**THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR
THE HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS**

**Draft Delivery Plan
and Associated Documentation**

September 2008

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TABLES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   This document forms the Proposed Delivery Plan, which accompanies the final Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands, July 2008.

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1.2   This Proposed Delivery Plan and Associated Documentation outlines a programme of initiatives which the Strategy hopes to deliver over the period of 2008-2022 (Section 2). It sets out the Horizontal Sub-Strategies in further detail (Section 3), describes the nature of the Strategic and Regional Network links within the HITRANS area (Section 4), and provides details of the Documents that support the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Context

The Draft Delivery Plan has been developed in conjunction with the 5 Councils which form HITRANS and reflects their potential investment plans over the next 3 years aimed at delivering local improvements as part of their Single Outcome Agreements within their available budgets, and their aspirations post 2011 which are subject to funding availability within future spending review periods.

Interventions where Government has indicated a commitment within current spending programmes have been included; as have those which HITRANS would wish included in future local and nationally funded programmes from 2012 to deliver the outcomes and objectives of the Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands.

2. DELIVERY PLAN FOR THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2008 – 2022

Package of strategy policies and initiatives

2.1 Through the strategy development process, discussed in Section 4 of the Strategy, a number of "best fit" options have been generated, aimed at meeting the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy, and delivering the overarching policy of ***developing a fit for purpose, multi-modal transport system with associated infrastructure.***

2.2 The following tables list the 'best fit' options for the horizontal sub-strategies, Strategic and Regional Network priority links. Network options are grouped under their link in their respective network, and horizontal sub-strategy options are grouped under their respective theme. An assessment of the contribution that that option makes to the Strategy objectives is also given, indicated using the scoring system described at the start of this section.

2.3 Some options have not been subject to an individual STAG study so far, and therefore will require further work in this area before final commitments are made to implement them.

2.4 In the design of schemes, the appropriate national policy guidance will be used. In particular, the principles of *Scottish Planning Policy 17 Planning for Transport* will be applied by HITRANS and its delivery partners, which include designing for a hierarchy of sustainable transport means (walking, cycling, public transport and motorised modes). In addition, an Active Travel audit and Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out on relevant initiatives, together with any Appropriate Assessments in terms of environmental impacts.

2.5 Following the assessment of contribution to the Strategy objectives, the options have been programmed into the 15 year period of the Strategy in three five-year periods as follows: 2008-2012, 2013-2017 and 2018-2022. As necessary, time has been allocated for research and for scheme preparation, such as land acquisition and design for example. Where a scheme will require a significant undertaking the scheme has been spread over an appropriate time period.

2.6 Schemes outside the region which are critical to delivering the Strategy, generally on the strategic corridors, have also been included.

TABLE 2.1   HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGY POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

KEY
- ☑ Unambiguously positive contribution
- ⃠ Lesser positive impact or distribution
- ✖ Negative impact
- ☒ Protected area
- ▲ research and scheme preparation
- ➔ delivery

Map ID	Link / Option	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
Active travel									
H27a	Clearer policy to promote in land use planning and development control processes across the region, including Active Travel audits on all RTS and LTS measures	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	➔	➔	➔
H27b	Active travel infrastructure audits in Regional Centres and other localities around the region	**Would advance all**					➔	➔	➔
H27c	Longer-term investment programme in response to audits	⃠	☑	☑	☑	☑	➔	➔	➔
H27d	Travel behaviour change programme	⃠	☑	☑	⃠	☑	▲ ➔		
H27e	Bespoke Travel Plan elements and support	☑		☑	⃠	☑	➔	➔	➔
Aviation									
H28a	Evaluate economic and social opportunities of providing other / enhancing existing air connections around the region	☑	☑			✖	▲	▲	
H28b	Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of Air Discount Scheme. Assess options for further development	☑	☑			✖	▲		
H28c	Development of direct rail services between Inverness and Edinburgh airport	☑	☑			⃠	▲	➔	
H28d	Continue to press and collaborate with others for slots for Inverness services at London Gatwick/Heathrow hubs	☑				✖	➔	➔	➔

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ◊ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
Community and health transport										
H29a	Baseline review including gap analysis		**Could advance all**					▲		
H29b	Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working		◊	☑	☑		☑	➜		
H29c	Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for region		**Could advance all**					➜		
H29d	Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate			☑	☑			➜	➜	➜
H29e	Training and mentoring programme for sector			☑	☑			▲ ➜	➜	➜
H29f	Common standards to guide decision making on procurement of local transport services		◊	☑	◊			➜		
H29g	Sharing of resources (e.g. vehicles) and knowledge (e.g. good practice)		**Could advance all**					➜	➜	➜
H29h	Integration of services & with mainstream passenger transport (including interchange facilities)		◊	☑	◊	☑	◊	▲ ➜		
H29i	Car sharing (lifts)		◊	☑			☑	▲ ➜		
H29j	Car sharing (community)			☑			☑	▲ ➜		
Congestion & urban issues										

KEY
- ☑ Unambiguously positive contribution
- ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution
- ✗ Negative impact
- ⊠ Protected area
- ▲ research and scheme preparation
- ➜ delivery

Map ID	Link / Option	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
H30a	Improve transport infrastructure including bus priority	☑	☑		☑	✗	➜	➜	➜
H30b	Travel demand management package	⊘	☑	☑	⊘	☑	➜	➜	➜
H30c	Package to increase the appeal of active travel and public transport	☑	☑		☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H30d	Strategic Park & Ride sites and services	☑	⊘		⊘	☑	▲ ➜		
H30e	Evaluate options for parking / pricing strategy for urban centres	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	☑	▲		
H30f	Enhance connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre, and other peripheral retail parks and town centres	☑	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	▲	➜	
H30g	Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards	☑		⊘		☑	▲ ➜		
Freight transport									
H31a	Freight Quality Partnership	☑			☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H31b	Addressing inefficiencies and constraints in the transport network	☑			☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H31c	Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs	**Could advance all**					▲		
H31d	Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods	☑					▲		

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
H31e	Take forward outcomes of HITRANS sea freight study		☑			☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H31f	Work with partners to shift the transfer of freight to rail where feasible		☑			☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
Locally significant network & road maintenance										
H32a	Attract additional funding		☑	☑	⊘	☑	⊘	➜	➜	➜
Mainstream passenger transport										
H33a	Multi-modal / operator ticketing system		☑	☑		⊘	☑	▲		
H33b	Comprehensive and user-friendly information and mapping		⊘	☑	☑	⊘	⊘	➜		
H33c	Consistent standard for supporting infrastructure		⊘	☑		⊘	⊘	▲	➜	➜
H33d	Integrated timetabling across the region		⊘	☑			⊘	➜		
H33e	Hub and spoke interchange network, including infrastructure		⊘	☑	☑	⊘	⊘	▲	➜	
H33f	Targeted support for socially excluded groups to improve access opportunities. This could include tackling any aspect of accessibility – physical, awareness, affordability, acceptability and availability.		⊘	☑	☑		⊘	▲		
H33g	Development of taxi sector as part of passenger transport network		⊘	☑			⊘	▲		

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
H33h	Develop Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts where appropriate		☑	☑		⊘	⊘	➜	➜	
H33i	Upgrade poor quality transport terminals and vehicles (including continued investment in accessible vehicle fleet)		⊘	☑	☑	⊘		➜	➜	➜
H33j	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental programme of improvements to the region's rail network		☑	☑		☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H33k	Develop a comprehensive bus and coach strategy for the region		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	➜		
K33l	Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	➜	➜	➜
H33m	Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, building on the new DRT fund delegated to Regional Transport Partnerships		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	➜		
Ports, ferries and waterways transport										
H34a	Understand origin and destination patterns for passengers and freight		**Could advance all**					▲		
H34b	Rationalise the waterborne transport network in partnership with Scottish Executive, pending outcome of Executive's review of lifeline ferry services (National Transport Strategy commitment)		⊘	⊘			⊘	▲	▲	➜

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
		KEY ☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ◌ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➡ delivery	**Strategy objectives**					**Provisional programme**		
H34c	Enhance ferry services and develop fit for purpose timetables		☑	☑				▲	➡	➡
H34d	Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms		**Could advance all**					▲	➡	➡
H34e	Develop a regional investment strategy		☑	☑				▲		
Costs of transport and travel										
H35a	Make travel more affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries		☑	☑	☑		☑	▲		
H35b	Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes		☑	☑	☑		☑	▲		
H35c	Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport		☑					▲		
Environmental impacts										
H36a	Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region		☑		☑		☑	▲ ➡	➡	➡

TABLE 2.2   STRATEGIC NETWORK PROPOSALS FOR PRIORITY LINKS

Map ID[1]	Link / Option	KEY ☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⃠ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
A82 Corridor (Road)										
S1a	Western bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel		☑	☑		☑	✗ ⊠	➜		
S1b	Ballachulish to Fort William route enhancements		☑	☑		☑	✗ ⊠	▲	➜	➜
S1c	Tarbet to Ballachulish strategy (road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan & route enhancement Tyndrum to Ballachulish)		☑	☑		☑	✗ ⊠	▲	➜	➜
S1d	Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness		☑	☑		☑	✗ ⊠	▲	➜	➜
S1f	Strip-widening Inverness to Glasgow		☑	☑		☑	✗ ⊠	▲	➜	➜
Highland Main Line										
S2a	Journey time and frequency improvements (hourly departure) including both infrastructure upgrades and service improvements		☑	☑		⃠	☑	▲ ➜	➜	
A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)										

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[1] Map ID – refers to identifier code of schemes on interactive maps which display RTS proposals, available on HITRANS website during Draft RTS consultation.

