

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 25th April 2025

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Regional Transport Strategy Update

Purpose of Report

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

Update

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 2024.

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 4th October 2024.

Since then Officers have provided responses to any feedback or questions from Transport Scotland officials who have been reviewing the final draft documentation. Transport Scotland have indicated that they are now in a position to seek Ministerial approval for the Strategy.

As set out above, the Strategy has been developed with a vision and priorities for transport in the region over the next 20 years but as our next Partnership meeting is not scheduled until 12th September 2025, Officers would like to ensure that subject to approval by the Minister, a final version of the document is developed as soon as possible so that any commentary contained with the Regional Transport Strategy remains as current as is possible given the time that has elapsed since the Partnership approved a final draft.

It is therefore recommended that approval of a final version and the adoption of the RTS and supporting documentation is undertaken if and when Ministerial approval is confirmed. To facilitate this, Officers propose that copies of all documents together with any changes made to the version that was originally submitted to Ministers be circulated electronically for review by Members to seek their approval prior to adoption so as to enable a corporate version of the Strategy to be developed for publication.

Parliamentary Event

To coincide with the adoption of the updated Regional Transport Strategy and 1st Delivery Plan, HITRANS officials have been making arrangements for a parliamentary reception in September following the HITRANS Partnership meeting that month. Subject to final approval of the Strategy by Ministers, it is hoped that this event will provide an opportunity to highlight some of the key priorities contained within the updated Strategy.

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 and 2024/25.

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 and update
2. Approve that a final version and the adoption of the RTS and supporting documentation is undertaken if and when Ministerial approval is confirmed.
3. Approve that a corporate version of the Regional Transport Strategy with current images, formatting and case studies is developed and published thereafter.

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Date: 24th April 2025