



2020

2021



HITRANS ANNUAL REPORT



FOREWORD



Ranald Robertson,
HITRANS Partnership Director

2020/21 was a challenging year for us all and HITRANS of course has not been insulated from the seismic shifts that the pandemic has had on how we live, work and travel.

As the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands HITRANS have been very closely involved in

the regional response to the pandemic and we have represented the region on a national basis too.

The Partnership Director has been involved as a Member of the Transport Transition Plan National Advisory Group and officers have been involved in multiple local forums and the Engagement Arrangements around ferry service Transition Arrangements led by Government on both Clyde and Hebrides and Northern Isles Ferry Services.

Working arrangements changed overnight in late March 2020 with the Partnership responding quickly to improve arrangements for home working and establishing systems for virtual meetings. The use of MS Teams and other IT video conferencing systems was not new to HITRANS but the extent we had to move to this format for daily business represented a significant change and extended to our Board meeting through MS Teams in April 2020 and throughout the year. Fortunately HITRANS already had good systems in place to support agile working and our journey to the new normal was perhaps made easier by this.

A lot of our business activity was impacted by the pandemic. Areas such as our shared service for Public Transport Information saw a very high level of service change as bus operators responded to the very changed demand for their services with only essential workers travelling and public health advice promoting alternative travel arrangements. During 2020/21 our focus on public transport information has been to ensure digital information services were kept up to date.

EU project activity continued although as with other aspects of our work this moved to virtual meetings.

An area that saw increased focus during the year was active travel and HITRANS was able to work closely with partner Councils to improve facilities for walking and cycling which became so important to our mental and physical wellbeing throughout the year. This has included work towards introducing a public eBike dock system in Inverness.

We continue to work with operators and Transport Scotland to support the development of our strategic services. This has included representation on the Strategic Transport Projects Review Process where the Highlands and Islands Regional Group is Chaired by the Partnership Director and we are members on the Argyll and Bute Regional Group. Officers are also engaged closely with Transport Scotland on the planning for the Islands Connectivity Plan which will replace the Ferries Plan.

We would like to thank our many public and private partners for their support throughout the challenging year of 2020/21. We know there will still be challenges in 2021/22 but we hope that this will see us move towards greater normality.

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BOARD, ADVISORS AND STAFF

The HITRANS Board comprises a Councillor from each local authority area covered by the partnership and 3 non-council members appointed in a personal capacity by the Board and approved by the Minister for Transport following open advertisement and selection. The Board has appointed a group of professional advisers who play an important role, working with the executive team, in developing strategy. The executive team report to the Board.

BOARD

CLr Allan Henderson, Chair (Highland Council)
CLr John Cowe, Vice Chair (Moray Council)
CLr Graham Sinclair (Orkney Islands Council)
CLr Uisdean Robertson (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)
CLr Robin Currie (Argyll and Bute Council)
Mrs Naomi Bremner
Prof David Gray
Mr Robert Andrew

ADVISORS

Gavin Barr (Orkney Islands Council)
Grant Campbell (Scottish Council for Development and Industry)
Fergus Murray (Argyll and Bute Council)
Angus Murray (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)
Malcolm MacLeod (Highland Council)
Nicky Sobey (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)
Nicola Moss (Moray Council)

STAFF TEAM

Ranald Robertson (Partnership Director)
Katy Cunningham (Business Manager)
Neil MacRae (Partnership Manager)
Vikki Trelfer (Active Travel Officer)
Frank Roach (Partnership Manager)
Julie Cromarty (Public Transport Information Officer)
Jayne Golding (Projects and Policy Officer)
Marelise Hamar (Project Officer – MaaS)
Rachael MacKenzie (Business Support Assistant)
Kelly Martin (Graduate Project Support Officer)
Rachel MacLean (Project Support Assistant)
Sarah Compton Bishop / Kirsten Gow
(Project Manager - Scottish Islands Passport)



CLr Allan Henderson, Chair (Highland Council), right
CLr John Cowe, Vice Chair (Moray Council), left