Map ID[1]	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
S3	Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (including existing programme of dualling Perth to Pitlochy, and strategic work Inverness to Pitlochry by Scottish Government programme of 2 plus 1s)		☑			☑	✗ ☒	▲ ➜	➜	➜
Inverness airport and flights										
S4a	Surface Access Strategy to deliver better integration		☑	⊘		⊘	☑	➜		
S4b	Terminal building, runway extension and taxiway		☑				✗	▲ ➜ (terminal)	➜ (terminal)	➜ (runway)
Inverness-Aberdeen Rail Line										
S5a	Commuter services Elgin-Inverness		☑	☑			⊘	➜		
S5b	Dalcross Station at Inverness airport		☑	⊘			⊘	▲	➜	
S5c	Journey time improvements and hourly departure Inverness to Aberdeen		☑	☑		⊘	⊘	▲	➜	
A96 Corridor (Road)										
S6a	Dual carriageway Inverness to airport		☑			☑	✗	▲	➜	
S6b	Fochabers bypass		☑			☑	✗ ⊘	▲ ➜		
S6c	Elgin bypass with demand management & provision of space		☑			☑	✗ ⊘	➜ demand management / local	➜ bypass	

Map ID[1]	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ◇ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
	for passenger transport / cycling through Elgin, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R							internal improvements ▲ bypass		
S6d	Other bypasses on route (including Nairn and Keith) with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through settlements, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R		☑			☑	✗◇	➜ demand management / local internal improvements ▲ bypasses	▲ bypasses	➜ bypasses
S6f	Strategic dualling of the A96		☑			☑	✗◇		➜	➜
A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow										
S7a	Modern 2-track standard Campbeltown to A82		☑			☑	✗		➜	➜
S7b	Address pinch points on A83 route		☑			☑	✗	▲	➜	
Far North Line										
S8a	New station at Conon Bridge		☑			☑	☑	➜		
S8b	Speed enhancement measures including level crossing upgrades and further research work into loop and line speeds		☑			☑	☑	➜	➜	
A9 North including A99										
S9a	Berriedale Braes crossing		☑	◇	◇	☑	✗⊠		▲	➜

Map ID[1]	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ◌ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➔ delivery	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
S9b	Bypass settlements on route, specifically Brora and Golspie		☑	◌	◌	☑	✗		▲	➔
S9c	Provision of roadspace for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness & P&R facilities and services		☑	☑	◌	◌	◌	▲ ➔	➔	
S9d	Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes between Tore and Cromarty Bridge and other improvements		☑			☑	⊠	▲	➔	➔
S9e	Passenger transport access to Wick airport			☑			◌	➔		
Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow										
S10a	Oban Development Road and demand management measures in Oban		☑	◌	◌		✗	▲	➔	
S10b	Oban Rail Line rail service enhancement / frequency increase		☑	☑		◌	◌	➔	➔	
Western Isles & Skye connections to A82 for Glasgow										
S11a	Skye air service to central bellt		☑				✗	▲	➔	
Kyle Rail Line										
S12a	Commuter service to Inverness		☑	☑		☑	◌	➔		
Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh										
S13a	Elgin to Craigellachie A941 road improvements		☑			☑	✗		➔	

Map ID[1]	Link Option	KEY ☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✘ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
			Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
S13b	A95 road improvements, including bridge improvements		☑			☑	✘		➜	➜
Barra airport and flights										
S14a	Fixed landing strip and surface access strategy to deliver better integration		☑	☑		☑	✘		▲	➜
Inverness										
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road in phases. This project will also include demand management interventions for Inverness, to include Park and Ride, bus lanes, traffic lights integration, parking management, and real time information systems.		☑	☑	⊘	☑	✘ ☒	▲ ➜	➜	➜

TABLE 2.3   REGIONAL NETWORK PROPOSALS FOR PRIORITY LINKS

KEY
☑ Unambiguously positive contribution
◊ Lesser positive impact or distribution
✗ Negative impact
☒ Protected area
▲ research and scheme preparation
➔ delivery

Map ID	Link / Option	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
Orkney inter-isle connections									
R15a	Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements including priority action on ferry links most at risk in the short term	☑	☑		◊	◊	▲ ➔	➔	➔
Easdale, Lismore, Luing and Islay-Jura ferry services									
R16a	Replacement vessels and / or infrastructure	☑	◊			◊	▲	➔	➔
Raasay ferry terminal									
R17a	New terminal at Churchton Bay and associated Sconser Ferry Terminal improvements	◊	◊				▲ ➔		
Western Isles spinal route									
R18a	Fixed links on the Sounds	☑	☑		◊	✗	▲		➔
R18b	Faster, more frequent ferry crossings	◊	◊			◊	▲		
R18c	Road improvement to complete a programme of improvements on the spinal route	☑	◊		◊	✗	▲ ➔	➔	➔
A816 Oban to Lochgilphead									
R19a	Road improvement options	☑	☑	☑		◊	▲	➔	➔

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Strategy objectives					Provisional programme		
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution �○ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ⊠ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➡ delivery	Enable the Region to **compete** and support **growth**	Enable people to **participate** in everyday life	Improve the **health** of the Region's people	Improve **safety** and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's **natural and built heritage assets**	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort and Iona Ferry										
R20a	Route enhancement of remaining five mile section		☑	�○		�○	✗	▲	➡	
A941 Dufftown to A95										
R21a	Road improvement including addressing pinch points and providing overtaking opportunities		☑	�○		☑	✗	▲	➡	➡
A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg										
R22a	Removal of single-track section at Laxford Bridge		☑	�○		�○	✗	➡	➡	
R22b	Route enhancement		�○	�○		�○	✗	▲	➡	
A890 Lochcarron to A832										
R23a	Route enhancement on two sections in vicinity of Achnashellach, with the first lying between Strathcarron junction and Balnacra level crossing (short term); and the second section at Achnashellach		�○	�○		�○	✗	▲	➡	➡
A939 Tomintoul to A95										
R24a	Road improvement options		☑	�○		☑	✗	➡		
A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh and A950 to Peterhead										
R25a	Road improvement options		☑	◠		☑	✗		➡	➡

Map ID	Link / Option	KEY	Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport on the Region's natural and built heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
		☑ Unambiguously positive contribution ⊘ Lesser positive impact or distribution ✗ Negative impact ☒ Protected area ▲ research and scheme preparation ➜ delivery	**Strategy objectives**					**Provisional programme**		

A832 Gairloch to Garve

Map ID	Option		Enable the Region to compete and support growth	Enable people to participate in everyday life	Improve the health of the Region's people	Improve safety and security	Manage the impacts of transport... heritage assets	Short term (2008-12)	Medium term (2013-17)	Long term (2018-22)
R26a	Road improvement options Slattadale to Gairloch the last remaining section of single track section on the A832 into Gairloch		☑	⊘		☑	✗	▲	➜	➜
	A 835 Trunk road section from Contin to Garve		☑	⊘		☑	✗		▲	➜

Indicative costings and delivery of the strategy programme

2.7   HITRANS has developed a set of indicative costings within the Delivery Plan of everything within the programme shown above. It should be noted these have been developed with the best available information to a 2006 base, and may be subject to change as the detail of initiatives are developed. For the sake of consistency, any costings that had Optimism Bias applied (such as costs prepared by external bodies), have had this percentage subtracted where known, with the aim of making all costs comparable.

2.8   Costs are spread across a three period framework for the Strategy – short (2008-12), medium (2013-17), and long (2018-22).

2.9   Costs of initiatives will be further updated in subsequent reviews of the Strategy.

Notes on the costings table 2.4

2.10   Items in the following table marked with an asterix (*), indicate a requirement for research and/or further feasibility work. The costs of this work will largely be taken from the HITRANS research budget, estimated at £1.5m in total for each five year period, although individual authorities may fund research / feasibility of locally delivered and funded projects within their areas.

2.11   As discussed further in section 4 below, each initiative or measure has been allocated to a general area or corridor of connectivity. This allocation is shown in the first column of the following table, and the scheme contents are explained in full in section 4. As an example, WSC indicates Western Strategic Corridor.

TABLE 2.4   TRANSPORT STRATEGY
OUTLINE DELIVERY PLAN - 2008 TO 2022

INTERVENTIONS					
£m	**Delivery agents - funding expectations**	**Short £m**	**Medium £m**	**Long £m**	**Total £m**
National funding	**Scottish Government (ferry and air)**				
	Orkney inter-isle connections				
	Orkney Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements* (with OIC)	20	24	24	**68**
	Western Isles spinal route				
	WI Faster, more frequent ferry crossings*	0.5			**0.5**
	Scottish Government through Transport Scotland				
	A82 Corridor (Road)				
S1a	A82 Western Bypass at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock Tunnel	11			**11**
S1b	A82 Ballachulish to Fort William route enhancements*	2	15	3	**20**
S1c	A82 Tarbet to Ballachulish (road improvement Tarbet to Inverarnan)		27	27	**54**
S1b	A82 Tyndrum to Ballachulish – route enhancement,*			15	**15**
S1d/S1f	A82 Pinch points / junction improvements Fort William to Inverness plus strip widening Inverness to Glasgow*	2	5	13	**20**
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - EAST*	2	35		**37**
S15a	A82 to A9/A96 Inverness link road - WEST*			85	**85**
	Highland Main Line				
S2a	HML Journey time and frequency improvements (hourly departure)*	45	9.5		**54.5**
	A9 Inverness to Edinburgh (Road)				
S3	Strategic dualling of A9 Inverness to Perth (including existing programme of dualling Perth to Pitlochry, and strategic dualling Inverness to Pitlochry supported by upgrading Scottish Executive programme of 2 plus 1s)*	28	110	130	**268**
	Inverness-Aberdeen Rail Line				
S5a	Commuter services Elgin-Inverness	0.8			**0.8**
S5b	Dalcross Station at Inverness airport		13		**13**
S5c	Journey time improvements and hourly Inverness to Aberdeen*			20	**20**
	A96 Corridor (Road)				
S6a	Dual carriageway Inverness to Airport		30		**30**

S6b	Fochabers bypass	30			**30**
S6c	Elgin bypass with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through Elgin, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*		46		**46**
S6d	Other bypasses on route (including Nairn and Keith) with demand management & provision of space for passenger transport / cycling through settlements, plus bus priority on approaches and P&R*			40	**40**
S6f	Strategic dualling of the A96*		10	80	**90**
	A83 and Argyll & Bute Sea Crossings to A82 for Glasgow				
S7a	Modern 2-track standard Campbeltown to A82		15	12	**27**
S7b	A83 Address pinch points on route	3	13.5		**16.5**
	A9 North and A99				
S9a	A9N Berriedale Braes crossing*			30	**30**
S9b	A9N Bypass settlements on route*			23	**23**
S9c	A9N Provision of roadspace for passenger transport / cycling to north of Inverness & P&R facilities and services	0.1	5		**5.1**
	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental improvements to the rail network	5	5	5	**15**
S9d	A9N Route Action Plan to provide climbing lanes and other improvements		12	8.5	**20.5**
	Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow				
S10a	Oban and Fort William Rail Line rail service enhancement / frequency increase	1	3.1		**4.1**
	Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh/Glasgow				
S13b	A95 road improvements*		10	20	**30**
	A832/A835 Gairloch to Garve				
R26a	A835 trunk road section*			20	**20**
	Network Rail				
	Far North Line				
S8b	Measures to speed up FNL		24.8		**24.8**
	HIAL				
	Inverness airport and flights				
S4a	Inv airport Surface Access Strategy to deliver better integration	0.5			**0.5**
S4b	Inv airport Terminal building	5	5		**10**
S4b	Inv airport Runway extension			4	**4**
	Barra airport and flights				

