

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

IN ATTENDANCE
 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
 Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council
 Ms Tracy Urry, The Highland Council
 Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Ms Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Ms Laura Cromarty, Orkney Islands Council
 Ms Nicola Moss, Moray Council
 Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council
 Mr Grant Campbell, SCDI
 Ms Jayne Golding, HITRANS
 Ms Gemma Robinson, HITRANS
 Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
 Mr. John Boyd, Grant Thornton

APOLOGIES
 Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair)
 Mr Robert Andrew (from 11.00am)
 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
 Mr Jim Buck, Orkney Islands Council

Declaration of Interest
 Mr Robert Andrew indicated that he had retired as Regional Director of Stagecoach Scotland in June 2020 and was employed on a part-time basis as a Director of Scottish Citylink and undertakes ad hoc consultancy for Shiel Buses.

MINUTES

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| Minute of Meeting of 12 September 2021 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 12 September 2021 was approved . |
| Matters Arising | 2 | Mr Ranald Robertson provided the following updates:

Item 9 – an initial meeting with the consultants undertaking the Fair Fares Appraisal had taken place and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Item 10 – the response the ScotRail Timetable Consultation had been submitted. |

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2021 to 31 October 2021 3 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 October 2021 and the projected year end position. The Report stated that the annual budget was as approved at the Board Meeting held on 5 February 2021, subsequently amended for the inclusion of the 2020/21 General Reserve Fund balance carried forward of £4,014. The summary statement showed the financial position to 31 October 2021 and indicated that income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

It was agreed to approve the Report and attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 October 2021.

HITRANS Annual Audit Report 4 Mr John Boyd, Grant Thornton, indicated that the impact of remote working had delayed completion of the Annual Audit Report. The final Report would include an assessment of COVID impacts. The final Report would be circulated upon completion. Mr Boyd thanked Mr Mike Mitchell and HITRANS Officers for the assistance during the audit.

It was agreed to note the update.

2020/21 Audited Accounts 5 Mr Mike Mitchell indicated that the audited accounts would be circulated upon completion.

It was agreed to note the update.

Statement on Internal Control 2019/20 and 2020/21 6 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 highlighted 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.

It was agreed to note the content of the Statement of Internal Control and the audit opinion provided for both financial years.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2021/22 7 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 17 September 2021, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development Programme and seeking approval of amendments to the Programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2021/22 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 23rd April 2021.

It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2021/22 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

HYDROBUS 8 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the Hydrobus Project. The Report stated that HITRANS had been approached by Protium Energy with a proposal to trial a hydrogen bus in Inverness. HITRANS agreed to fund the hydrogen supply, Caetano to provide the bus and Stagecoach to run the services which were to operate before and during COP26. The Report highlighted that feedback from drivers and passengers indicated that they were enthusiastic about the vehicle, noting its lack of noise and smooth, quick acceleration and braking.

It was agreed to approve the Report.

CMAL – Vessels and Infrastructure Update 9 The Chair welcomed Mr Kevin Hobbs and Mr Brian Fulton, CMAL, to the meeting. Mr Hobbs gave a presentation on CMAL’s Ferry Replacement Programme. Members were given the opportunity of asking questions of Mr Hobbs.

It was agreed to note the presentation.

Active Travel Update 10 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 17 September 2021, 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 HITRANS would be asked to submit a bid for funding for 2022/23 to Transport Scotland in December/January, so ideas were invited for capital projects which HITRANS funding could add value to, and design projects which could be funded at 100%.

It was agreed to note the Report and consider opportunities for advancing projects within the Active Travel funding streams which would support HITRANS wider policy objectives and priorities.

Rail Round Up 11 Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on rail matters in the HITRANS area. The Report provided an update on the following projects:

- Request to Stop
- Fair Exchange
- Inverness Station Masterplan
- Inverness Airport Station
- Zero Emissions Train Programme
- Going With The Flow
- Timetable Consultations

It was agreed to note the Report.

