

Minute of Meeting held in the
Chambers, The Town House,
Inverness, on Friday 21 April 2023
at 9.30am.

Present		<p>Mr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member (Chair) Ms Amber Dunbar, Moray Council Member (Vice-Chair) Mr Andrew Kain, Argyll & Bute Council Member Mr David Dawson, Orkney Islands Council Member Ms Naomi Bremner, Non-Councillor Member Dr David Gray, Non-Councillor Member</p>
In Attendance		<p>Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director Ms Carolyn Moir, Partnership Treasurer Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager Mr David MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mrs Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mr Donald Macrae, Moray Council Mrs Tracey Urray, The Highland Council Mr Jim Buck, Orkney Islands Council Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council Mr Nicholas Sobey, HIE Mr Grant Campbell, SCDI Ms Gemma Robinson, Project Officer Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop, Project Manager Mrs Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager Ms Joni McBride, Audit Scotland</p>
Apologies		<p>Mr Ken Gowans, The Highland Council Member Mr Rob Andrew, Non-Councillor Member Ms Nicola Moss, Moray Council</p>
Declaration of Interest		<p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>MINUTES</p>
Minute of Meeting of 3 February 2023	1	<p>The Minute of Meeting of 3 February 2023 was approved with the inclusion of Mr Calum Mackenzie, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, in the list of attendees.</p>

Matters Arising 2 The following updates were provided:

Item 9 – Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that there was budgetary provision to support the GO-HI journey planning system for 2022/23. Discussions were being held with Transport Scotland to extend the project to support further evaluation and development. HITRANS would explore options for app to support major events including the 2025 Island Games in Orkney.

It was agreed to note the updates.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023 3 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 3 February 2023 Ms Carolyn Moir, Partnership Treasurer, submitted a Report setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period to 28 February 2023 and the projected year end position. The Report stated that the variance to date was a £1.097k overspend due to time differences with income and spend and that it was expected that the year end position would remain at breakeven.

It was agreed to approve the Report and the schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 28 February 2023.

HITRANS Draft External Audit Plan 4 With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 22 April 2023 Ms Joni MacBride, Audit Scotland, submitted a Report detailing the Annual HITRANS External Audit Plan 2022/23. The Report summarised the work plan for the audit and highlighted the main elements of the work, including:

- an audit of the annual accounts, and provision of an Independent Auditor’s Report;
- an audit opinion on statutory other information published within the annual accounts including the Management Commentary, the Governance Statement and the audited part of the Remuneration Report; and
- consideration of arrangements in relation to wider scope areas: financial management; financial sustainability; vision, leadership and governance; and use of resources to improve outcomes.

It was agreed to note the Report.

HITRANS Business Plan for 2023-24 5 With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 22 April 2022 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report seeking approval for the HITRANS Business Plan for 2023/24. The Report indicated that the Business Plan set out how it was intended to support delivery of the Strategy during 2022/23 working with constituent Councils and Stakeholders with a view to improving transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Report stated that, as with previous Business Plans, the programme set out included a two-year Research and Strategy Development Programme in line with the recommendation of the Partnership Board discussion at the February 2023 meeting.

It was agreed:

- (1) to approve the Business Plan for Financial Year 2023/24 subject to the Partnership Manager being authorised to finalise the Plan following confirmation of funding from Transport Scotland and including reference to cyber security; and**
- (2) to redevelop and refresh the HITRANS website, funded from the publicity budget.**

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2022/23	6	<p>With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 22 April 2022 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development Program and seeking approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding options identified since approval of the 2022/23 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 22 April 2022.</p> <p>The Report stated that the HITRANS Business Plan for 2022/23 included a programme for Research and Strategy Development for 2021/22 in support of development, implementation and delivery of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy. The Report highlighted that work was progressing on delivery of the Programme.</p> <p>The Report indicated that with external funding from EU and Scottish Government in place and added to the Research and Strategy Delivery programme budget identified in the core programme there was currently sufficient funding in place to meet a £2,700,000 programme. At this late stage in the financial year a small underspend of £24,000 was forecasted against the programme.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2022/23 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report; and(2) that there would be a presentation on the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) Project to the September Board Meeting.
Rail Roundup	7	<p>Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing a summary update on the following HITRANS rail developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fastline Faslane;• Evanton;• Rolling Stock Strategy;• Inverness Airport Station (IVA);• Request to Stop;• Skyefall; and• Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
Active Travel Update	8	<p>With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 3 February 2023 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, presented a Report which provided an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved in. The Report stated that HITRANS had submitted a bid for Active Travel projects to Transport Scotland. Transport Scotland had confirmed funding for the programmes outlined in the Report, totalling £905,000.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>