S14a	Barra Fixed landing strip and surface access strategy to deliver better integration*			15	**15**
	TOTAL				
Local Funding	**ABC**				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network				
H32a	Road Maintenance	7			**7**
	MC				
	A96 Corridor (Road)				
S6c	Elgin demand management		1		**1**
S6d	Keith demand management		1		**1**
	Moray connections to A9 for Edinburgh/Glasgow				
S13a	Elgin to Criagellachie A941 road improvements		23		**23**
	A939 Nairn and Tomintoul to A95				
S24a	A939 Road improvement options	1.2			**1.2**
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network				
H32a	Road maintenance	5			**5**
	OIC				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network				
H32a	Road maintenance	3			**3**
	CNES				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network				
H32a	Road maintenance	2			**2**
	HC				
	A96 Corridor (Road)				
S6d	Nairn demand management	1.5			**1.5**
	Far North Line				
S8a	New station at Conon Bridge	0.5			**0.5**
	A9 North and A99				
S9e	Passenger transport access to Wick airport	0.05			**0.05**
	Raasay ferry terminal				
R17a	Raasay new terminal – and associated Sconser terminal improvements	13			**13**

	A838 Kinlochbervie to Lairg				
R22a	A838 Removal of single-track section at Laxford Bridge*	0.5	0.5		**1**
R22b	A838 Route enhancement*		5		**5**
	A890 Lochcarron to A832				
R23a	A890 Route enhancement including single track sections and visibility improvements in vicinity of Achnashellach*		7	7	**14**
	A832/A835 Gairloch to Garve				
R26a	A832 Road improvement options*		5	5	**10**
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network				
H32a	Road maintenance	11			**11**
	Scottish Government Funding				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Road maintenance (not committed)	28			**28**
	European Funding				
	Locally significant network & road maintenance				
H32a	Locally significant network (ERDF)	3.7			**3.7**
	HITRANS				
	HITRANS Research and Development	1.5	1.5	1.5	**4.5**
	TOTAL	**212.8**	**614.4**	**758**	**1585.2**
Regional/ National Funding	**Partnership approach needed between Councils and Government (not committed)**				
	Oban A85 connections to A82 for Glasgow				
S10a	Oban Development Road and demand management measures in Oban* (with Government)	0.2	14		**14.2**
	Easdale, Lismore, Luing and Islay-Jura ferry services				
R16a	Replacement vessels and infrastructure*	2	12.6	3	**17.6**
	A816 Oban to Lochgilphead				
R19a	A816 Road improvement options*	3	15	12	**30**
	A848 & A849 Tobermory to Fionnphort and Iona Ferry				
R20a	A848 A849 Route enhancement of remaining five mile section*		13.2		**13.2**

	A941 Dufftown to A95				
R21a	A941 Road improvement including addressing pinch points and providing overtaking opportunities*		8.5		**8.5**
	A98 from Elgin to Fraserburgh and A950 to Peterhead				
R25a	A98 Road improvement options*		6	5.5	**11.5**
	Orkney inter-isle connections				
R15a	Orkney Inter-isle ferry and air service connectivity enhancements*	20	24	24	**68**
	Western Isles spinal route				
R18a	WI Fixed links on the Sounds (cost for Harris only)*	0.4		100	**100.4**
R18c	WI Road improvement options *	3.75	20	20	**43.75**
	Western Isles & Skye connections to A82 for Glasgow				
S11a	Improve infrastructure to develop Skye air service to central belt*		10		**10**
	TOTAL				

HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGIES				
	Theme			**Lead agency**
Active Travel				
H27a	Clearer policy to promote in land use planning and development control processes across the region, including Active Travel audits on all RTS and LTS measures	1		HITRANS
H27b	Active travel infrastructure audits in Regional Centres and other localities around the region			HITRANS
H27c	Investment programme in response to audits			HITRANS
H27d	Travel behaviour change programme			HITRANS
H27e	Bespoke Travel Plan elements and support			HITRANS
Aviation				
H28a	Evaluate economic and social opportunities of providing other / enhancing existing air connections around the region*			HITRANS
H28b	Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of Air Discount Scheme. Assess options for further development*			HITRANS
H28c	Development of direct rail services between Inverness and Edinburgh airport			TS

H28d	Continue to press and collaborate with others for slots for Inverness services at London hubs				HITRANS
Community and health transport					
H29a	Baseline review including gap analysis	0.1			HITRANS
H29b	Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working				HITRANS
H29c	Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for region				HITRANS
H29d	Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate				HITRANS
H29e	Training and mentoring programme for sector				HITRANS
H29f	Common standards to guide decision making on procurement of local transport services				HITRANS
H29g	Sharing of resources (e.g. vehicles) and knowledge (e.g. good practice)				HITRANS
H29h	Integration of services & with mainstream passenger transport (including interchange facilities)				HITRANS
H29i	Car sharing (lifts)				HITRANS
H29j	Car sharing (community)				HITRANS
Congestion & urban issues					
H30a	Improve transport infrastructure				HC/MC
H30b	Travel demand management package				HITRANS
H30c	Increase the appeal of public transport investment package				HITRANS
H30d	Strategic Park & Ride sites and services				HC/TS
H30e	Evaluate options for parking / pricing strategy for urban centres				HITRANS
H30f	Connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre				HC
H30g	Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards				HC/MC/ABC
Freight transport					
H31a	Freight Quality Partnership				HITRANS
H31b	Addressing inefficiencies / constraints in the transport network*				HITRANS
H31c	Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs*				HITRANS
H31d	Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods*				HITRANS
H31e	Take forward outcomes of HITRANS sea freight study				HITRANS

	Mainstream passenger transport				
H33a	Multi-modal / operator ticketing system				HITRANS
H33b	Comprehensive and user-friendly information and mapping				HITRANS
H33c	Standard for supporting infrastructure				HITRANS
H33d	Integrated timetabling				HITRANS
H33e	Hub and spoke interchange network				HITRANS
H33f	Targeted support for socially excluded groups				HITRANS
H33g	Development of taxi sector				HITRANS
H33h	Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts				HITRANS
H33i	Invest in poor quality transport terminals and vehicles				HITRANS
H33k	Develop a comprehensive bus strategy and investment programme for the region				HITRANS
H33l	Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads				HITRANS
H33m	Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, building on the new DRT fund delegated to Regional Transport Partnerships				HITRANS
H33j	Rail service enhancement / frequency increase – incremental improvements to the rail network	5	5	5	TS
	Ports, ferries and waterways transport				
H34a	Understand origin and destination patterns*				HITRANS
H34b	Rationalise the waterborne transport network*				HITRANS
H34c	Enhance ferry services and develop timetables				HITRANS
H34d	Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms*				HITRANS
H34e	Regional investment strategy				HITRANS
	Costs of transport and travel				
H35a	Make travel more affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries*				HITRANS
H35b	Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes*				HITRANS
H35c	Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport*				HITRANS

	Environmental impacts				
H36a	Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region*				HITRANS

Longer term aspirations for review during the RTS

2.12   HITRANS holds some long term aspirations for major improvements to the transport network in the region which realistically may not be achievable within the current Strategy's lifespan, that is, 2008 to 2022. Despite these being omitted from the current Delivery Plan, work will continue to build a case for these improvements, which are as follows:

- **A82: A modern two-track standard road between Inverness and Glasgow** – in the current Strategy, work will be ongoing on selected strip-widening along the A82, with the future aim of upgrading the road to a modern standard, subject to the outputs of further feasibility work.

- **A96: A dual carriageway from Inverness to Aberdeen** – in the current Strategy, exploratory research and development on this long term aspiration will be ongoing, as well as work to improve strategic sections. However, it remains a long term goal to have a dual carriageway standard on this vital economic link.

- **Western Isles Spinal Route: Upgrading to modern two track standard on remaining 80km/50miles** – progress has been made on a programme of upgrading this lifeline link, although substantial funding is required to complete the Spinal Route work. Therefore, it is proposed that work continues during the lifespan of this Strategy, but with the proviso that funding will be required in the next Strategy (beyond 2023) to complete the full route upgrade.

- **A9: Dualling from Inverness to Perth** – in the current strategy, work will continue on upgrading strategic sections. It remains a long term goal to have dual carriageway standards on this vital economic link.

- **Highland Main Line: Two track railway from Inverness to Perth** – strategic improvements will be carried out within the current strategy, but given the significance of this route, and the need to make it competitive with road journey times for passengers and freight, a long term goal is for a two track railway.

- **Modern ferry network for the 21ˢᵗ century**: work will continue on sustaining and upgrading the ferry network across the region. However, there is a need for investment to continue beyond the lifetime of this Strategy as significant improvements need to be made to bring services and related infrastructure up to modern standards.

- **Exploration of the role of fixed links**: the complexity and high cost of fixed links can often act as a barrier to implementation. However, as technological innovations become more mainstream, the feasibility of fixed links connecting island communities both internally and to the mainland should be considered in the longer term.

Initiatives for assessment and consideration within the first year of the Strategy

2.13   The Regional Transport Strategy underwent a comprehensive consultation process during its development in 2006/2007. During this time, a number of additional initiatives were proposed for inclusion within the Regional Transport Strategy by HITRANS members, which are listed below. As initiatives proposed within this Strategy have been developed through a bespoke assessment process which has followed the principles of STAG, the inclusion of additional initiatives which had not been subject to this assessment process was not viewed as desirable by HITRANS. Therefore, judgement has been reserved on the appropriateness of including new, untested initiatives in this Strategy, although each will be assessed as to whether they should be within the Delivery Plan as it evolves and prior to the first review of the Plan and Strategy due to be completed by 2011.

2.14   It should be noted that the Regional Transport Strategy will essentially be a living document, with regular reviews and updates. Ongoing review is crucial as circumstances change, and particularly as Local Transport Strategies are developed across the region.

2.15   The list of initiatives that emerged during the consultation process from HITRANS local authorities, which need to be assessed in the first three years of the Strategy, is set out below. However, this list is not exhaustive, and will be reviewed throughout the first year of the Strategy.

- Highland Council
  - A87 to Uig road improvements: A87 Breakish to Portree, Breakish/Broadford bypass (cost £6m), A850 Glen Varrigill, section of road on the southern approaches to Portree.
  - Fort William Bypass A82.
  - A887 at Torgoyle Bridge with 2km of single track and passing place approaches to the west of Invermoriston.
  - A99 Keiss to north of Keiss.
  - A836, a final single track section of road immediately to the east of Bettyhill.
  - A861 Drynie Hill – the remaining section of single track and passing place road on the link between Lochailort and Acharacle.
  - Freight horizontal sub-strategy– Inverness Freight Transport facility.
  - Passenger transport horizontal sub-strategy – Interchange Information Services Development.
- Argyll and Bute Council
  - Breakwater at Wemyss Bay (to improve reliability of Rothesay ferry service).
  - Ballycastle ferry service.
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
  - Uig Pier improvements, Skye.
  - Mallaig/Lochboisdale ferry service.
- Moray Council
  - A98 Route Action Plan.

