

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting 26 April 2024

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2023/24

SUMMARY

This Report provides the Partnership Board with an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development programme and seeks approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2023/24 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 21st April 2023.

DETAIL

The Partnership at its meeting of 21st April agreed the HITRANS Business Plan for 2023/24 which includes a programme for Research and Strategy Development for 2023/24 in support of development, implementation and delivery of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

Work is progressing on delivery of the Programme as indicated in the Appendix to the report.

The Programme has been amended to reflect changes that have been identified to the circumstances surrounding some projects. The changes are summarised below and more information is provided on each change in Appendix A to this report.

Summary of key Programme changes:

- Add a new budget line totaling £1,564,000 to support Argyll and Bute Council Ferry Service Capital Improvements. This is budget initially allocated through the Scottish Government Public Transport Fund to Argyll and Bute Council to support improvements in ferry services operated by the Council to secure lifeline connectivity to Luing. The original project did not progress as a review of options to include fixed links was pursued. To avoid the loss of funding it has been by SPT since 2008 on behalf of the Council following an agreement made by HITRANS with SPT. This funding is now being returned to the Council.
- Increase budget allocated to Regional Active Travel Grant by £10,000 to £1,010,000 as Transport Scotland have awarded additional funding to support the development of the Regional People and Places programme.
- Reduce budget for External Funding project development and support to reflect the actual spend allocated to supporting one EU project application and one Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding application.
- Reduce budget for Regionally Significant Scheme Development to reflect actual spend as year end nears.
- Reduce budget for Local Authority Capital Investment Case for support to reflect the actual cost of the work undertaken on this as reported to the November Partnership meeting.

- Increase Intelligent Transport Systems budget by £60,000 following confirmation of increased funding from Transport Scotland through the MaaS Investment Fund grant for the GO-HI app.

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 is currently sufficient funding in place to meet a £3,624,000 programme. This is made up of £350,000 of core budget and a draw down against funds secured from SPT (former PTF funding), EU projects, MaaS Investment Fund, Regional Active Travel Grant and Smarter Choices Smarter Places.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – The Research and Development Programme is the key mechanism by which HITRANS promotes delivery of the Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands

Policy

Impact - Neutral

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – This item reports on the 2023/24 Business Plan research and strategy delivery programme

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Actions within the programme will have a positive impact on Equalities including Accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2023/24 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 15th March 2024
Additional Information: Appendix – Research and Development Programme
Appendix – Research and Development Programme

Area	Project	2023/24	March Update	Comments
Active Travel	CnES SCSP Programme	50000	50000	HITRANS are managing the CNES programme of local authority SCSP measures.
	Regional Active Travel Fund	1200000	1010000	Regional Active Travel Fund agreed with Transport Scotland for 2023/24. Detailed report included in meeting papers.
Aviation	Zero Carbon Aviation Region Opportunities	10000	10000	SATE project activity support and development opportunities including the opportunity offered by Hybrid Air Vehicles and Zero Carbon Roadmap opportunities.
External Funding	eHubs Project	150000	150000	North West Europe programme project with 60% ERDF intervention rate. Balance of funding secured through Transport Scotland and eBike Grant fund.
	ERDF Smart Mobility	50000	50000	ERDF Smart Mobility Project. HITRANS are seeking new match funding to complete draw down of ERDF. Transport Scotland are meeting 50% of the total cost of ferry information signs.
	FASTER Project	500000	500000	SEUPB INTERREG project focussed on the delivery of 24 Rapid EV Chargers in Argyll & Bute, Western Isles and North West Highland.
	RURALITIES Project	0	100,000	HITRANS are leading one of the six SIMSES lighthouses across Europe (simplified rural socio-ecological systems), with our lighthouse focusing on rural transport. Project is 100% funded through the UKRI Horizon Guarantee.

	Argyll and Bute Council Ferries	0	1,564,000	Budget initially allocated through the Scottish Government Public Transport Fund to Argyll and Bute to support improvements in ferry services operated by the Council to secure lifeline connectivity to Luing was held by SPT on behalf of the Council for following an agreement made by HITRANS with SPT. This funding is now being returned to the Council.
	ERDF / INTERREG / SG Bid Project Support	5000	2500	
Travel Information	Intelligent Transport Systems	15000	75000	Support towards ITS within Smart Cities including the project officer resource. MaaS Investment Fund project.
	Real Time Information Development	15000	15000	Delivery of improved real-time information for public transport passengers
RTS	Regionally Significant Scheme Development	40000	25000	Funding support to help partner Councils develop Regionally Significant Transport Projects e.g. Concessionary Travel on Ferry Service, Growth Deal Support etc.
	Local Authority Ferry Capital Investment	30000	10000	To support the case for additional resources to allow local authorities to replace vessels and renew infrastructure on their in house operated fleets.
	EV Infrastructure Fund Shared Service	145000	145000	HITRANS partnership with OIC, SIC and Moray Council on the EV Infrastructure Fund. To be reported separately in the meeting pack.
	EV Strategy	10000	10000	Funding to support the roll out of EV Strategy.
Rail	Rail Policy Development	30000	30000	Support for HITRANS rail project delivery. This will include the local rail development fund support to the Fastline Faslane project.
	Inverness Station Masterplan	10,000	10,000	Support for the development of Inverness Station Masterplan

Bus / DRT	Bus Service Development, Bus Partnership Fund support and HiTravel	30,000	30,000	To support HITRANS Bus Partnership Fund and Digital DRT activity.
	Total Identified Project Expenditure	2290000	3786500	
	Current Estimated Budget (R&D)	350000	350000	
	Current Estimated Budget (External - EU, Sustrans, Transport Scotland Ring Fenced Project Support)	1,900,000	3,624,000	