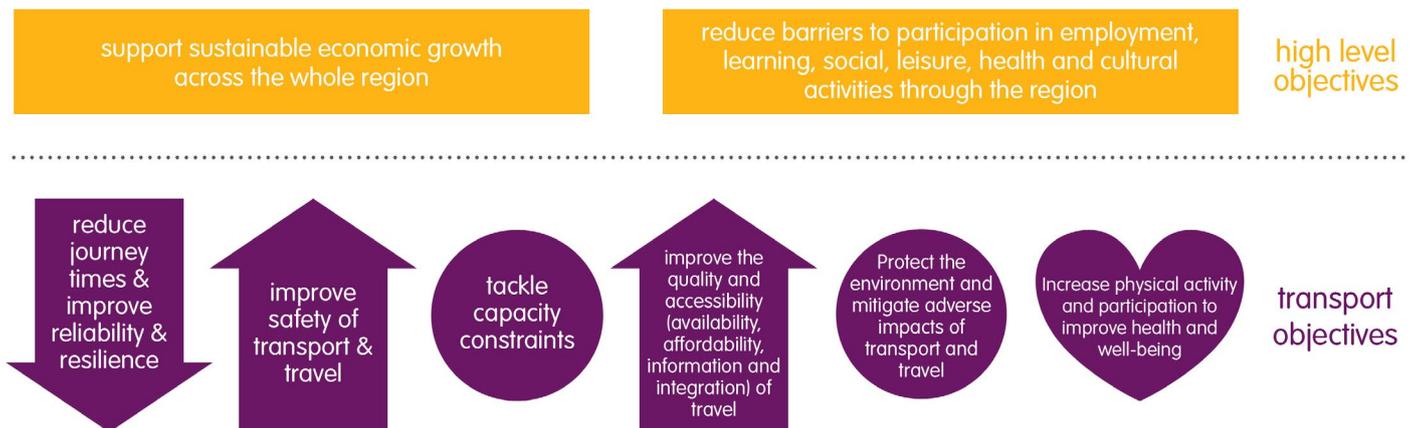
THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Transport Scotland Act 2005 placed the preparation of the Regional Transport Strategy as the first duty of the Regional Transport Partnerships. The Strategies are strategic high level documents that focus on the transport strategies necessary to support Government's key objectives and the single outcome agreements of the constituent local authorities.

HITRANS updated Regional Transport Strategy (2018), sets out a vision to deliver connectivity across the region which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities.

The RTS objectives were also updated as set out below. They were underpinned by two high level objectives which were to:

- Support sustainable economic growth across the whole region
- Reduce barriers to participation in employment, learning, social, leisure, health and cultural activities throughout the region



SUPPORTING LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLANS



As a statutory community planning partner HITRANS works across our five CPP areas to provide transportation support to the process. The work of CPPs continues to evolve and Single Outcome Agreements are now to be replaced with Local Outcome Improvement Plans that will enable priority areas to be identified and addressed by Partners.

The modern transport system that is detailed in the Regional Transport Strategy will support a smarter community through better access to learning opportunities. The Strategy and the joint working of the Partnership, its Councils and Community Planning partners will help people across the Highlands and Islands to sustain and improve their health, ensuring faster, more reliable, and more affordable access to healthcare, and greater opportunities to lead an active lifestyle through active travel access to local services and facilities. HITRANS is actively engaging in the SOA process covering each of the five Community Planning Partnerships in our region.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY



The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and its associated RTS Delivery Plan set out the key priorities, proposals and interventions required to support successful implementation and realisation of the Strategy's Vision and Objectives. Each year the Partnership approves a Business Plan which sets out the Partnership's key delivery priorities for the financial year concerned.

The Business Plan details the projects the Partnership is involved in and an update is reported to the Partnership Board which meets four times per annum. These projects link to the aims of the strategy and the Annual Report provides a report of performance against objectives, targets and performance indicators as outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

During 2020/21 the Business Plan set out a wide range of regional, local regional and national scale projects that have been delivered. These include:-

- Ongoing development, monitoring and refresh of the RTS

- Orkney Internal Air and Ferry Study Outline Business Case
- Real Time Passenger Information
- Inverness Airport (Dalcross) Station Development
- HiTravel Shared Service Travel Information Project
- Smarter Choices Smarter Places Project Support
- GO-HI MaaS Project (MaaS Investment Fund)
- G-PaTRA North Sea Area Project
- MOVE North Sea Area Project
- INCLUSION Horizon 2020 Project
- PAV North Sea Region Project
- Stronger Combined North Sea Region Project
- FASTER SEUPB Programme Project
- ERDF Smart Cities – Scotland's 8th City ERDF
- Low Carbon Transport and Travel ERDF
- EU Project Development (eHubs, Ride2Autonomy)
- CivTech 5.0 Programme