- ▪ Elgin Traffic Management
- ▪ A941 Route Action Plan
- HIAL
  - ▪ GPS system at Wick Airport
- Orkney Islands Council
  - ▪ Car club
  - ▪ A964 and B967 Route Strategies
  - ▪ Kirkwall Traffic Management and active travel measures

3. DESCRIPTIONS OF HORIZONTAL SUB-STRATEGIES

Introduction

3.1 This section provides more detail of the HITRANS sub-strategies, each of which deal with a cross-cutting priority issue for the Strategy over the next 15 years.

3.2 A package of policies and measures are set out within each sub-strategy. The sub-strategies are closely linked, and some share common policies (for example, passenger transport, and congestion and urban issues).

Active travel

3.3 Active travel refers to non-motorised travel, commonly walking and cycling, although horse riding and travel by waterway are also included. Active travel can be a means of travel in itself, and is also a key part of multi-modal journeys, for example at the beginning and end of bus and rail journeys. Active travel contributes to four public policy areas: health improvement; mode shift; environmental protection and growth in domestic and visitor tourism.

3.4 People in some parts of the region are more physically active than those in other parts. Physical activity is a key determinant of health outcomes. Creating the right environment (physical and cultural) to encourage more walking and cycling, has been shown to deliver excellent returns on investment.[2]

3.5 Barriers to active travel have developed over a long period and it is important to work towards long-term changes to overcome these barriers. Barriers include:

- Planning and design that has not prioritised or provided for active travel.
- Poor infrastructure and facilities to support walking and cycling.
- A culture that promotes use of the car and a lack of understanding of the benefits of and the know-how to walking and cycle.
- Maintenance funding issues that result in the deterioration of established and new infrastructure.
- Constrained road space, limiting opportunities for providing walking and cycling infrastructure.

3.6 Active travel is a low cost means of travel compared to the car, and also leads to only few or no emissions of pollution. The health benefits potential from increasing levels of active travel in the region are massive.

3.7 The key policies for active travel within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H27a: Clearer development control policies requiring walking and cycling infrastructure and promoting Travel Plans through conditions. Scottish Planning Policy 17 sets out the order of priority for personal travel as follows:

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[2] Benefit to cost rations in the order of 20:1 have been calculated. *Economic appraisal of local walking and cycling routes,* Sustrans, 2005.

- Walking.
- Cycling.
- Public transport.
- Other motorised transport.

- Land-use planning control should recognise this hierarchy, and should necessitate the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of planning requirements. Decisions on the location and design of new developments should pay particular attention to the ability to deliver subsequent connectivity in keeping with this hierarchy of access. Additionally, Active Travel audits of initiatives to be taken forward within the RTS should highlight improvements or amendments to initiatives to promote walking and cycling. An example of this would be the incorporating of facilities for cyclists into trunk /local roads improvement schemes.

- H27b: Infrastructure audits of regional centres to provide baseline information. These audits to include appearance, road safety, personal security, pedestrian facilities, cycling facilities, public transport facilities. In addition, these audits should consider improvements in infrastructure for those with disabilities. Identification and assessment of key walking and cycling routes in the areas, in terms of existing and potential new routes, to promote development of active travel particularly in relation to travel to work (including to Council offices), leisure destinations, health care sites, and to school. This process could be used to identify inadequate links in the active travel network, where infrastructure is inadequate or non-existent. This process should work in partnership with core paths teams in local authorities and other agencies.

- H27c: Longer-term core funding for a programme of investment in response to the audits. The programme of investment could include infrastructure, information and promotion. Focus in the programme would be on mode shift to walking for functional journeys of less than two kilometres and to cycling for less than five kilometres. Also, development of standards for infrastructure, including common signage and branding.

- H27d: Travel behaviour change programme, initially targeted at employees / jobseekers; and/or, development of toolkit for local authorities / health boards to implement behaviour change campaigns at local / site-specific levels. This element could also include developing a training programme for active travel, for both young people and adults, and for people with specific learning or mobility needs. Such travel training could be equally applied to other means of travel, for example passenger transport and community transport.

- H27e: Development of bespoke Travel Plan elements to fit the specific nature of the HITRANS regional and local centres. HITRANS support for Local Authorities, Health Sites and businesses to develop Travel Plans that befit their individual problems, issues and opportunities.

Aviation

3.8   Aviation is of critical importance for the region, more so than for almost any other region of the UK. Being remote from all major domestic centres of commerce and Government, the importance of aviation in the region is evident. Three other features have a bearing on the importance of aviation in the region, each reflecting a different facet of the unique nature of the Highlands and Islands:

- Rail services are few and far between, and often poorly timed for day return trips to the National Gateways.
- The indented coastline of the region and the mountainous topography makes road

journeys slower in the region than elsewhere in the UK.

- A significant proportion of the region's population resides on islands, for which surface journeys involve ferries that are generally slow, often infrequent and not always reliable, especially in winter.

3.9   Air services are vital in a region that is distributed over such significant distances, minimum surface journey times by comparison for routes in the region are four and a half to almost 15 hours.

3.10   Some areas are not well served by air and have extremely long surface journey times to the National Gateways. The existence of some current services are / have been threatened. The Air Discount Scheme has reduced the cost of air travel for island / remote residents. Affordability issues still exist, and the Air Discount Scheme does not address the cost of friends, family, tourists and business travel to these areas.

3.11   The key policies for aviation within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H28a: Evaluate the economic and social opportunities of providing new or enhanced air connections around the region and externally. Investigate devising a broad policy for when an air service would be particularly valuable, for example in relation to surface travel times.
- H28b: Evaluate the impacts and outcomes of the Air Discount Scheme. Assess the options for further development.
- H28c: Encourage the development of direct rail services between Inverness and Edinburgh Airport, with one very early departure from Inverness to offer the widest range of onward air services, and a late departure from the airport.
- H28d: Continue to press and collaborate with others for the retention and development of slots for Inverness services at London Gatwick/Heathrow hubs.

Community and health transport

3.12   This theme covers services provided for community and health purposes, such as community and voluntary transport, local authority provision for transport to school and for social services, and transport provision by health boards and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

3.13   Community transport offers a valuable service to communities and specific socio-economic groups across the region. It has wide socio-economic benefits by enabling people with limited transport opportunities to access vital services, such as social care and health, as well as everyday activities such as shopping, visiting friends and family, and leisure opportunities.

3.14   Provision across the region is varied. Provision is often developed by the community in response to inadequacies in mainstream passenger services.

3.15   There is rising demand for the sector from an ageing population across the region. Services tend to run with uncertain financial stability, and there can be underutilisation of vehicles and a lack of collaboration to deliver efficient services. There is a lack of clear understanding of the 'gaps' in accessibility right across the region.

3.16   Furthermore, there is a need for a coordinated approach to improving infrastructure

across the region for people with disabilities.

3.17   The key policies for community and health transport within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H29a: Baseline review of community and health transport sector (and council and patient transport) in the region including a 'gap' analysis of what is being provided, level and nature of need being met, funding levels for the sector. A robust analysis of the sector will act as a platform for development. A review should also assess unmet demand for community and health transport in the region, particularly amongst target/excluded populations. This will help develop a better understanding of how to focus funding from local authorities, previously Scottish Executive, on rural community transport and Demand Responsive Transport.

- H29b: Demonstration project of a good practice example of joined up working.

- H29c: Consistent monitoring and evaluation framework for the region, enabling the costs and benefits to be assessed and using the results to continuously feed into the future development and improvement of the sector.

- H29d: Securing additional funding including alternative funding mechanisms to current, including exploration of different operational structures such as social enterprise, where appropriate.

- H29e: Developing a training and mentoring programme, specifically aimed at training in passenger care, and support for volunteers as service providers. This option would explore opportunities for operators, drivers, escorts, passengers, including through:
    - Networking and information exchange.
    - Provision of courses, including remotely.
    - Mentoring scheme.

- H29f: Developing a common set of standards to guide how decisions are made in procuring transport services which best meet local needs, in terms of accessing community facilities, public services and health.

- H29g: Sharing of resources and knowledge including:
    - Sharing best practice and experience between staff of different schemes.
    - Vehicle sharing / brokerage to result in improved utilisation of vehicles.

- H29h: Integration:
    - Integration of services to benefit passengers. For passengers, enabling greater reach of community and voluntary transport through use of neighbouring schemes. For example, development of a Travel Dispatch Centre concept, providing integrated services from a users' viewpoint.
    - Interchanges for Community Transport / Demand Responsive Transport and Public Transport on radials to enable interchange between rural Community Transport and the higher frequency mainstream passenger transport links into main centres (this could be facilitated by Real Time Information). Facilities and coordination with operators on key corridors to enable such integration.

- H29i: Car sharing (lift) scheme for access to work, education and training opportunities.

- H29j: Region-wide car sharing network for communities.

Congestion and urban transport issues

3.18   Around 30% of the region's population live in the inner Moray Firth, and 40% in urban areas or settlements with 5,000 people or more. The targeted management of congestion and traffic growth within the largest and fastest growing built-up areas is essential.

3.19   Within a number of Regional Centres, and including Inverness, the main trunk roads tend to provide a dual purpose, carrying both long distance through-traffic **and** providing local connections. This traffic competes for road space and often conflicts. Consideration will need to be given to physically removing extraneous traffic from some places as well as the contribution that can be made by challenging why and how people travel the way they do.

3.20   Congestion adversely affects all travellers, people walking and cycling, people travelling by car, those travelling by coach or bus and business travellers and heavy goods vehicles. Congestion affects the economy and left unchecked is a vicious circle.

3.21   The key policies for tackling congestion and specific urban transport issues within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are shown here. It should be noted that many of these policies are strongly linked to those within the Passenger Transport sub-strategy:

- H30a: Improve transport infrastructure - options could include removing extraneous traffic from congested areas through the provision of bypass arrangements. Bus priorities where appropriate should be developed, including bus lanes and bus priority at junctions.
- H30b: Travel demand management package
  - Increased support for uptake of Travel Plans in schools, workplaces and other organisations through support from the HITRANS Travel Plan Officer. This should include development and ongoing coordination of a HITRANS Travel Plan Network for Workplaces (including local authorities) engaged in the process of Travel Planning in the region. Also investment in Travel Plan developed site-specific interventions.
  - Working with local authorities, businesses and schools to encourage greater spreading of peak demand for travel including alterations to school/start finish times and support to organisations to adopt flexible working practices.
  - Sharing of best practice with other RTPs and organisations outside Scotland to increase effectiveness of travel demand measures in the region.
  - Continue to promote measures to reduce the need to travel (such as video conferencing and home working), and provide other organisations' information about how Information and Communication Technologies can assist in reducing the need to travel.
  - Travel behaviour change programme, including personalised travel planning for example.
- H30c: Increasing the appeal of public transport and active travel together:
  - Work in partnership with public transport providers and local authorities to improve integration between public transport and walking and cycling, for example consideration of increased opportunities for bus-bike interchange and bike carrying bus services. Improve integration between different public transport services within urban centres.

