021/22 Business Plan and that a draft version of the Business Plan would be considered by Members at the Partnership meeting in April 2021.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) approve the draft Programme detailed in the Report;**
- (3) consider projects that could be added to the draft Programme; and**

(4) delegate responsibility to the Chair and Director to finalise the Programme for inclusion in the 2021/22 Business Plan which would be tabled at the April Partnership Board Meeting.

Scottish Passport Update	Islands Project	7	With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 24 April 2020, Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop, Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager submitted a Report providing an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. The Report provided information in relation to the progress of the project in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• App Development• App User Testing• Website• Physical Passport• Community and Stakeholder engagement• Marketing and brand building
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It was agreed to note the Report.

Rural Bus Support Funding	Service and	8	Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report in respect of the £500m Bus Partnership Fund being introduced by Government. The fund was designed primarily to relieve congestion impacts on bus service running and encouraging a mode shift from car to bus. The fund would offer limited opportunity to address issues with rural bus service whose primary need was revenue support and officers were developing a paper on the issue of finding ways to support rural bus services.
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The Report stated that there was a real opportunity in the current context to deliver services in new ways, using technology as well as community involvement, to inform good service design and delivery. The Next Steps and potential Bus and Community Transport Interventions were:

- (1) Introducing a Rural Transport Fund – if managed at RTP level there would be no impacts on local government grant in terms of ring fenced funding or grant formula. This would enable targeting and learning between areas across the region for a pipeline approach to delivery on the ground;
- (2) Reinstating RTP capital passenger transport grant to support improvements to infrastructure and public transport capital assets including within the community transport sector;
- (3) Introducing an Enhanced DRT funding stream – managed at RTP level and developed collaboratively with local authorities and community anchor groups including existing CT providers and the CTA; and
- (4) Investigating the potential for more regional collaboration on Public Transport and DRT management and operations.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report;**
- (2) to consider the suggested Next Steps and whether these represented a useful first step in an effort to engage partners and decision makers on how to support rural passenger transport services to address the decline in patronage over recent years; and**
- (3) that a press release be issued in relation to this Report to highlight the difficulties that the constituent authorities were suffering and indicating that revenue**

funding was required and that a further submission would be submitted to the Scottish Government.

Fort William 9
Opportunities
Around Rail

Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report indicating that Fort William suffered from well-known congestion problems, with journey low reliability on the road networks across the town especially during April-September. It was further indicated that the increase in tourist traffic impacted on HGV movements at major industrial sites. This was exacerbated when accidents occur leading to very lengthy diversions. The Report stated that the congestion was not only in the peaks but could also be impacted by tourist staying in the town overnight leaving their accommodation to journey out to visitor attractions. It was highlighted that uniquely rail could provide alleviation for some of these problems.

The Report indicated that rail could:

- Provide school travel to Lochaber High from Tulloch in, available for commuters also.
- Provide school travel into Mallaig High.
- Develop park and ride on the A82 north of the town also Spean Bridge.
- Service Nevis range?
- Encourage trips to Glenfinnan (though many just want to see a train on the viaduct rather than travel over it).
- Create a new station at Ben Nevis distillery for the High School.
- Provide increased freight through an intermodal terminal at Corpach or
- Tomnafaire, timber handling at Corpach and aluminium ingots and associated products at the smelter.
- Satisfy the demand for parcels and online deliveries.

The Report indicated that HITRANS would appoint a specialist consultant to identify on timetable options based on an additional unit being allocated to Fort William, with an indication of traincrew resources required.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

Strategic Active 10
Travel Network

Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer submitted a Report providing an update on Sustrans' proposed Strategic Active Travel Network and 30 Year Delivery Plan. The Report provided background information and detailed work that had been carried out to date. The Report stated that two workshops for delivery partners were held in December 2020 and input was being sought on the Delivery Plan during 2021. The Report further stated that Sustrans wished to work with partners regarding the current and proposed routes in the Plan, potential crossovers with local transport plans, development plans, and identification of projects which could be delivered along existing route corridors and those which could potentially extend the network. The Report indicated that individual meetings would be organised in early 2021 with Local Authorities and other Partners.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Inverness 11
Masterplan

Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing members with information on developments towards the creation of an integrated transport interchange at Inverness. The Report provided background information in relation to the project and provided further details in relation to land acquisition, the Master Planning Steering Group and areas of activity.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Active Travel Update	12	<p>With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020, Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel officer submitted a Report providing an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. The Report stated that a total of £187k was available for projects in 2020/21 through the Regional Active Travel Fund.</p>
		<p>The Report indicated that within the £100k Sustrans Partnership Fund, the following projects were complete or nearing completion:</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wick and Thurso Active Travel Masterplan updates • Elgin Active Travel Map • Carrbridge Rural Spaces – 20mph, traffic calming, place-making • Inner Moray Firth Active Travel Masterplans also being taken forward across two financial years
		<p>It was agreed to:</p>
		<p>(1) note the Report; and</p> <p>(2) consider opportunities for advancing projects within the Active Travel funding streams which would support HITRANS wider policy objectives and priorities.</p>
MaaS Project Status Update	13	<p>With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020, Mrs Marelise Hamar, MaaS Project Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on the HITRANS Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Project. The Report stated that the MaaS project was now well underway and until close of 2020 had been tracking consistently against the previously reported COVID adjusted milestone dates. The Report indicated that as a result of the renewed COVID restrictions the pilot project go-live date had been revised from March 2021 to June 2021.</p>
		<p>The Report indicated that the pilot project was planned to run for a total period of 12 months and 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.</p>
		<p>The Report stated that it had been previously reported that as a result of the impact of COVID-19, Ticketer would no longer be able to support the project due to a lack of available resourcing. The Report further stated that working in conjunction with Transport Scotland the funding allocated to Ticketer was now being considered for the purpose of contributing towards round two funding activities.</p>
		<p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
	14	<p>CONSULTATION</p>
Scottish Government Strategy and Consultation Update	15	<p>Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on a number of Scottish Government and Transport Scotland policy documents and consultations including the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2), National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan 2020-22 and the Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032.</p>
		<p>It was agreed:</p>
		<p>(1) to note the Report; and</p> <p>(2) that the Chair and Partnership Director be authorised to submit the results from on the Case for Change Reports, following circulation to the membership of the Partnership.</p>

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

- EU Funding Consolidated Update 16 With reference to item 15 of the Minute of Meeting of 13 November 2020, Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Officer submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included programmes Horizon 2020, Interreg North Sea Region (NSR) and Interreg VA Cross Border Programme and feedback was welcomed on additional information that might be helpful to include in the projects log.

The Report indicated that HITRANS was currently involved in seven ongoing European projects. The Appendix to the Report provided details on all projects including current status, timelines, description of main activities, a Gantt Chart showing involvement into 2023 and a consolidated budgets table. The Report stated that amounts had been converted into GBP using the European Commission's official monthly exchange rate and that as of January 2021, HITRANS total budget for European projects was £4,506,799.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PARTNERSHIP

- Regional Transport Strategy Update 17 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report in respect of a proposal to update the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy. The Report stated that in order to take cognisance of the National Transport Strategy 2 and reflect on both the significant changes to the wider policy framework and the impacts of the pandemic on transport priorities within the region it was proposed that HITRANS officers commence a proportionate update of the Regional Transport Strategy. The Report highlighted that a number of other Regional Transport Partnerships were currently in the process of updating their Strategies.

The Report indicated that while some of the wider policy framework had developed since HITRANS last consulted through its Main Issues Report and draft RTS, it was felt that there was not a need to undertake a repeat public consultation on the strategic transport priorities of the area given the comprehensive exercise undertaken by Transport Scotland in developing STPR2 just last year. It was proposed that an update be initially developed to include the following elements

- A review of the vision, high level and sub objectives
- A review of the draft delivery plan, STPR2 options and priorities within the context of local, regional and national policy changes since 2017.
- Set out a vision of what HITRANS can offer as a Regional Transport Partnership within the context of a national review of transport governance.

The Report stated that this work would enable a draft updated Strategy to be developed which would then be published for public consultation prior to the submission of a final version to Scottish Ministers seeking their approval.

It was agreed to approve:

- (1) that HITRANS officers further develop proposals for updating the Regional Transport Strategy in conjunction with Partnership Advisors as part of the Business Plan for 2021/22; and**
- (2) that a further Report be taken back to a future Partnership meeting setting out the more detail the scope and timetable to update the Regional Transport Strategy.**