HITRANS also received direct budget from Transport Scotland to support the delivery of a Regional Active Travel Fund and at the end of the financial year an allocation from the unallocated



Transport Scotland Active Travel programme to deliver the following projects:

- Feasibility and Design of Active Travel Routes
- Bikes on Buses
- Cycle Parking at Interchanges
- Active Travel Masterplan Implementation
- Inverness eBike Dock System

In addition to the above projects, the Active Travel partnership with Sustrans during 2020/21 secured a grant allocation of £100,000 from the national Places for programme to support the development and provision of Active Travel projects across the region.

During 2020/21 projects delivered under this programme include:-

- Active Travel Workplace Challenge
- Cycle Counters
- Cycle Shelters
- Cycle Stands
- Cycle Lockers
- Active Travel Maps
- Active Travel Facilities at Transport Hubs
- Active Travel Feasibility and Design

In addition to its principal focus on developing and delivering the RTS through work on the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme a significant proportion of staff time and resource was committed to supporting Community Planning engagement and activity in all five partner Council areas.

Further information on the Partnership's activity, the Regional Transport Strategy and our Revenue and Strategy Delivery Programme work can be obtained by visiting our website www.hitrans.org.uk.

EQUALITIES SCHEME

HITRANS as the Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands has statutory duties to have an Equalities Scheme and take very seriously engagement in matters relating to equality. Since the Partnership was established at the beginning of 2006, we have made significant progress in adopting and implementing policies in the human resources area which have equalities of opportunity enshrined within them. In addition, a major theme throughout our Regional Transport Strategy is the need for equality of access to transport facilities and services and through these to jobs, health care, education, shopping and social activities.

We have a statutory duty to publish an equalities scheme under legislation covering Race, Gender and Disability and we chose to introduce a single scheme addresses what we intend to do in these areas. It also addresses our proposals in other areas as well, for example age, religion/belief and sexuality.

We have chosen to combine these commitments in one equalities scheme rather than publish a series of individual schemes addressing specific legal duties but we have made it clear in the scheme which sectors of society should benefit from our proposals. The publication of this scheme is not the end of our duty to promote equal opportunities but simply the beginning. We hope that stakeholders and service users find this scheme informative and we welcome constructive feedback with a view to its improvement.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

ACTIVE TRAVEL ADVISORY GROUP

The Active Travel Advisory Group (ATAG) meets twice per year. The Group is attended by local authority transport officers, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, cycle campaigners, access officers, and representatives from the health sector and transport operators.

The group has been engaged in the Active Travel Town Audit/ Masterplan process and acts as a forum for those interested in the greenest form of transport to share ideas and expertise at a regional level.



FERRY CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Scottish Government tasked the Regional Transport Partnerships to put in place arrangements to provide consultative mechanisms between the operator, users and public agencies for the ferry network serving the Clyde, Hebrides, and Northern Isles.

The first line of consultation is between island groups and the ferry operator (Tier 1), with three second tier committees largely concerned with longer term planning and route development. The arrangements are now well established and the Tier 1 groups meet two to three times per annum.

There are four ferry user groups. These are:

- Clyde, Kintyre and Islands
- Argyll, Lochaber, Skye, Raasay and Small Isles
- Hebrides
- Orkney Transport and Travel Forum

AVIATION CONSULTATION GROUP

Our strategy for aviation is to enhance connectivity within the region and to our national gateways; to increase links with countries outside the UK; to retain the London services particularly through Heathrow and Gatwick; and to manage the environmental impact of aviation on the region without adversely affecting economic growth and sustainability of our communities.

To help us take forward these strategic aspirations HITRANS has established the Aviation Consultation Group with membership drawn from representatives of our key aviation stakeholders. The Group is chaired by HITRANS Board Member Wilson Metcalfe who brings a wealth of practical real world experience to the Group.

TRANSPORT COORDINATORS GROUP

The HITRANS Transport Coordinating Officers Group (HITCOG) is formed of officers from HITRANS and local authority transport officers and aims to deal with technical issues and share good practice in relation to the management and delivery of passenger transport coordination across the Highlands and Islands. The group meets two or three times each year.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Audited Annual Accounts presented a public statement on the stewardship of funds for the benefit of both members of the Transport Partnership and the public. The Partnership is funded by The Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Argyll & Bute Council (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond).

