

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 6 February 2026**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Shared Service Update: Public Transport Information**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Members with an update on the shared service operating model for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area and proposals to support this going forward.

#### **Background**

For over a decade, HITRANS and partner Local Authorities have operated a shared service approach to the provision of public transport information.

Following staff reductions in a number of partner councils Public Transport teams, HITRANS developed a proposal for that included the recruitment of a Public Transport Information Officer in 2015 with the responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of transport information across the HITRANS area. A parallel application was submitted to the Scottish Governments Bus Investment Fund to secure match funding support for a number of improvements to bus information and infrastructure across the region.

The model also supports the hosting of a single real-time passenger information (RTPI) database and the operation and maintenance of over 170 electronic displays and screens across the region. This service is managed by HITRANS but can be accessed by partner local authorities and operators. The current contract expires in December 2026.

Similarly, the shared service supports for the provision of an information database that hosts all the timetable information of local registered bus services in a format suitable for exporting the information to external journey planning websites such as Traveline Scotland, our RTPI database and for the publishing of at stop wayside information displays.

The supplier for the public transport information database has changed twice since 2015 with HITRANS and our partner local authorities now using the DIVA system supplied by MENTZ (who provide the database for Transport for London). This contract was awarded in July 2020 and a new contract will need to be procured next year.

The annual combined cost of the two contracts that support the shared service is currently over £90,000 per annum. To date HITRANS has been largely able to fund these maintenance costs through external funding sources. HITRANS also support the service through the overhead costs associated with the shared service functions, e.g. IT and printing and publishing of the at stop displays.

Annual contributions from each local authority to support the provision of the shared service approach were agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding at the outset of the project

in 2014. These contributions and the funding split have remained the same since the introduction of the shared service model.

External funding support from Transport Scotland has changed over the last 18 months with Local Authorities all now receiving a direct capital grant through the Tier 1 Bus Infrastructure Funding and local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships now able to utilise funding from the People and Place programme for all forms of sustainable transport rather than just active travel.

## **Status Update**

### **At Stop Information and Infrastructure**

The list below outlines the volume of stops for which wayside information is currently produced by area:

- Highland Council: 1811
- Moray Council: 319
- Orkney Islands Council: Orkney currently produces its own at stop displays
- Argyll & Bute Council: 687
- Western isles Council: 100

The MENTZ system (DIVA) is being delivered by one of Mentz's existing clients National Public Transport Information (NPTI) on a subnet basis of their system.

Work to improve the source information received from operators is being done in collaboration with the operators themselves and each local authority. This improvement is on an ongoing basis to ensure the output information received by the public is continually improving. We would encourage our partner Councils to include conditions for supplying high quality public transport information (e.g. use of Electronic Bus Service Registration and stops names that match the national bus stop database (NaPTAN)) in any new contracts as this helps both improve the accuracy of the information and reduces the need for manual editing of the data.

Through the Highland Bus Service Improvement Partnership, members have agreed to support an additional shared service that has enabled the recruitment of a resource to help maintain all the bus stop information and infrastructure within the partnership area. A Support Officer was appointed in January 2025 and after initial success it was recently agreed to extend this until December 2027.

### **Real-Time Information**

Real time information throughout the HITRANS area is supported through a contract with the supplier Vix Technology who maintain the database that drives all the on street electronic displays and information screens at key interchanges. Many of these information points now provide multi modal information with departures for rail and ferry as well as bus. The content of each display can be remotely adapted with the opportunity to include temporary public or travel messaging and also promotional content or campaigns where the display functionality permits. Both The Highland Council and Orkney Islands Council have utilised their allocation of Bus Infrastructure Funding to upgrade or install new real-time displays with HITRANS supporting through a match funding contribution.

The contracts for both real-time information and the public transport information database are both due to expire within the next 12 months.

