



# HITRANS Annual Report 2021/22



# FOREWORD

2021/22 was another interesting and challenging year for HITRANS.

The year saw strong steps made in the recovery from the pandemic and new patterns in how we work, travel and do business become more established.

2021/22 was a year where the local government elections taking place in May 2022 meant a likelihood of organisational change and so that turned out to be the case with a number of our elected members retiring from local government at the elections including our Chair Cllr Allan Henderson. At our final Partnership meeting we took the opportunity to thank our Board Members for their support and service to HITRANS over the term.

We have continued to work with partner Councils on shared service activity in Public Transport Information, EU projects, UKRI projects and key delivery areas including active travel. Transport Scotland have provided very welcome support for HITRANS in Active Travel again increasing the level of funding support we are entrusted to deliver our Regional Active Travel Fund. This included very welcome additional funding near the end of the financial year that allowed us to support delivery of really important active travel infrastructure.

At a research and project level we have continued to work innovatively with partners in Scotland, the rest of the UK and across the European Union to deliver meaningful improvements in transport services within the Highlands and Islands. As lead partner in the PAV project we will be implementing Scotland's first ever Connected and Autonomous (Self Driven) bus service while other work supported by EU funding is improving passenger transport services and digital information systems.

We continue to work with operators and Transport Scotland to support the development of our ferry services. We are well engaged in the development of the Islands Connectivity Plan that will replace the Ferries Plan. We have also been involved in a number of stakeholder engagement sessions around the various stages of easing lockdown restrictions and returning to more normal access to our island communities.

Bus services are the backbone to our public transport system providing vital access to employment, education, health and leisure services and connecting with other modes. In 2021/22 HITRANS has helped improve intelligent transport information systems building on our existing real time information provision. An exemplar of this was the launch in June 2021 of the UK's largest scale Mobility as a Service Platform when our GO-HI app went live. The app offers passengers to plan, book and pay for travel on a range of transport modes including Stagecoach bus, rail, air, car club and taxi. It even allows people to book a hotel stay at the same time as their travel.

We would like to thank our many public and private partners for their support in making 2021/22 a successful year and look forward to building upon this in the year ahead.



Ranald Robertson, *HITRANS Partnership Director*

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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

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

## ADVISORS

Jim Buck (Orkney Islands Council)  
Grant Campbell (Scottish Council for Development and Industry)  
Fergus Murray (Argyll and Bute Council)  
David MacLeod (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 Manager)  
Gemma Robinson (Project Officer – FASTER)  
Rachael Fraser (Project Officer – Finance)  
Kelly Martin (Project Support Assistant)  
Rachel MacLean (Project Support Assistant)  
Sarah Compton Bishop / Kirsten Gow  
(Project Manager - Scottish Islands Passport)



Cllr Allan Henderson, Chair (Highland Council), right  
Cllr 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

Following input from Members at the Partnership meeting on 17th September Officers have commenced the process of developing an updated Regional Transport Strategy that will update our 2018 Strategy to reflect the National Transport Strategy and the emerging STPR2 when that document is published in draft.

support sustainable economic growth across the whole region

reduce barriers to participation in employment, learning, social, leisure, health and cultural activities through the region

high level objectives

reduce journey times & improve reliability & resilience

improve safety of transport & travel

tackle capacity constraints

improve the quality and accessibility (availability, affordability, information and integration) of travel

Protect the environment and mitigate adverse impacts of transport and travel

Increase physical activity and participation to improve health and well-being

transport objectives



# 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 an 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 an annual 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 five 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 2021/22 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

- Real Time Passenger Information
- Inverness Airport (Dalcross) Station Development
- Inverness Station Masterplan
- Hydrogen Rail

- Green Freeport
- Bus Partnership Fund Projects – Highland and Argyll & Bute
- 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
- PAV North Sea Area Project
- PAV North Sea Region Project
- Stronger Combined North Sea Region Project
- FASTER SEUPB Programme Project
- eHubs North West Europe Project
- ERDF Smart Cities – Scotland's 8th City ERDF
- Low Carbon Transport and Travel ERDF
- Horizon 2020 Ride2Autonomy Project
- CivTech 5.0 Programme
- Sustainable Aviation Test Environment Project (SATE) - UKRI





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
- Black Parks, Fort William Active Travel Network
- Transport Integration at Ferry Terminals
- Ardrishaig Active Travel Masterplan Delivery
- Bike Share Accessibility
- Inner Moray Firth Cycle Network Project Design

In addition to the above projects, the Active Travel partnership with Sustrans during 2021/22 secured a grant allocation of £100,000 to support the development and provision of Active Travel projects across the region. During 2021/22 projects delivered under this programme include:

- Active Travel Workplace Challenge
- 20 Minute Neighbourhood Baseline
- Monitoring
- Active Travel Masterplans

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](http://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.

