

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 15 September 2023

PARTNERSHIP

Regional Transport Strategy Update

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update on the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy.

Introduction and Background

HITRANS has a statutory duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to produce a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). Working with local authority partners, HITRANS is in the process of producing a new RTS for the development of transport in the region over the next circa 20 years with the aim of delivering a transport system that ***reduces inequalities, takes climate action, helps deliver inclusive economic growth, and improves the health and wellbeing of people in the region.***

Following a public consultation on the initial Case for Change and parallel Impact Assessments, final versions of the documents have been published on the HITRANS website. This report now introduces the Draft Preliminary Appraisal Report and invites feedback from Members and Partnership Advisors ahead of work to develop the Regional Transport Strategy itself. In addition, a workshop session will be held at the evening session of the Partnership meeting in Orkney that will provide an opportunity to discuss some of the key policy areas.

The development of the RTS involves three broad stages:

- **Stage 1: The Case for Change** - this initial stage has set out the transport problems in the HITRANS region and established a set of Strategy Objectives focused on addressing these problems.
- **Stage 2: Options Appraisal** - this stage involves developing and appraising a set of options which help to resolve the problems identified and deliver the Strategy Objectives.
- **Stage 3: RTS Document** - this stage collates the outputs from the above activities into an RTS document ahead of statutory consultation.

Case for Change

The process of developing an RTS must broadly follow STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) and Stage one of the three-stage process is to establish a Case for Change, which involved the identification of the transport challenges encountered in the HITRANS area and established a set of strategy objectives to address these. A subsequent public consultation gathered feedback on the draft Case for Change and parallel Impact Assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment Report (EqIA) and an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA). Copies of the final versions of each of these documents together with the Case for Change Technical Note can be found at this link. www.hitrans.org.uk/Strategy/Regional_Transport_Strategy

Preliminary Appraisal

The next stage of developing the RTS involves an options appraisal. A copy of the initial draft Preliminary Appraisal Report is attached as **Appendix A** to this report. This stage involves generating, developing and appraising a set of high-level options that could be considered in the RTS.

At the Partnership Meeting in Orkney, Stantec, who have supported the development of the draft Preliminary Appraisal Report will introduce the report, outlining the structured approach adopted at the Board Meeting, as well as the proposed process for developing the RTS policies and delivery plan.

Members are invited to provide comments and feedback on the Preliminary Appraisal Report, in particular **Section 4.4**, which sets out the option packages and the sub-options of which they consist – these option packages will form the basis of the RTS policies. The workshop session at the Partnership meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss some of the complex policies and options.

The final Regional Transport Strategy will be accompanied by a Delivery Plan, which will highlight actions that HITRANS will take to progress each policy developed.

RTS Delivery Timescale

Milestone	Date
'Case for Change' consultation	Complete
Preliminary Options Appraisal	14 th September 2023
Draft RTS and associated SEA, EqlA and ICIA	10 th November 2023
Finalise Draft RTS reporting package	w/c 15 th December 2023
Draft RTS Statutory Consultation	Late December 2023 to March 2024 (12 weeks)
Final RTS	April 2024
Post-consultation SEA Technical Note and Equalities Note	April 2024
Submission of RTS to Scottish Ministers	May 2024
Post-adoption SEA Statement	June / July 2024.

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The work to refresh the Regional Transport Strategy seeks to update the Delivery Plan

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – This work helps set new policies and objectives for HITRANS that are relevant to the framework within which the Partnership now sits.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – Funding for developing the Regional Transport Strategy Update has been identified in the HITRANS Business Plan for 2023/24.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Updating the Regional Transport Strategy offers an opportunity to address both transport and wider inequalities across the region

Recommendation

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report
2. Consider and provide feedback on the draft Preliminary Appraisal Report attached as Appendix A to this report

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Designation: Partnership Manager

Date: 14th September 2023