HI TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

STRATEGY

Introduction

HITRANS plays a critical role in shaping sustainable transport for the Highlands and Islands. While infrastructure and service delivery remain central to our Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on how well we communicate with our communities, stakeholders, and decision makers. Our marketing and communications strategy must be forward-looking, digitally driven, and designed to inspire behavioural change while showcasing innovation.

This strategy is not a stand-alone document. It is directly aligned with and will feed into the HITRANS Business Plan, ensuring that communications and marketing activities are integrated with organisational priorities, resource planning, and delivery objectives.

The HITRANS website has recently been updated enabling more flexibility in sharing work programme updates.
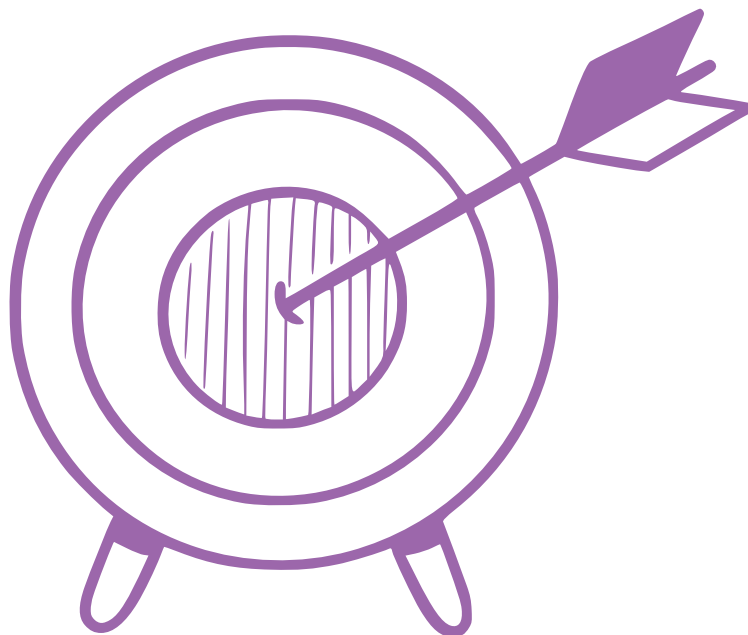
STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVES

Our communications and marketing objectives are to:

- Position HITRANS as a trusted, recognised, and influential voice on transport across the Highlands and Islands.

- Support delivery of the Business Plan by aligning communications priorities with key organisational objectives and targets.

- Promote HITRANS projects (e.g. People and Place Programme, SATE, EV Infrastructure Shared Service, RURALITIES) to generate public engagement and uptake.

- Drive behavioural change towards sustainable transport choices.

- Strengthen relationships with stakeholders, decision makers, and the media through consistent, targeted messaging.

PRIORITY
AUDIENCES

- Public: Residents, commuters, and visitors in the Highlands and Islands who make daily transport choices.

- Stakeholders: Partner organisations, local authorities, transport operators, environmental and community groups.

- Decision Makers: Local, regional, and national elected representatives, Transport Scotland, and UK Government.

- Media & Influencers: Local and regional media, specialist press, and digital influencers focused on sustainability, travel, and regional development.

CORE STRATEGY
ACTIVITIES

1. Branding

- Ensure brand consistency across all platforms (digital, print, events, signage) and areas of work (HITRANS, HItravel, HI-BIKE, MooveFlexi, Scottish Islands Passport, SATE)

- Strengthen the HITRANS brand by positioning it as synonymous with sustainable, inclusive, and innovative transport.

2. Digital Platforms

- Establish the HITRANS website as a dynamic hub with news updates, current project information, user-friendly resources, and interactive transport tools.

- Establish HITRANS as a thought leader onLinkedIn, BlueSky and X (Twitter) for policy and stakeholder engagement.

- Use Facebook and Instagram to connect with the public.

- Use paid digital advertising to target visitors and residents with behavioural-change messages.

3. Media and Public Relations

- Proactively engage with local, regional, and national media through press releases, opinion pieces, and media events.