## FREIGHT FORUM

Meeting yearly the HITRANS Freight Forum (HFF) draws together local authority representatives, logistics providers and users of freight services. The Forum concentrates on practical Highland issues, and has involved visits to new freight infrastructure and terminals. It was involved in the Lorry Parking and Whisky Logistics Studies.

## 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 2022

2021/22			
	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Staff costs	412	666	254
Property costs	22	20	(2)
Travel and subsistence costs	20	6	(14)
Administration and meeting costs	25	26	1
Research and strategy development costs	753	1,667	914
Publicity costs	10	18	8
European projects costs	0	888	888
Support services	40	40	0
<b>Gross expenditure</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>3,331</b>	<b>2,049</b>
Government grants	(790)	(1,641)	(851)
Other grants	(100)	(1,073)	(973)
Other income	(188)	(459)	(271)
Constituent Council requisitions	(200)	(200)	0
<b>Gross income</b>	<b>(1,278)</b>	<b>(3,373)</b>	<b>(2,095)</b>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(46)</b>

The position in the year was a surplus of £0.042m 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 variance relates to grant income for European projects.



# PUBLIC SERVICES REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

## HITRANS 21/22

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 2021/22 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 01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022				
1)	Public Relations Statement			
	Category	Supplier	External costs - invoiced	Supplier Total
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£210.00	
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£180.00	
	Photocall, Inverness Bus Station and supply images	Ewen Weatherspoon	£100.00	
	Photography for Launch of Go-Hi App	The Write Image	£150.00	
	Go-Hi Launch Moray Firth advertising costs	Flourish Marketing	£2,400.00	
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£1,000.00	
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£360.00	
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£165.00	
	HITRANS Website Support	Velocity Design	£1,000.00	£2,000.00
	Issuing Drafting and Writing Services	Gordon Fyfe	£314.00	£915.00
	<b>Total</b>		<b>£5,879.00</b>	

2)	Overseas Travel						
	Reason	Origin / Destination	No. Employees / Members	Travel Costs	Accommodation / Meals	Other Expenditure	Total
	eHubs Partner Meeting - Funded by EU Project	Bergen	1	£573.40	£108.56		£681.96
	eHubs Partner Meeting - Funded by EU Project	Nijmegen	2	£423.33	£424.60		£847.93
	MOVE Partner Meeting - Funded by EU Project	Diksmulde, Antwerp & Amsterdam - November 2021	2	£776.17	£162.98		£939.15
	<b>Total</b>			<b>£1,772.90</b>	<b>£696.14</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£2,469.04</b>

3) Hospitality & Entertainment		
Date	Reason	Cost
<b>Total</b>		<b>£0.00</b>

4) External Consultancy			
Supplier	Project / Service	Total	Supplier Total
SYSTRA	Fort William Opportunities around Rail	£7,812.80	
SYSTRA	Timetabling work additional services between Faslane and Dalmuir/Glasgow	£7,856.50	
Stantec	Bus Partnership Fund Application X 2 Payments	£10,330.00	
Stantec	Orkney OBC Interim Account - Joint with HIE	£8,175.00	
Eyland Skyn	STPR2 Support	£800.00	
Pedersen Consulting	Feasibility study for the Mull & Iona Community Ferry Initiative X 2 Payments	£1,000.00	
DHC	IMF2	£5,000.00	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£40,974.30</b>	

5) Payments in Excess of £25,000			
Payee	Commodity / Service Description	Payment Date	Amount
Fion Construction	Black Parks Active Travel Route - Regional Active Travel Fund	11/06/2021	£30,600.00
Brompton Bike Hire	Stomoway Solar Bays and Installation - Regional Active Travel Fund	21/06/2021	£142,218.00
HIAL	Dalcross Rail Station Footpath - Regional Active Travel Fund	02/07/2021	£150,000.00
ProxiSmart	Travelpex Solution - MaaS	20/08/2021	£35,000.00
Network Rail	Project Stromferry	22/10/2021	£23,000.00
Fleetondemand	MaaS - Funded by Project	14/02/2022	£44,500.00
Navya	MOVE - Funded by Project	14/01/2022	€100,440.00
Argyll and Bute Council	Ardrishaig Active Travel Improvements - Regional Active Travel Fund	04/02/2022	£50,000.00
Orkney Islands Council	Carness Path Design - Regional Active Travel Fund	11/03/2022	£52,000.00
The Highland Council	Black parks - Regional Active Travel Fund	18/03/2022	£51,8887.00
Liftango	DRT APP - Funded by Project	18/03/2022	£25,000.00
Coeval	Smart Cities - Funded by Project	18/03/2022	£108,264.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,019,909.62</b>

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



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