- Improve transport access to, and quality of public transport information across the Region, in all formats including online, on street and paper based formats.
- Partnership working with First Scotrail and the Highland Rail Partnership to secure service provision improvement on the key commuter routes into Inverness, Oban and Fort William.
- Multi-operator ticketing and cross-city / town through tickets.
- Re-allocation of road space within urban centres and installation bus lanes and bus priority on key routes / corridors. Enforcement of bus priority measures.
- Increase take up of Passenger Transport Quality Partnerships and Contracts.
- Investment in accessibility enhancements, speed the continued progress towards full Disability Discrimination Act compliance across the network.
- Increasing the appeal and validity of active travel in the urban environment:
- Actively promote active travel as a valid means of transport for short trips for business, leisure and tourism. Refer to the active travel section for more information.
- H30d: Strategic Park and Ride sites:
  - Consider the feasibility of Park & Ride for the key localities of Inverness, Elgin, Oban and potentially Fort William.
  - This will be best combined with measures above to increase the attractiveness of passenger transport. Bus priority will be a key success factor.
- H30e: Evaluate options for a parking / pricing strategy for urban centres:
  - Coordinate the development of a parking strategy with an aim of managing demand for travel while supporting local economies around the region.
  - Better enforcement of parking controls.
  - Application of maximum parking standards.
- H30f: Enhance connectivity between Inverness Retail Park and the city centre:
  - The Inverness retail park has been identified as a site that requires far better connectivity to Inverness city centre. Work is ongoing to develop improvements as part of major development initiatives to the East of Inverness.
- H30g: Work with Councils to develop consistent maximum car parking standards across the region. Management of parking is a key tool in managing traffic growth and promoting modal shift to sustainable modes, particularly in urban areas. Consistency is required to avoid competition between places.

Freight transport

3.22   Efficient freight transport is essential to the economy and quality of life in the region. Economic growth generates growing demand for freight transport. In order to meet the needs of business in the region, goods need to be transported easily, reliably and efficiently. This is not always the case in the region. Much of the region's transport network is inadequate, and this adversely affects freight users as much as it does other users of the network.

3.23   A diverse range of goods and items are transport around the region. This includes frozen goods, bulk, forestry and agriculture, fish, food and drink and manufactured produce. Specialist transport is often required, which in some cases is only required

for very short periods of time over the course of the year. Because of the distances and the sea crossings that are often required, this disadvantages businesses based in the region compared to their counterparts located closer to the markets.

3.24   Whilst it is a challenge to shift freight transport to rail for most of the traffic in the region due to lack of infrastructure access and / or uneconomical commodity characteristics, HITRANS will explore ways in which freight can be moved to rail and sea transport where feasible.

3.25   The key policies for freight within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H31a: Development of a Freight Quality Partnership. This would aim to facilitate safe, efficient and environmentally-friendly solutions to freight transport issues at a regional level. A Freight Quality Partnership could:
  - Better understand the needs of the freight transport industry and its customers, and the views of other legitimate stakeholders.
  - Provide a single contact point for early consultation on improvement initiatives, yet represent a large number of organisations.
  - Agree realistic and achievable actions that provide clear economic, social and environmental benefits.
  - Provide an effective working forum in which to agree and deliver solutions.
- H31b: Address the causes of inefficiency in the transport network. This would include:
  - Examining root causes affecting reliability such as the condition of strategic road infrastructure (for example the A9, A82, A96) and bottlenecks in the locally significant road network.
  - Reviewing capacity and schedules of vehicular ferry services. This could include dedicated freight services, alternative origins and destinations, and increased frequencies. This should only be undertaken as part of a comprehensive review of the network.
  - Examining the potential of coastal shipping to serve the region and key origins / destinations.
  - Support work of the Timber Transport Forum.
- H31c: Review of grant funding to better fit with market needs;
  - A Freight Innovation Fund could assist with trials of opportunities.
- H31d: Evaluation of programme to reduce the cost of moving goods to and from the region's islands, including a potential review of ferry fare tariff structure.
- H31e: Take forward the outcomes of the HITRANS sea freight study (study outputs in 2006/07).
- H31f: Work with partners to shift the transfer of freight to rail where feasible.

Locally significant network and road maintenance

3.26   The Locally Significant Network has been defined as part of the assessment of the region's transport network (see Section 4 of the Strategy). The Locally Significant Network connects communities to their local centres and onwards to the Regional Centres and National Gateways. The Locally Significant Network makes up a large part of the region's entire network, and in most cases these roads are the only connection that a community has. All roads are significant in the region; in most cases any given road is the only connectivity between communities and Local Centres, Regional Centres and National Gateways. This lack of an alternative route, particularly in the west, is a key factor that differentiates the region from many other areas across Scotland.

3.27   The adequacy of the network determines the adequacy of the walking and cycling environment, the adequacy of passenger transport and community and voluntary transport, and the adequacy of freight transport. The study of Lifeline Roads in the region in 2004 highlighted the generally poor condition of selected routes, with many of them presenting severe constraints to travel. The conclusion from the audit in this study was that the majority of lifeline roads were not considered to be 'fit-for-purpose'. Approximately 5,000 jobs are at stake due to the fragility of this network.[3]

3.28   Significant parts of the network suffer from a lack of appropriate funding levels, inadequate for even routine maintenance. This has led to a considerable backlog of identified maintenance work across the region. Where parts of the network do not come up to a 6m wide standard (or wider as appropriate), damage can occur to structures, surfaces and verges when heavy vehicles need access, whether this be for short-term or for prolonged periods. In some instances weight restrictions or structures prohibit certain vehicles from using parts of the network. Such prohibitions mean that communities at the end of that route are isolated. There are weight restrictions on many single track roads around the region.

3.29   Furthermore, locally significant routes provide a safety valve for the strategic routes when the latter are closed, for example, due to landslips or accidents. These routes need investment to make them safer routes during these unpredictable situations.

3.30   The main policy under this sub-strategy is as follows:

- H32a: Attract additional funding:
    - The approach to dealing with the locally significant road network recognises the need to identify more resources, especially for road maintenance. Current levels of investment through the Grant Aided Expenditure to Local Authorities are not adequate. These levels of funding do not address the routine maintenance let alone the backlog maintenance work.
    - Without significant additional funding then it will not be possible to deal with the issues that have been identified. An element of this option may comprise ring-fencing of budgets in order that Grant Aided Expenditure

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[3]   *Investment in Lifeline Rural Roads, Stage 2 Final Report,* September 2004.
    http://www.hitrans.org.uk/downloads/Final%20stage%20Two%20Report%20_4th%20Draft_%202-side.pdf

allocations to local authorities are spent on this issue. However, it is considered that yet greater allocations are required in order to manage the problems and work towards a maintenance programme that is sustainable.

▪ There is therefore a need to investigate the options for attracting this additional funding for this specific issue. Addressing the issues associated with the locally significant road network and road maintenance in the region fits with all of the Strategy objectives.

Mainstream passenger transport

3.31 Mainstream passenger transport in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland comprises air, rail, local and long distance bus, coach and ferry services. To be effective these means of transport must integrate with one another to provide a network of services which offer a genuine alternative to the car. They must also integrate with community and voluntary sector transport and taxis, including in many rural areas where low population densities make conventional bus services unviable.

3.32 Subsidised bus services make up a large proportion of the network in the region. Frequencies of passenger transport tend to be limited away from all but the main routes. This limits opportunities for commuting and for travelling to other time-sensitive destinations.

3.33 There is still work to be done to improve understanding of the all forms of passenger transport supply and demand around the HITRANS region as a whole, how it integrates and how it compares from areas to area; and whether it is most effectively and efficiently meeting the needs of communities, business and tourists.

3.34 Gaps in passenger transport inhibit social and economic outcomes in the region. Many ferries, buses, coaches and air services are difficult to access for people with disabilities. It is costly to access the region and to travel around it. Affordability of transport is a barrier to access to employment, education and training.

3.35 The Scottish Executive's Bus Route Development Grant Scheme offered an opportunity for HITRANS to identify gaps in the quality and frequency of bus services that can be eliminated. The Scheme allows services to be kick started by pump priming the routes on a declining subsidy basis for a three year period with the enhanced service becoming commercially viable in its fourth year of operation.

3.36 The Highlands and Islands has benefited from a number of successful bus route development scheme projects that have benefited, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray and Orkney. These projects have seen the introduction of new environmentally friendly easily accessible buses and more frequent services. HITRANS hopes in partnership with Government and Councils to build on these successful projects with more in the future, and deliver a step change in quality of provision on bus networks across the region.

3.37 The key policies for passenger transport within the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy are as follows:

- H33a: Investigate the feasibility of delivering a multi-modal/multi-operator ticketing system.
- H33b: Develop high quality passenger transport user information and mapping,

potentially to present a hierarchy of transport in the area.

- H33c: Develop a consistent standard for supporting infrastructure. Provision of interchange points with passenger facilities including seating, bus shelters, real time information, way-finding, accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities, and so on. Integrate these facilities with tourist information centres where appropriate.

- H33d: Work towards integrated timetabling whereby all modes change timetables on the same day. This would mean aligning timetables with rail timetable change dates as these are set nationally. However it will not always be possible to align with rail timetable changes as these are set by a European standard.

- H33e: Examine the potential for a hub and spoke interchange network for interchange to Postbus, community transport and/or taxis for onward travel in rural areas into local/regional centres, and within the local and long-distance bus network.

- H33f: Explore mechanisms for targeted support for socially excluded groups. This could include partnership working with JobCentre Plus network for example and would cover all aspects of 'accessibility' – physical accessibility, awareness, affordability, acceptability or availability.

- H33g: Evaluate options for the development of the taxi sector as part of passenger transport network. Consider the role that taxis can play, in both rural and urban settings, and in respect to all aspects of accessibility.

- H33h: Exploration and support for Bus Quality Partnerships / Contracts where appropriate to enable frequency enhancements and extending hours of operation.

- H33i: Investment in infrastructure:
    - Upgrade poor quality transport terminals which are of poor quality, bringing them up to a consistent standard.
    - Replacement of vehicles which fall short of accessibility standards.
    - Invest in infrastructure facilities such as bus shelters.