- Develop strong visual assets (professional photography, video content, infographics) to enhance media coverage.

- Position HITRANS' leaders as expert commentators in broadcast and print media.

- Use milestone announcements to drive coverage and reinforce HITRANS' role as an innovator.

- Use human-centred storytelling to make projects relatable, featuring real users of services.

4. Events and Partnerships

- Strengthen HITRANS' presence at regional, national, and sectoral events, including sustainability and transport conferences.

- Organise community-facing events to launch and promote projects and encourage behavioural change.

- Partner with cultural, health and environmental organisations to expand audience reach beyond transport-focused forums.

5. Marketing Campaigns

- Deliver integrated campaigns linked to the Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan where project funding has been allocated.

6. Publications

- Transition to digital-first publications with limited high-quality print runs.

- Increase distribution of our newsletter.

- Create engaging, visual content such as infographics, interactive reports, and video summaries.

- Ensure all materials are inclusive, accessible, and compliant with HITRANS' equalities policy.

MEASUREMENT AND
EVALUATION

- Track success through KPIs including media coverage, website traffic, social media reach, campaign engagement, and public uptake of services.

- Conduct regular audience perception surveys to monitor HITRANS' visibility and reputation.

- Review and adapt campaigns to remain agile and responsive to audience needs.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to amplify their campaigns across our area and increase cross distribution of marketing materials.

CONCLUSION

The HITRANS Marketing and Communications Strategy is designed to position the organisation as a forward-thinking, digitally confident leader in sustainable transport. By prioritising digital engagement, targeted campaigns, and innovative storytelling, HITRANS will build stronger connections with communities, stakeholders, and decision makers, ensuring our projects are visible, valued, and widely used.

Appendix 1:

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1   This policy sets out the way in which Social Media is used by HITRANS, as required to achieve sound and effective corporate governance.

2. Scope

2.1   This policy applies to HITRANS employees, Board members, advisors and all other individuals and third parties who have access to HITRANS profiles on Social Media, hereafter "associates".

2.2   This policy applies to all Social Media interactions related to HITRANS, regardless of its format or whether it was created within or outwith HITRANS.

3. Social Media and Social Networking Definitions

3.1   The term 'social media' is commonly used to describe any number of web-based and mobile technologies that allow users to communicate and interact with each other.

   'Social networking', meanwhile, is a term commonly used to describe the process of using these channels.

Increasingly, social networking is being used by businesses and organisations to communicate and engage with customers on a number of levels.

At a basic level, organisations may simply want to use social media to direct users to a corporate website, as a news outlet, or to promote job opportunities.

At a more advanced level, social media can be used as a means to respond to comments and complaints, consult and engage with customers, and to monitor and respond to feedback on an organisation.

3.2   Some popular examples of social media platforms include:

Facebook: Allows users to share information, images and links with others. Users can view, comment upon or 'like' other profiles, depending on privacy settings. From a business perspective, organisations can communicate and engage directly with customers via the platform.

X: Like Facebook, users can share a range of information with others. This is done via status updates, known as "tweets", of no more than 140 characters. Users "follow" other profiles that appear in a constantly updated news feed. Updates can be "re-tweeted" and shared with others.

LinkedIn: Aimed at the business community, LinkedIn allows users to connect with fellow professionals, share expertise, enter discussions and seek or promote job opportunities.

flickr: One of a number of image hosting sites that allow users to share images with others. Images can also be searched by keywords and themes.

Wordpress: One of a number of websites that allow users to create a 'blog', whereby diary-style entries can be created and shared with others. Some blogs are personal in nature, while others are specialist or offer a 'behind the scenes' look at an organisation.

YouTube: One of several websites that hosts video footage that can be shared with others. Links to such clips are often shared via other social media channels.

Communities of Practice: An online discussion forum commonly used by professionals to share experiences and expertise.

Wikipedia: An information website which allows people to people to create or add information to a communal document.