Shared Services Update - Public Transport Information Provision	12	<p>Ms Julie Cromarty, Public Transport Information Officer and Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on the shared service model for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area.</p> <p>It was agreed to:</p> <p>(1) note the Report; and</p> <p>(2) approve the proposed staffing proposals to provide cover while the current Public Transport Information Officer was on secondment.</p>
MaaS Project Status Update	13	<p>With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 17 September 2021, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing an update on the HITRANS (Mobility as a Service) MaaS Project. The Report indicated that the HITRANS MaaS Solution was called GO-HI and was launched at MVP (Minimum Viable Product) stage on 21 June 2021.</p> <p>The Report detailed that GO-HI was a Regional, multi-modal journey planning system using real-time data that offers account-based payment available to all users for all participating mobility options. The Report indicated that the funding obtained was intended for an initial 6-month live pilot project but through internal virement of budget and additional funding from the Stronger Combined North Sea Region Project it had been possible to launch the platform for a 24-month period by which time it was hoped that the platform would become sustainable based on use. The Report stated that in addition to the platform the partnership with our INTERREG North Sea Region project, 'Stronger Combined' was also enabling the introduction of the Inverness eBike Dock System and MaaS programme marketing. A combination of Stronger Combined and Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding had enabled the appointment of a project officer to deliver the work.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
SATE Project	14	<p>Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in the Innovate UK Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) Project.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
Scottish Islands Passport Update	15	<p>With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report providing an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. The Report stated that following a stakeholder 'sneak peak' live webinar in July, the Scottish Islands Passport app was released publicly for iOS and Android. Following feedback gathered during user testing in the Shetland isles, functionality of the app was improved prior to release, including the new ability for users to create and store their photo journals.</p> <p>The Report highlighted that as of 1 November 2021 the app had 906 unique users and a total of 5,846 unique user sessions (the number of times the app had been used), which was encouraging given there had been minimal marketing activity to date.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>

CONSULTATION

Scottish Aviation Strategy Consultation 16 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report introducing a consultation by the Scottish Government to inform the development of a Scottish Aviation Strategy. The Report highlighted that aviation formed a crucial, often lifeline, element of the transport network in many parts of the HITRANS area. The consultation provided an opportunity to highlight priorities relating to aviation and air services in the Highlands and Islands and officers would prepare a draft response which would be circulated to Members for comment.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) consider those priorities for HITRANS to identify in responding to the Consultation;**
- (3) seek a meeting between Transport Scotland and Partnership Advisors;**
- (4) approve the preparation of a draft response by Officers for Members to comment upon; and**
- (5) authorise the Chair and Partnership Director to submit HITRANS final response.**

A82 Consultation 17 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report seeking approval of the HITRANS response to the Transport Scotland consultation on their proposals for upgrading the A82 between Tarbet – Inverarnan. The Report stated that upgrading of the section between Tarbet and Inverarnan was highlighted as the main priority in the original Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR, 2008) for addressing the wider objectives of improving the A82 between Glasgow and Oban/Fort William.

The Report indicated that HITRANS had welcomed the Transport Ministers' recent commitment to upgrading this key strategic route and delivering the improved journey times, road safety and resilience of the strategic network that the upgrade would deliver.

It was agreed to approve the HITRANS response to Transport Scotland's consultation on the Tarbet to Inverarnan scheme detailed in Appendix A to the Report.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Funding Consolidated Update 18 Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included programmes Interreg North Sea Region, Interreg VA Cross Border, Interreg North West Europe and European Commission Connect 2020.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PARTNERSHIP

Review of HITRANS 19 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director and Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer
Financial Regulations and Standing Order. The Report stated the previous Review was approved by the Partnership
Contract Standing Orders at its meeting on 25 November 2016 for both the Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders. The Report indicated that the Review had now been completed by the Partnership Director and Finance Manager and the findings and recommendations for changes were presented for the Board's consideration.

It was agreed to approve the application to HITRANS of the Highland Council Financial Regulations September 2021 and Contract Standing Orders November 2017, to be implemented forthwith.

The Chair indicated that Mr Mike Mitchell would shortly be retiring from the Highland Council and thanked Mr Mitchell for all his contribution to HITRANS and, on behalf of Members and Officers, wished him a long and happy retirement.

Risk Management: 20 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report reviewing the Strategic,
Risk Register Management/Operational and Financial Risks faced by the Partnership and through
Update – doing so ensuring significant risks were identified, evaluated and controlled.

November 2021

The Report stated that the HITRANS Risk Register was subject to annual review, the latest of which was undertaken in November 2020. This had again been reviewed by Officers to ensure it continued to support the good management of the major risks faced by HITRANS.

It was agreed to approve adoption of the HITRANS Risk Register November 2021 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.