- H33j: Rail service /frequency enhancement Challenge Fund, administered jointly by Regional Transport Partnerships and Transport Scotland.

- H33k: Develop a comprehensive bus strategy for the region, which will be based on the development of a region-wide accessibility model.

- H33l: Ensure that appropriate provision for buses is made in all road improvements, and improve facilities on existing roads. Fast-tracking of bus lay-by schemes on trunk/local roads, to enhance safety and promote use of buses.

- H33m: Develop an innovative approach to Demand Responsive Transport across the region, working with the member Councils

Ports, ferries and waterways

3.38   Ferry services operate in all parts of the region except Moray. Almost all services receive operating deficit finance, either directly from the Scottish Executive or via local authorities. Thirty per cent of the population of the Highlands and Islands[4] live on more than ninety inhabited islands. Sea transport therefore forms a vital social and economic role in supporting the island communities, businesses and tourism. With the exception of a few relatively low capacity air services to some islands, ferries are

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[4]   Highlands and Islands Enterprise area.

responsible for carrying all passenger movements and the majority of goods traffic to, from and between the islands.

3.39   There is a poor understanding of the ultimate passenger and freight origins and destinations around the region[5]. There is limited frequency on much of the network, with some islands being connected less than daily, and particularly so in the winter months. Interchange opportunities to other means of transport, including bus and rail, are lacking at some points in the network; ferries, road, bus / coach and rail sectors are managed by various different bodies / organisations.

3.40   There is limited life expectancy of vessels and infrastructure around the region and the network is at risk from the impacts of climate change and tidal surges, for example.

- H34a: Understand origin and destination patterns for passengers and freight. Develop a strategy and evaluate long-term network options such as exploring concentration of activity on a hubs and spokes network. Study of origins and destinations could also assist in identifying how the region's canals could play a greater role in the market.
- H34b: Explore rationalisation of the waterborne transport network in partnership with the Scottish Executive, who have committed to "a comprehensive review of lifeline ferry services to develop a long-term strategy for lifeline services to 2025" in the National Transport Strategy[6].
- H34c: Enhance ferry services and develop fit for purpose timetables:
    - Provide for daily commuting to and from key economic, education and health centres.
    - Review timetables and sailing hours, with earlier starts and later finishes.
- H34d: Evaluate alternative pricing mechanisms, including for example, introducing yield management mechanisms and marginal cost pricing.
- H34e: Develop a regional investment strategy which is consistent with:
    - The requirements of a strategic review of the future sea-crossing network.
    - The opportunities to facilitate modal transfer to coastal shipping through improved port infrastructure.
    - The opportunities to facilitate modal transfer and use of the canal network.
    - Support for enhancing port facilities, for example in respect to accessibility and port handling facilities.
    - Improved efficiencies through investment in modern vessel technology.
    - Sustain the network whilst climate change ensues.
    - Catering for proven demand for new routes.

Costs of transport and travel

3.41   This sub-strategy has been developed in response to consultation responses to the Draft Regional Transport Strategy.

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[5]   A study is currently ongoing that is looking at ferry traffic origin and destinations. This research follows the recommendation of the Strategic Sea Crossing Study completed in 2005. The survey will be carried out in August and November 2006 on all strategic crossings.

[6]   National Transport Strategy, 2006, Scottish Executive, para 189

3.42   Whilst the environmental impacts of reducing the costs of road-based transport are recognised to be undesirable, and unsustainable, HITRANS wishes to promote the case for reducing the costs of travel for its communities and businesses, which tend to be significantly higher than for other communities and business across Scotland.

3.43   In particular, there is a need to continue to make travel on lifeline services affordable to all users. Currently, concessionary travel discounts are available to certain sections of the community, older people, individuals with disabilities, and young people, on certain modes – rail and bus primarily. However, discrepancies in concessionary travel entitlements remain, particularly in areas of the region with poor or non-existent rail or bus services, particularly communities who depend on ferry services, or community transport services.

3.44   Affordable fares are necessary to promote modal shift, and to provide mobility/social inclusion to people on low incomes.

3.45   The cost of freight transportation within the region is significant, due to long distances travelled, regulations over working hours for drivers, and additional costs incurred when ferry links are required.

3.46   Policies within this sub-strategy are as follows:

- H35a: Make travel affordable to individuals and businesses, extending Assisted Development Scheme to ferries.
- H35b: Achieve equity and consistency in the concessionary fares system, across all relevant modes.
- H35c: Explore ways of reducing the cost of freight transport.

Environmental impacts

3.47   HITRANS recognises its duty to promote sustainable development in the region. Moreover, the region is home to a significant proportion of Scotland's designated landscapes, species and habitats, as well as a rich historical heritage. This heritage is an asset, and needs to be protected both for future generations, and for the continued economic development of the region.

3.48   HITRANS looks beyond the current Regional Transport Strategy with regards its contribution to sustainable development, and whilst in this first fourteen year strategy, a net increase in travel may occur to promote economic development, it is the intention of HITRANS to seek to mitigate these impacts to minimise the region's carbon footprint.

3.49   The key policy within this sub-strategy is therefore:

- H36a: Develop ways to mitigate the environmental impacts of socially and economically necessary travel across the region.
  - Continue to promote and increase levels of Active Travel across the region.
  - Continue to focus on promoting modal shift away from the private car in areas where public transport is a real choice, particularly the Inner Moray Firth area.
  - Explore ways to increase the modal transfer of freight from road to rail and

short sea shipping, where feasible

- Work with partners, particularly Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to progress the up-take of alternative fuels for all transport modes.

- Work with partners, particularly Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to integrate renewable energy generation into some transport projects where feasible (an example of this is the potential for renewable energy projects to be included within proposals for fixed links in the Western Isles).

- Monitor the proportion of carbon emissions from the transport sector that are being actively offset by other initiatives across the region, working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise in particular.

- Support the adopted policies of local development plans across the region to ensure that new developments are planned in areas that are in close proximity to local services and amenities in order to reduce the need to travel longer distances; and work with local authority planners to ensure that transport accessibility is considered at an early stage in the planning process.

- Ensuring, with local authority partners, that the Appropriate Assessments are carried out on transport proposals supported by the Strategy – this is to ensure that proposal/project level mitigation measures are taken forward as the strategy is implemented.

4. THE NATURE OF THE PRIORITY STRATEGIC AND REGIONAL NETWORK

4.1   To further the HITRANS policy objective of building a fit for purpose multi-modal transport infrastructure, analysis has identified a multi-modal, priority Strategic and Regional Network which needs to be improved (reported in Section 5 of the main Strategy document). The following describes these priority links in more detail.

The Strategic Network

4.2   The Strategic Network makes up the principal links between Regional Centres and the National Gateways of Scotland.

4.3   The efficiency and effectiveness of the Strategic Network is vital to the social and economic vitality of the region. Efficient transport network support the economy in a number of ways. For example by improving access to jobs, thereby increasing employment opportunities and extending labour markets; improving access to education and training opportunities, so improving the skills of the workforce; supporting tourism, by ensuring access to the region; and by closing the distances between companies and their customers and suppliers.

A82 and Fort William and Oban Rail Lines

4.4   The A82 is historically the main route from Glasgow to Inverness which runs along the west side of Loch Lomond to Tarbet, north from Tarbet (through Glencoe) to Fort William and on to Inverness. The A82 is the principal link to the west of Scotland and the main commercial corridor for goods and services being transported into and out of the Western Highlands, Skye and the Western Isles.

4.5   The journey time on the route is long and unreliable as a result of the narrow and circuitous route with bottlenecks and limited overtaking opportunities. There are also a number of pinch points on the route. The route has a poor accident record, particularly on the section between Invergarry and Inverness.

4.6   The A82 Tarbet to Fort William Economic Appraisal describes that the current standards on the A82 fall well short of the transport expectations of both businesses and residents in the West Highlands and Islands which are set out in *A Smart Successful Highlands and Islands,* and this is also borne out by the business survey that was carried out for the economic appraisal.[7]

4.7   Journey time on the Fort William and Oban Rail Lines is long, and frequency is limited (three and four departures per day respectively). There is poor integration between coach and rail timetabling, with departures often competing rather than complementing.

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[7]   A82 Tarbet to Fort William: Economic Appraisal, Main Report, September 2005.
http://www.hitrans.org.uk/downloads/A82%20Final%20Report.pdf

A9 and Highland Main Line

4.8   The A9 was upgraded in the 1970s and exhibits a variety of standards including dual and single carriageways and a variety of junctions and minor accesses which intersect with the road along the entire route.

4.9   The connectivity of this corridor to the central belt is essential to the attractiveness and function of the region. The road and rail corridor is the principal route between Inverness and the central belt. The corridor is the main route for the movement of people and goods from Orkney and Caithness and is the principal connection from Moray and north-west Highland to the National Gateways.

4.10   A recent study of the perceptions of the A9 (and A95) in the business community found that the upgrading of the A9 is a priority. The main issues for the A9 were viewed as overtaking opportunities and efficiently dispersing platoons, rather than greatly reducing journey times. Improvements were seen as having the potential benefit of reducing stress and thus making driving the A9 less "hard work".[8]

4.11   On the Highland Main Line the journey time is long (3hrs 20mins to 4hrs 10min) and the service pattern irregular (6 direct services per day to Edinburgh and 3 direct to Glasgow). On the road the journey time is also long as a result of limited overtaking opportunities. This results in convoying. The route has a significant record of fatalities.

4.12   Journey time on the A9/A99 north is long and unreliable. There is a prevalence of slow moving vehicles on the route and limited opportunities for safe overtaking. To the immediate north of Inverness congestion is significant on the Kessock Bridge and at the Longman roundabout. The Far North Line is a single track line and there are 24 stations along the route. Journey times are very long and frequency is very limited.

4.13   An increase in demand on the route is expected through continued growth of the inner Moray Firth and growth in visitors to the areas, especially at Aviemore associated with the Aviemore Highland Resort initiative[9.] Unreliability of journey times south of Inverness will increase.

Inverness airport

4.14   Inverness has direct connections to Edinburgh and a number of other UK destinations. There are opportunities for interlining at Edinburgh, Manchester and London airports for international travel. There is constrained capacity at the airport and a high dependence on the car to access the airport. Passenger transport schedules are not adequate to meet the hours of operation of the airport, and the bus service experiences delay, making passenger transport an unattractive option.

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[8]   Perceptions of the A9 and A96 among business organisation and businesses, final report to Highlands and Islands Enterprise, March 2006.

[9]   http://www.hie.co.uk/Default.aspx.LocID-0finewd73.RefLocID-0fihiesv500b00d.Lang-EN.htm

4.15   Inverness airport is an important link to the Western Isles and Orkney. The terminal building and air-side facilities at the airport are inadequate to deal with current and future demands.