Most social networking sites require users to register and create a profile, although users can generally control how much information is shared with others.

It is common for individuals and organisations to use a number of social media platforms for different purposes and to engage with different audiences.

3.3 HITRANS recognises that social media has become a part of everyday life for many of our employees and can be used positively. This Policy provides information on how social media can be used to help teams and services engage with new and wider audiences.

4. General Usage Guidelines

4.1 HITRANS will update Social Media when the following occur:
- A news article is published on the website
- New documents are uploaded to the website

- Forthcoming events/consultations are announced
- A major project bill is made law or announced
- News or an event related to the partnership's work becomes known
- In order to promote the work/services enabled/provided by HITRANS

This list is not exhaustive, and there may be other information that would be appropriate to upload to social media.

4.2 Direct Messages
HITRANS will endeavour to respond to direct messages received through Social Media, except where these are marketing queries or of a frivolous nature. Responses may not be immediate as it can sometimes take time to ensure that the best possible answer is obtained, although target response time of three working days should act as a reasonable maximum. For formal enquiries members of the public will be advised to contact HITRANS by email, post or telephone.

4.3 Monitoring
Social Media in use by HITRANS will be monitored during office hours (typically 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). There will be no requirement for Social Media monitoring outside of these times.

5. Social Media Guidance for all Channels

5.1 We will not automatically "follow" back everyone who "follows" HITRANS or our project sites. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid resource wasting spam handling and so that members of the public can easily identify other key users that we think are relevant and who we "follow". However, being "followed" by HITRANS does not imply endorsement of any kind.

5.2 HITRANS may also "share" from other sources or on other subjects when these are deemed to be of interest to our stakeholders, for example news from our partners, government, and other bodies.

5.3 Where a social media presence is being developed on other platforms similar guidance to that set out in this policy will apply.

Brand	Digital Channels
HITRANS	Website www.hitrans.org.uk X @HITRANS_RTP LinkedIn @HITRANS @hitrans.bsky.social
HI-BIKE	Website www.hi-bike.co.uk App Facebook HiBikeFortWilliam X hibike_fortw Instagram hibikefortwilliam Facebook HiBikeInverness Twitter HiBikeInverness Instagram hibike_inverness/
Scottish Islands Passport	Website www.islands.scot App Facebook ScottishIslandsPassport/# Instagram scottishislandspassport/ Facebook: ScottishIslandsPassport Instagram: scottishislandspassport X: IslandsPass Threads: scottishislandspassport Bluesky: /islandspass.bsky.social Wordpress website islands.scot Scottish Islands Passport App
SATE	Website www.sate.scot LinkedIn Sustainable Aviation Testing
Moove Flexi	Website www.mooveflexi.co.uk App

6. Unacceptable Use

6.1   Overview

All HITRANS associates who have their own personal profile on a social media website should be aware of their conduct on these sites and their responsibilities to HITRANS. This applies equally to content posted in associates business and personal social media accounts.

6.2   Associates must not post:

- Any information, media, image or comment which could cause offence or which may be considered discriminatory or may be considered as bullying or harassment.

- Comments, content, media or information that could bring HITRANS into disrepute.

- Any confidential or personal information, their own, or service users, other associates, stakeholders or partners, such as contact details

- Photographs or video footage without express permission from the subject and/or owner

- Offensive comments in relation to any HITRANS employee including management and other colleagues

- Discriminatory comments

- Confidential information regarding an incident or decision at work

- Derogatory or malicious comments about HITRANS

- Comments which may be harmful to employees, service users, associates stakeholders or partners of HITRANS

This list is not exhaustive.. If a breach of policy is suspected or observed, associates will be expected to co-operate with any investigation. Breaches of policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

DOCUMENT
VERSION CONTROL

Records Management Plan	Group or Name(s) & Designation(s)	Date	Version
Author: Sheena Corcoran	HITRANS	16/10/2025	
Owner: Ranald Robertson	HITRANS	16/10/2025	
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Reviewer/Update:			

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