

Report to Partnership Meeting 12 September 2025

PARTNERSHIP

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION: RTS LAUNCH

Purpose of Report

This report advises Members on arrangements for the forthcoming HITRANS Parliamentary Reception at the Scottish Parliament. The event, sponsored by Liam McArthur MSP, will provide an opportunity to highlight the priorities of the updated Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and engage with Members of the Scottish Parliament, key regional stakeholders, operators, and business representatives.

Event Overview

The Parliamentary Reception will take place on Tuesday 23 September 2025 and will serve as the formal launch of the new HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), which was completed in late 2024 and received formal approval from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport earlier this year. The RTS sets the direction for the development of transport across the Highlands and Islands for the next 20 years. Its vision is to deliver a transport system that reduces inequalities, supports climate action, enables inclusive economic growth, and enhances the health and wellbeing of people and communities in the region.

The event, sponsored by Liam McArthur MSP, will provide a platform to present these priorities directly to Members of the Scottish Parliament alongside key stakeholders from public bodies, transport operators, and the business community. Taking the form of a standing reception with a short presentation, supported by display stands and visual material, the reception will facilitate engagement and discussion around the delivery of this long-term strategy. Attendance is expected to be in the region of 50 guests, with catering and audio-visual support arranged to ensure an effective and well-profiled event. HITRANS has also commissioned a short video to help communicate some of the key priorities of the Strategy and this will be uploaded onto the HITRANS website after the reception.

Objectives

The reception will:

- Engage MSPs and stakeholders in the delivery priorities of the Regional Transport Strategy.
- Provide a platform for HITRANS to present its strategic direction and highlight transport challenges and opportunities across the Highlands and Islands.
- Facilitate discussion with public, private, and community partners on how transport improvements can support economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental targets.
- Strengthen HITRANS' visibility within the parliamentary environment and provide MSPs with practical insights into regional transport issues.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment: The event supports RTS delivery by securing political awareness and stakeholder commitment to the strategy's outcomes.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment: Strengthens policy development and positions HITRANS as a leading voice in shaping national and regional transport policy debates.

Financial

Impact – Neutral/Positive

Budget Line and Value: Event costs will be met from the Partnerships' communications and stakeholder engagement budget line. Expenditure is proportionate to expected impact and visibility.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment: Invitations will be extended widely, ensuring representation across sectors and communities. Accessibility requirements will be addressed as responses are received.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Endorse HITRANS' participation in the Parliamentary Reception on 23 September 2025, noting the objectives and planned format.
2. Agree that the event will be used to launch and promote the updated Regional Transport Strategy to MSPs and key stakeholders.

Report by: Neil MacRae

Designation: Senior Partnership Manager

Date: 1st September 2025