A96 and Inverness – Aberdeen rail line

4.16   The Aberdeen-Inverness route is a multi-modal corridor that provides local and long-distance connections along its route. Road and rail both have long journey times. On the road, congestion is a problem as well as limited opportunities for safe overtaking resulting in convoying. There are significant capacity constraints between Inverness and Inverness Airport access and worsening conflict between long-distance and local traffic at Fochabers, Elgin, Keith and Nairn, all of which is constraining development.

4.17   The rail journey on the corridor is slow, of variable frequency, and offers poor onward connections. Rail has therefore limited attraction as an alternative to road, despite road transport also being slow and unreliable. The rail line has significant capacity constraints as it is predominantly single track.

4.18   There is significant growth in housing and employment development along the corridor, especially to the east of Inverness and at Elgin.

Argyll & Bute Sea crossings and A83 to A82

4.19   Coll, Tiree and Colonsay do not have a daily connection throughout the year - in the winter timetable, the connection is reduced to just three sailings per week. Islay is one of the most populous islands in Argyll and Bute, yet on most days during the winter the last sailing from the mainland is at 12:50. Between Mull and Oban there are many variations to the ferry timetable over the week and year, for this short crossing.

4.20   On the A83 between Campbeltown and Lochgilphead single track sections remain, which constrain capacity and lead to slow journey times and limited opportunities for safe overtaking. There are also a number of pinch points that restrict movement of commercial traffic to and from the area.

Western Isles sea crossings to Uig and the A87 to the A82

4.21   Harris & North Uist connections to mainland via Uig to the A82 corridor for onward travel to all gateways and beyond. There is no breakwater at Uig, which constrains connectivity. The Harris and North Uist services share the same vessel, restricting the maximum number of return sailings to either island to two per day in summer, with a lower frequency actually provided on most days. The sailing frequency is reduced in winter, with Harris having less than one return sailing per day. Return sailings are in the early afternoon in the winter, so a day trip is not possible in either direction. Furthermore, the Sound of Harris ferry cannot operate during hours of darkness during winter, which severely limits services.

4.22   The A87 through Skye is poorly aligned on the stretch between Portree and Broadford. The stretch at Glen Garry on the mainland is below standard and on the A887 Torgoyle Bridge is a pinch point.

4.23   Road (including coach travel) is the only journey option from Skye to national gateways. This comprises very long journey times (6½-7½ hours by coach and 5½ hours by car) between Skye and Glasgow / Edinburgh.

Stornoway to Ullapool sea crossing and the A835 to Inverness

4.24   The crossing from Ullapool is a key trade route for the Western Isles. There is concern from hauliers as to the reliability of the current services. There is no Sunday service to Lewis. The five mile section of the A835 between Garve and Contin is particularly sub standard with poor alignment, severely restricting flows and affording limited if any real opportunities for overtaking.

A85

4.25   The A85 connects Oban to the A82 for onward routes to the national gateways. Oban is a gateway to the ferry services to the Inner Hebrides, Mull and the Western Isles. There is increasing congestion through Oban itself, particularly at peak times and in line with ferry arrival / departure times.

A941 and A95 Moray connection to A9

4.26   The A941 is the section between Elgin and Craigellachie, and thereafter merging with the A95 and continuing to the A9 just north of Aviemore.

4.27   This is the main artery for Moray south to the central belt, and is vital for the transportation of manufactured products from the Spey valley area. HGV traffic is proportionally high, and the route is inadequate for the volume and type of traffic that uses it. There are limited overtaking opportunities on the routes which results in convoying and slow journey times. The A95 also has alignment constraints and a number of pinch points.

Kyle Rail Line

4.28   Three trains operate each way daily on the route with a fourth service operating in the summer peak. For the east end of the line, the arrival time into Inverness is too late, and the afternoon departure time poorly timed, for a working day.

Barra air service

4.29   The air service between Barra and Glasgow uses a beach landing at Barra, and so the schedule depends upon timings of the tides. This changeable timetable means that undertaking a days' business on or away from the island is not a possibility. It also has an impact on the costs of the service – the service provider must use a Twin Otter aircraft, and the lack of efficiency from a uniform fleet and limited schedule contribute to a costly service. A hard runway would enable the operation of a standard aircraft at regular times leading to a more efficient and effective service for the island. The Barra air service operates under a Public Service Obligation, and passenger numbers grew by 13% in 2005 following the introduction of the reduced fares in 2004.

4.30   Air services are a vital link to Barra, particularly as in the winter ferry services are reduced to three a week.

Nature of the priority links – Regional Network

Introduction

4.31   The Regional Network connects Local Centres to Regional Centres. These links therefore ensure that communities centred around Local Centres and their hinterlands are able to access the services and functions that are provided in the 12 Regional Centres around the region. Each of these Regional Network routes tend to be the main and only connection between the Local Centre and Regional Centre, and so the availability and efficiency of the link is directly related to the social and economic outcomes of each Local Centre. Research[10] has shown that accessible rural areas have performed better than remote rural areas in the past. Hence, there is potential for enhancing links in the Regional Network delivering benefits such as improving accessibility and reversing population decline.

Orkney inter-isle connections

4.32   Orkney Ferries operate nine ferries to 13 islands. Most islands currently receive at least a daily service throughout the year. The exceptions are, first, North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray, which receive very limited lift-on lift-off services and are served by the internal air service. The second group receiving less than a daily service are some of the smaller South Isles, although a daily service is maintained during the summer months.

4.33   Across the network there is however considerable variation in service frequency and crossing times. The inter-isles connectivity is threatened – capacity is inadequate and the vessels are at end of their life and have poor physical accessibility.

Easdale, Luing, Islay-Jura and Lismore ferry connections

4.34   Sailing frequencies are greatly reduced on Sundays. Replacement vessels and infrastructure are required in the medium term.

Raasay ferry connection

4.35   The island of Raasay, which lies of the east coast of Skye, is accessed by ferry from Sconser on Skye. The existing ferry terminal, which is at the end of its lifespan, is being upgraded to provide improved pier facilities in order to safeguard the ferry link to Skye.

Western Isles Spinal Route

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[10]   Factors Affecting the Competitiveness of Businesses in Rural Areas, DTZ Pieda.

4.36   The Spinal Route is the principal connection of the Western Isles arc of islands. The route includes the crossings of the Sound of Harris and Sound of Barra. The Sound of Harris ferry service has operated since 1996 on a very restricted timetable as a result of the shallow waters and reefs/rock outcrops making the crossing route extremely circuitous. The difficult nature of the crossing has resulted in a restriction to daytime sailings only which severely curtails the service throughout the winter months. Recent improvements to the route markings has resulted in some small improvements but further works are required if the significant route limitations are to be overcome and an appropriate level of service introduced at all times.

4.37   The last remaining single track sections on the road between the ferry ports at Stornoway and Tarbert and from the ferry port at Lochmaddy to Clachan were funded through Scottish Executive granting funding to HITRANS in 2004 (with remaining funding coming from CNES and European money). Fifty miles (80km) of the Spinal Route remain single track or poorly aligned in Harris, Ness, the Uists and Barra.

A816

4.38   The A816 formed part of the trunk road network until 1996 linking A83 and A85 trunk roads. It provides the main transport artery south from Oban to Lochgilphead. The A816 links key settlements in Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and Islay to Oban, the regional centre for the area.

4.39   The A816 is also of industrial importance as it is the only route north from Kintyre suitable for timber extraction and vehicles serving the fishing industry.

4.40   There is poor alignment, in terms of width and geometry, on 28 miles of 38 mile route between Lochgilphead and Oban.

A848 and A849

4.41   These roads are the principal connections between the main town of Tobermory on Mull and the ferry terminal for the mainland ferry at Craignure. The route provides the opportunity for future development of island ferry services through Tobermory.

4.42   The final five mile section of this route to Tobermory is substandard.

A941

4.43   The A941 is the section between Craigellachie and Dufftown. This section links parts of the Speyside whisky manufacturing area to the A9 and routes south. There are limited overtaking opportunities on the routes which result in convoying and slow journey times.

A838

4.44   The A838 is the principal route between Kinlochbervie and Inverness via Loch Shin. The majority of the route is single track and passing places, although visibility and alignment is reasonable. However some small sections in the vicinity of Laxford Bridge have poor visibility and sub-standard alignment. These single-track sections are of very poor standard and relate to a high accident record.

A890

4.45   The A890 (and A832) is the link between Lochcarron and Achnasheen, this is the principal Wester Ross connection for travel to Inverness. There are difficulties with single-track sections on the route, which also have very poor visibility in the vicinity Achnashellach.

A939

4.46   Sections of the A939, which links Nairn and Tomintoul to the A95, are poorly aligned and below standard. The route has a poor accident record. The route presents difficult winter conditions, and there are poor structural elements.

A98 and A950

4.47   The A98 and A950 link Moray to Fraserburgh and Peterhead. The A98 is a major coastal route beginning at Fochabers and proceeding north-east, passing close to Buckie, Findochty and Portknockie before passing though Cullen and Portsoy. After the junction with the A95 it passes through Banff and Macduff. The A950 joins the A98 near New Pitsligo and passes through Mintlaw and Longside before crossing the A90 on route to Peterhead harbour.

4.48   The A98 and the A950 comprise some sections with poor alignment and the route has a poor accident record.

A832

4.49   The A832 connects Fortrose to the A9. A large number of people commute from Fortrose to Inverness. There are problems with traffic volumes and speeds in the villages on this route and bus stop and waiting facilities are of poor quality.

5   DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THE STRATEGY

A1.1   To include:

- C2: Equality Impact Assessment
- C3: Monitoring information
- Separate supporting documents
    - Consultation report
    - Network option development and assessment (technical paper)
    - Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Statement (post-adoption summer 2007)

A2. OUTLINE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE HITRANS LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

A2.1   HITRANS, the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, is a statutory body and has a duty to prepare a statutory Regional Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands region. HITRANS covers the local authority areas of Highland, Argyll and Bute, Moray, Orkney and Western Isles Councils. The objectives of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

The objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy

A2.2   The objectives of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy were set following detailed research of the existing transport related issues, problems and opportunities in the Highlands and Islands and consultation with the public and key stakeholders in the area.

A2.3   The transport objectives set out the direction for investment in transport in the HITRANS area over the next fifteen years. The objectives are strongly influenced by transport objectives at national and local level and the objectives of various cross-sector plans such as those pertaining to land use planning, health improvement and accessibility, economic development and environmental sustainability.

A2.4   The key themes addressed by these objectives are:

- Environment;
- Safety;
- Economic growth;
- Social inclusion; and
- Integration.