Bus Taskforce – Regional Steering Group 9 With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2022 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report which provided an update on the first meeting of the Bus Taskforce Regional Steering Group. The Taskforce will review and coordinate activity to support patronage recovery, to address workforce recruitment and retention and to ensure proactive communication and engagement with bus users. The Report stated that the Taskforce had met three times, with a final meeting scheduled to take place in June 2023.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Regional Transport Strategy Update 10 With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2022 Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report which provided an update on the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The Report stated that Stage 1 of the development of the RTS was complete and HITRANS was now seeking views and feedback on the Draft Case for Change Report prior to progressing to Stage 2.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;**
- (2) approve an online consultation on the draft Case for Change and associated impact assessment reports; and**
- (3) arrange a workshop for Board Members and Advisors.**

Scottish Islands Passport Update 11 With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2022 the Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager submitted a Report which provided an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. Details of the funding, resources and future development of the project were outlined in the Report, along with an update on the travelogues and physical stamps, digital app and website, engagement and working with partners and marketing.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) endorse the direction of travel.**

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Shared Services 12 With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2022 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted an update on regional activity under the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF), which covers Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council. It was indicated in the Report that the new proposed restructured funding model would allow Local Authorities to access £30m worth of funding and aimed to leverage in a further £30m of private sector investment, bringing the total investment for Scotland to £60m. The funding model would support regional collaboration to enable the delivery of infrastructure to meet demand and encourage car users to switch to electric vehicles to support climate change objectives.

It was agreed to note the Report.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Consolidated Update	Funding	13	With reference to item 16 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2022 Mrs Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included Interreg North Sea Region, Interreg VA Cross Border, Interreg North-West Europe and Horizon Europe. The appendix to the Report provided details on all projects including status, timelines, description of main activities, a Gantt Chart showing involvement into 2023 and a consolidated budgets table.
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It was agreed to note the Report.

FASTER Update	Project	14	With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 22 April 2022, Ms Gemma Robinson, FASTER Project Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on the FASTER project funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project had been launched in October 2020 and was a joint proposal between seven Partners across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambition to transition to low carbon transport systems.
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The key objective of FASTER was to install 73 interoperable rapid charge points (50KW capacity) in the INTERREG VA region by June 2023, ensuring that the availability of charging stations was not a major obstacle to EV market penetration.

The Report indicated that installation preparation continued to progress well for FASTER, with works being scheduled by both SSE and Scottish Power from June through to October. HITRANS had a significant budget in the FASTER project of 1,675,703 Euros, which allowed for the installation of at least 24 rapid charge points.

It was agreed to note the Report.

PARTNERSHIP

Equalities Update	Duties	15	Mrs Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager, submitted a Report to update members on HITRANS Equalities Duties which have been updated with two reports required to be published by 30 April 2023 – The Equalities Outcomes Report and Mainstreaming the Equality Duty Report.
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The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010 and brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act includes a public sector equality duty which came into force on 5 April 2011.

HITRANS Equalities Outcomes have been compiled based on available evidence of national and local transport inequality as well as involvement through a Transport Equality Survey launched by HITRANS in 2021.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the draft “Mainstreaming of Equality Duty” and “Equalities Outcomes” reports as a basis for publishing them by 30 April 2023.**

Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report seeking approval for the process of filling the vacancy for a Non-Council Board Member that has arisen from Professor David Gray indicating his intention to step down from the Board following the Partnership meeting on 21 April 2023.

The Report stated that the role of the Non-Council Board Member provided valuable additional perspective and continuity in Board Membership particularly at times of local government elections, and each Non-Council Board Member over the years had contributed greatly to the work and success of the organisation.

The Report further stated the process for the recruitment of a new Non-Council Board Member.

Mr Ranald Robertson, on behalf of the Board, thanked Dr Gray for his valued contribution as a Board Member and wished him well for the future.

Dr David Gray thanked the Board and indicated that he was proud to have been part of an innovative and proactive organisation that has made a positive impact for the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to:

- (1) approve that the Partnership's personnel adviser arranges to advertise the Non-Council Board Member vacancy;**
- (2) approve that the selection panel for shortlisting of applications and interviews be comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, Mr Andrew Kain and the Partnership Director; and**
- (3) select the Board Member who would join the selection panel.**