The Partnership's financial results for the year, compared against budget, are as shown below. The full Audited Accounts are available at this link.

BUDGET PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

2019/20			
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Staff costs	578	585	7
Property costs	22	20	(2)
Travel and subsistence costs	28	2	(26)
Administration and meeting costs	32	28	(4)
Research and strategy development costs	540	1,144	604
Publicity costs	10	10	-
European projects costs	-	824	824
Support services	40	39	(1)
Gross expenditure	1,250	2,652	1,402
Government grants	(1,790)	(1,279)	(489)
Other grants	(100)	(805)	(705)
Other income	(160)	(365)	(205)
Constituent Council requisitions	(200)	(200)	-
Gross income	(1,250)	(2,649)	(1,399)
Net expenditure	-	3	3

Overall the budget was overspent by £0.003m and this sum was transferred to the General

Fund Reserve with the main variations from budget during the year being as follows:

- Government grants exceeded their target. The excess was specific to particular projects included in the research and strategy development costs budget.
- The overspends in both research and strategy development costs and European projects costs are offset by third party contributions, included in other income, for project work and grant income received in respect of European projects. Given the nature of the unpredictability of both the expenditure and income profiles at budget setting time it is very hard to set a definitive budget. However, going forward, a more realistic budget will be set and adjusted through the regular financial monitoring reported to the Partnership Board.
- The budget for other grants relates to a grant from Sustrans for cycling project work. The majority of the favourable variance relates to grant income for European projects.

PUBLIC SERVICES REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

HITRANS 19/20

Section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year each listed public body must publish a statement of the steps it has taken during the financial year to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions.

During 2019/20 HITRANS has continued implementing a number of initiatives that have improved efficiency, effectiveness and economy and these are outlined below, following on from our actions the previous year. The table below details the information we publish under the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 which can also be accessed at this link.

HITRANS, as a statutory Regional Transport Partnership, is a listed body within the Act.

HITRANS Public Reforms Act Information Period covering 01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021			
1)	Public Relations Statement		
	Category	Supplier	External costs - invoiced
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£195.00
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£395.00
	Enable Magazine Thistle Card Advert: Jan/Feb 2020	Tactran	£166.00
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£1,000.00
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£240.00
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£60.00
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£1,000.00
	Design and Artwork of Integration of GO-HI map	Mako Creative	£105.00
	Design and Artwork of Rural Bus service document	Mako Creative	£70.00
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£180.00
	Total		£3,411.00
			Supplier Total
			£2,455.00
			£175.00
			£615.00

2)	Overseas Travel					
	Reason	Origin / Destination	No. Employees / Members	Travel Costs	Accommodation / Meals	Other Expenditure
	Total					£0.00

3)	Hospitality & Entertainment	
	Date	Reason
	Total	£0.00

4)	External Consultancy			
	Supplier	Project / Service	Total	Supplier Total
	Stantec	Fastline Faslane STAG Appraisal x 3 payments	£17,589.00	
	Bax & Company	PAV Project	€ 2,500.00	
	Stantec	Orkney OBC Interim Account - Joint with HIE x 10 payments	€ 132,605.00	150,194.00
	Pedersen Consulting	Barra and Vatersay Community Ferry Initiative Feasibility Study	£900.00	
	Eyland Skyn	Rural Bus Services Support and Funding / STPR2 Support	£2,500.00	
	Reference Economics Consultants	Union Connectivity Review Consultation	£900.00	
	Total		£156,994.00	

5)	Payments in Excess of £25,000			
	Payee	Commodity / Service Description	Payment Date	Amount
	Mobilleo	MaaS - Funded by Project		£80,000.00
	Shotl	MaaS - Funded by Project		£32,500.00
	Enterprise Car Club	MaaS - Funded by Project		£49,166.67
	Bewegen	Electric Bike Share Scheme in Inverness - Regional Active Travel Fund		£93,000.60
	The Highland Council	Active Travel Link, Balmakeith Ind Est, Nairn - Regional Active Travel Fund		£60,000.00
	The Routing Company	External Funding Match - Funded by Project		£84,000.00
	The Routing Company			£398,667.27

6)	Members or employees who received remuneration in excess of £150,000			
	Nil return.			



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