A2.5   The objectives of the strategy can be found in Chapter 4 of the RTS.

Who is intended to benefit from the strategy?

A2.6   The RTS sets HITRANS's priorities and actions for investment in transport in the Highlands and Islands over the next fifteen years and it is intended that the policies and interventions outlined in the strategy will benefit everyone who lives, works and travels within the HITRANS area. Through implementation of the RTS there is the potential to improve transport for the young, elderly and those with disabilities, particularly through improved access to the transport network and improved safety whilst travelling on the transport network.

A2.7   Due to the nature of the RTS, that is, a strategic transport policy document, it has been judged as unlikely to have any specific impacts on nature of transport policy and initiatives, it was not believed that the strategy will have any specific negative impacts

on the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgender community, or those with specific Religion and Belief interests.

Information collation and consultation

A2.8   The first stage in developing the RTS involved detailed research into the socio-demographic profile of the area. Accessibility, in terms of geographic accessibility (the availability of public transport, access to hospitals/GPs) was examined, and information on levels of car ownership was gathered, together with information on Deprivation across the region. Furthermore, in the Review of the previous voluntary RTS, representatives of each NHS board across the region were surveyed to gather their views on the opportunities and challenges a new RTS should address. This Review work fed directly into the new statutory RTS.

A2.9   Consultation to ascertain the views of the public and a wide range of stakeholders played a large role in informing the direction and priorities for the strategy. Consultation was carried out in two stages during the development of the RTS and is reported upon in the Consultation Report which accompanies the HITRANS RTS. The first stage involved targeted stakeholder consultation through workshops and meetings. The second stage involved wider consultation with the general public, and the document was actively sent to a range of stakeholders (shown below), as well as being publicly available through various means. Large print versions of the material was available upon request, although no such requests were made.

A2.10   To ensure that the consultation process was fair and equitable, the draft RTS was sent to the following bodies:

- Age Concern
- Disability Rights Commission
- Disability Rights Commission – Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS)
- Disability Rights Commission - Enable
- Equality Network - Sexual Orientation
- Royal National Institute for the Blind Scotland
- Royal National Institute for Deaf People Scotland
- Scottish Association of Mental Health - SAMH
- Scottish Association of Mental Health - Sense Scotland
- Scottish Women's Rural Institute (SWRI)
- Argyll Communities
- Highlands & Islands Equality Forum
- Moray Action for Communities
- Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay
- Voluntary Action Lewis
- Voluntary Action Orkney

A2.11   Responses to the RTS were received from the Orkney Disability Forum, and MACS.

Actions

A2.12   All comments received on the Draft RTS during the consultation period were considered, fed back into the development of the strategy and the final strategy amended accordingly where appropriate.

A2.13   No adverse impacts of the strategy were identified, however some amendments were made in order to maximise the benefits of the strategy for as many people as possible.

A2.14   Specifically, responses received from Orkney Disability Forum related to reducing rail journey times on the Far North Line, and querying a statement in the draft RTS to provide funding to taxi firms to upgrade to accessible vehicles. In the final RTS, an additional proposal to invest in enhancing journey times on the Far North Line has been included, as this was a major theme throughout the consultation. With regards funding for accessible vehicles for taxi firms, this is an option to be explored throughout the lifetime of the RTS and does not suggest a commitment to this course of action.

A2.15   A further specific response from MACS stated a desire to work with HITRANS to develop a comprehensive understanding of the transport needs of people with disabilities. HITRANS endorses this potential for partnership working with MACS.

A2.16   Furthermore, an additional measure to improve the accessibility of the transport network for people with disabilities was introduced to the final RTS as a result of the consultation process – specifically, under H33c in the RTS, a commitment is made to improving the standards of passenger transport infrastructure across the region, including for people with disabilities.

Monitoring

A2.17   A draft monitoring strategy is contained within Chapter 5 of the RTS. However, HITRANS commits to developing a monitoring strategy for the RTS and Delivery Plan in its first year of action. Indicators and targets will be developed to measure progress towards achieving each of the RTS objectives. The RTS will be monitored on an annual basis.

Publishing of the strategy

A2.18   Once published, the RTS and Delivery Plan will be available on the HITRANS's website and copies distributed to all stakeholders involved in the consultation. Hard copies of the document will also be available on request. Large print copies of the RTS will be available upon request, and an audio version may be made available.

A3.   REVIEW OF OTHER MONITORING FRAMEWORKS

APPENDIX: TABLE A3.1   **LOCAL AND REGIONAL INDICATORS RELEVANT TO HITRANS**

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
TRANSPORT		
Orkney Local Transport Strategy (draft for consultation February 2007)	• Active Travel • Air services • Bus services and community and voluntary transport • Ferry services, ports and harbours • Freight transport • Land use planning and development control • Local roads and roads maintenance • Smarter choices and information • Taxis and private hire vehicles • Traffic and parking • Travelling safely	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable
Argyll and Bute Local Transport Strategy (draft for January consultation 2007)	Economy objective: • Population (Census) • Employment (Area statistics)_ • Gross Value Added (Area statistics) • Commercial traffic on ferries (National Statistics) Integration objective • Public perception / satisfaction (from Citizen's Panel) • Intermodal connections (proportion of services providing connecting opportunities) • Number of interchanges improved or refurbished	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
	Environment objective • NOx levels • PM10 levels • Modal shift (volume of timber transported by sea) • Number of cycle trips (results of local cycle counters) • Mileage of local cycle network connecting to the National Cycle Network • No. of schools participating in Active Travel (no. of school travel plans implemented) Accessibility objective • Access to public transport (bus passenger numbers) • Accessible transport (passenger numbers on community and demand responsive transport) • Access over water (ferry passenger numbers) • Access over air (air passenger numbers) Safety objective • Road casualties (accident statistics) Safer communities (speed limit review)	
Western Isles Local Transport	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, although as in development at time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS and DP will review individual indicators
Highland Local Transport	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, although as in development at time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS and DP will review individual indicators

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
Moray Local Transport	In development and still to be finalised	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, although as in development at time of writing, the first Annual Report of the HITRANS RTS and DP will review individual indicators
Regional Transport Strategy for the west of Scotland	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report – extensive range developed in draft form for Consultative Draft RTS which have been reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Regional Transport Strategy for North East Scotland	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Regional Transport Strategy for Tayside and Central	To be finalised and reviewed in first HITRANS Annual Report	Directly relevant – consistency with HITRANS RTS and DP monitoring desirable, particularly where cross-boundary issues are concerned
Audit Commission for Scotland	The Audit Commission for Scotland holds data and information on Best Value performance monitoring for local authorities in Scotland. However, transport has limited coverage in the Best Value process in Scotland, being limited to three indicators covering carriageway condition, traffic light repairs and street light repairs (http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/).	Indicators more appropriately monitored at a local level, not a regional one.
ECONOMY		
Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network Operating Plan 2006-09[11]	Network targets and measure of progress of relevance to HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy Strengthening Communities: Number of new / enhanced community assets; and Number of	Difficult to directly attribute progress in these indicators to transport

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[11] http://www.hie.co.uk/HIE-HIE-corporate-documents-2005-06/HIE-Network-Operating-Plan-2006-09.pdf

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
	community groups with increased capacity Regional GVA Number of business growth projects	

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
HITRANS RTS Strategic Environmental Assessment indicators	Refer to accompanying SEA Environmental Statement.	
Indicators of Sustainable Development for Scotland: Progress Report 2005[12]	• Indicator 1: Sustainable prosperity, as measured by index of carbon dioxide emissions divided by GDP. According to Friends of the Earth, road transport is currently responsible for around 22 per cent of UK carbon dioxide emissions, and that level is expected to rise . • Indicator 7: Climate Change, as measured by Million tonnes of greenhouse gases carbon equivalent (weighted by Global Warming Potential). • Indicator 8: Air Quality, as measured by the number of Air Quality Management Areas. • Indicator 14: Travel - distance, as measured by total vehicle kilometres. With road traffic forecast to rise by 27% by 2021, this is viewed by the Scottish Executive to be unsustainable, and long distance commuting may be contributing to this indicator. • Indicator 15: Travel - industry, as measured by freight intensity (relationship between tonne kilometres	Several are directly relevant to HITRANS RTS and DP, and direct consistency with transport indicators (14-17) desirable. Indicators 1, 7 and 8 will be monitored through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process

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[12] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/26122734/27353

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
	moved and Gross Domestic Product).	
	• Indicator 16: Travel - mode: as measured by the proportion of journeys to work not by car.	
	• Indicator 17. Travel – accessibility, as measured by the percentage of Scottish households within 6 minutes walk of a bus stop.	
HEALTH		
NHS Clinical Outcome Indicators, 2005[13]	Indicators related to child health, cancer, women's health, mental health, knees and hips, surgical procedures and other miscellaneous	Reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy and none assessed to be of direct relevance to HITRANS with the exception of Childhood Obesity, which was last reported on in 2003. It is concluded however that the HITRANS Strategy would be better placed to monitor transport actions that contribute to reducing obesity through increased physical activity (School Travel Plans, Active Travel and so on)
Scottish Health and Community Care targets (Draft Budget 2007-08)[14]	Targets relating to health improvement, reducing health inequalities, involvement by the public in NHS planning, improvement in quality of NHS services, patients receiving healthcare promptly	Reviewed for the HITRANS Strategy and no objectives or related targets assessed to be directly relevant to HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy or Delivery Plan
PLANNING AND OUTDOOR ACCESS		
Relevant Development Plan indicators across the region	Cairngorms National Park Plan[15] and Local Plan (consultative draft) [16]– no indicators presented	No indicators identified for Cairngorms

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[13] http://www.indicators.scot.nhs.uk/Reports/Published.html

[14] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/05131713/10

[15] http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=98

[16]   http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/resource/docs/publications/07112005/CNPA.Paper.182.Local%20Plan%20Draft%20Report%20Oct%202005%20-%20Full%20Report,%20Policies%20and%20Settlement%20Statements.pdf

Partner and Plan	Indicators	Assessment of relevance to HITRANS RTS and DP
	No overall Local Plan for Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park at time of writing	
	Highland Trends 1999[17] - monitors information on areas related to the Highland Structure Plan, and of relevance to the HITRANS RTS: Economy – travel to work	
	Infrastructure – transport	
	Environment – air quality	
Relevant Outdoor Access Strategy indicators across the region	Cairngorms National Park Authority Draft Outdoor Access Strategy[18], August 2006 – no indicators presented	No indicators identified
	No overall Outdoor Access Strategy for Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park at time of writing	

[17] http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/E7B23C46-6067-477D-A0F3-3707E2C9BF19/0/highland_trends_99.pdf

[18] http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/parkauthority/publications/results.php?publicationID=82