

Item:  
**11**



## Report to Partnership Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

### RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

#### Regional Transport Strategy Draft RTS Delivery Plan

##### Purpose of Report

This report introduces the first Draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan and provides Members with an update on the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy.

##### Background

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

Following amendments made in response to feedback received through the statutory public consultation, Members approved a final version of the Regional Transport Strategy at the Partnership meeting in Stornoway in September.

A copy of the final version of the Regional Transport Strategy, together with supporting documents (that included all the parallel Impact Assessments: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment Report (EqIA) and an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA)) was then submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport for approval on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

Officers subsequently received feedback and comments from Transport Scotland on the final draft. In response to this feedback, Officers have updated and / or provided responses to this feedback making a number of minor amendments to the text of the RTS as appropriate.

It was originally anticipated that a final version of the Regional Transport Strategy would be submitted for adoption by the HITRANS Board at the February Partnership meeting but it is likely that it will be taken to the next Partnership Meeting in April instead.

##### RTS Delivery Plan

HITRANS Regional Transport Partnership sets out a long-term, strategic framework for transport in the Highlands and Islands. Its delivery will be dependent on a combination of actions by HITRANS, partner local authorities, Transport Scotland and wider partnership working with other key local and national organisations.

To guide the implementation of the RTS, a Delivery Plan has been prepared to accompany the RTS. The purpose of the Delivery Plan is to set out a series of actions including an ongoing programme of physical and non-physical interventions which will deliver the objectives defined in the RTS. The Action Plan contains a combination of proposed appraisals / business cases,

research studies, projects and programmes as well as 'business-as-usual' activities intended to promote the interests of our region. Members and Advisors have already input to a draft version of the Delivery Plan prior to the statutory consultation. Officers have now updated this based on the final version of the Strategy that was submitted to the Cabinet Secretary.

This document constitutes the first of the Delivery Plans to accompany the RTS. The Delivery Plan will be reviewed and updated throughout the lifetime of the strategy as part of the ongoing monitoring process. It is proposed that this review should coincide with each Scottish Local Authority Election cycle. This will provide an opportunity to reset or realign priorities to the changing political, social, environmental and economic landscape.

Unlike the RTS itself, which provides a circa 20-year strategic framework, the **Action Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated** to reflect the changing status of projects, their differing stages in the project lifecycle and the need for new or amended actions to support a policy (e.g., in response to the emergence or development of new technology).

A draft version of the first Delivery Plan attached in Appendix A. The Delivery Plan identifies 74 Actions to address each of the policies set out in the updated Regional Transport Strategy. It also set outs a timescale for each Action and the outcome sought.

The initial sift by officers identifies all those Actions that would be ideally be progressed within the timeframe of the Delivery Plan given unlimited resources. In order to develop a prioritised programme for the period covered by the first delivery plan – up to May 2027, officers are keen to understand those Actions that Members and partners would like to see given the highest priority so that a final version of the Delivery Plan can be submitted for adoption at the next Partnership meeting.

## **Risk Register**

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment:

The work to refresh the Regional Transport Strategy will involve the development of a new Delivery Plan that will be updated every 5 years or council term

### Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment:

This work helps set new policies and objectives for HITRANS that are relevant to the policy and governance framework within which the Partnership currently sits.

### Financial

Impact – Positive

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

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment:

Updating the Regional Transport Strategy offers an opportunity to comprehensively review both transport and wider inequalities across the region. Parallel Impact Assessments

including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment Report (EqIA) and an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) have been undertaken to inform each stage in the development of the RTS.

**Recommendation**

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report
2. Consider those Actions within the delivery plan that should be prioritised so that a finalised version of the first Regional Transport Strategy can be submitted for adoption at the next Partnership Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

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**Date:** 2nd February 2025