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Report to Partnership Meeting 20th April 2025

Research and Strategy Delivery

Regional Transport Strategy: Draft 1st Delivery Plan

Purpose of Report

This report introduces a final draft of the first Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Delivery Plan.

Regional Transport Strategy: Draft 1st Delivery Plan

HITRANS updated Regional Transport Strategy (that has been submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval) 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 first Delivery Plan has been prepared. 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 help 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. The attached draft has been updated since the last Partnership meeting following input from Members and Advisors.

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).

This document will constitute the first of several 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. This review will coincide with each Scottish Local Authority Election cycle providing an opportunity to reset or realign priorities to the changing political, social, environmental and economic landscape.

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

Since the last Partnership meeting, officers have updated the detail of some of the actions and reviewed the timescale for the delivery of those actions that require the commissioning of new work or activity by HITRANS.

Below is a summary of some of the key actions set out in the draft which HITRANS will seek to implement over the timeframe of the 1st Delivery Plan covering the period up to Summer 2027:

- Develop Regional Rail and Bus Strategies as daughter documents to the RTS
- Update the Regional Active Travel Strategy
- Publish our Regional Behaviour Change Strategy and continue to develop the Regional People and Place Behaviour Change Programme in partnership with local authorities and anchor community organisations
- Expand HI-Bike e-bike share scheme within Inverness, Fort William and into Elgin
- Continue to continue to support the expansion of our Moove Flexi app for new DRT services across our region
- Lead the development of an Integrated Transport Plan for Fort William
- Lead work with local and national partners to improve the integration of facilities between modes at points of key interchange including Inverness, Oban and Fort William
- Establish a Highlands and Islands Health and Transport Action Plan building on recent collaboration and progress made in the Western Isles and elsewhere with the region
- Expand the Sustainable Aviation Test Environment (SATE) across the Highlands & Islands with different demonstration activities across the region, with the overall aim to integrate sustainable aviation within the overall transport mix

We have also included a number of actions which we will seek to progress subject to available funding and following review of work already being progressed by partner local authorities and other regional or national organisations. These include:

- Develop a regional approach to policy and management of abnormal loads on the regional road network
- Development of a regional strategy to challenges relating to visitor demand such as parking and traffic management at key hotspots, bus and rail travel to areas of high visitor demand, active travel provision, facilities and interchange, transport related management issues from motorhomes and cruise ships
- Develop a regional mobility hubs hierarchy and seek to progress individual projects as funding opportunities arise

These actions and others set out within the draft 1st Delivery Plan (attached as Appendix A to this report) complement a wide range of ongoing work that HITRANS will continue to undertake in support of objectives and policies within Regional Transport Strategy.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment:

The Delivery Plan will be updated every 5 years or council term and sets out the actions that HITRANS and partner organisations will undertake to support the implementation of the the Regional Transport Strategy.

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 undertaking actions of the first Delivery Plan will be identified in future Business Plans and through the wider work of the Partnership which will be reported to members at Partnership meetings.

Equality
Impact – Positive

Comment:

Updating the Regional Transport Strategy has offered 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. Approve the actions set out in the 1st Delivery plan attached as appendix to this report.
3. Approve the development of a final formatted version of the 1st Delivery Plan ready for publication following the adoption of the Regional Transport Strategy.

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Date: 17th April 2025