### **Local Authority Public Transport Information Shared Service contributions**

Listed below are the contributions from each local authority towards for the public transport information shared service:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Annual Contribution</b>
Argyll & Bute Council	£7,500
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	£5,000
The Highland Council	£10,000
Moray Council	£7,500
Orkney Islands Council	£5,000

### **Electronic Bus Service Registration (EBSR)**

The current system for registering bus services has been in place since deregulation in 1986 and, while it has been adapted over time to reflect changing needs, the general principles remain the same. Despite attempts to modernise the system through the Electronic Bus Registration System (EBSR), take up for this has been patchy.

The bus service registration process is a formal way of maintaining a central register of local bus services. It is largely an administrative process, whereby bus operators provide route and timetable details of services to the Traffic Commissioner; these are processed by DVSA staff who work in the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. As long as all details have been provided correctly and the appropriate length of notice given, permission will be granted to operate the service. This remains in force until the operator applies to vary or withdraw the service, with the required period of notice.

As well as providing this central register, the process provides some formal status to services and an entitlement to provide a public service. It ensures that services are being operated by companies that are properly licensed to do so. It also provides a benchmark from which deviations can be measured, in respect of reliability and punctuality. Equally, the process provides time and route data from which timetable information can be made available to users, either by the operators themselves, local authorities, regional transport partnerships or through Traveline.

Where routes have been supplied by EBSR it removes the need for the route and timetable information to be re-entered by the HITRANS Information Officer. This both reduces the time to produce at stop displays but also removes the risk of manual error when inputting the service details. EBSR ensures that the operator provides the single source of information that then drives all subsequent information points that utilise this information from wayside information, real-time displays, TravelineScotland and Google.

The draft Bus Service Improvement Partnership agreement for the Highland Bus Partnership proposes imposing a charge for operators that are not able to supply their service registration via EBSR. We would encourage all partner councils to adopt this within the conditions of new contracts and stipulate that all registrations must use NaPTAN stop names and codes for timing points in their registrations. The introduction of other conditions that require operators to market and promote their services would also be welcomed.

### **Moove Flexi – Demand Responsive Transport App**

HITRANS awarded mobility software developer, Liftango, the contract to deploy a DRT platform consisting of a user application, operator platform and a driver platform in 2021. This contract has enabled the development and deployment of the Moove Flexi app

<https://www.mooveflexi.co.uk/> and the equivalent m.connect app by Moray Council that supports their council wide on demand network  
[http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_148117.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_148117.html).

A core priority of the initiative was to help improve access to all demand responsive transport services across the HITRANS area by providing a single point where locals and visitors would be able to book any non-scheduled transport service. There are still just under two years left on the existing contract with services now utilising the app in four out of HITRANS five partner local authority areas (please see update to HITRANS Partnership Meeting November 2025).

HITRANS would like to see as many services take advantage of this service within the remainder of the contract. To date, officers have found it challenging to persuade operators to transition onto the app despite it providing a positive impact in almost all cases where it has been deployed. Ideally, we would like partner Councils to adopt conditions in new contracts that require operators to utilise the app on any services that would be appropriate for its deployment and provide passengers with an enhanced option for booking and tracking the service.

## **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

1. Note this report.
2. Agree that the Memorandum of Understanding between HITRANS and Partner Councils for the Public Transport Shared Service be reviewed and an updated MoU submitted for consideration at a future Partnership meeting.
3. Agree that the cost of inputting manual registrations be accounted for in the updated Memorandum of Understanding.

## **Risk Register**

### RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports RTS objectives and the monitoring of their implementation. The work also supports key elements that will underpin the Regional Bus Strategy that is currently being developed.

### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports the several policies and outcomes within the recently update Regional Transport Strategy

### Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – Cost savings have been realised as a direct result of the shared service approach adopted for the provision of public transport information. The intention is to update the memorandum of understanding to reflect the current policy and funding environment whilst retaining the benefits of the shared service model.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for improving public transport helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and also helps remove a number of physical accessibility barriers.

**Report by:** Robert Wilson / Neil MacRae

**Designation:** Public Transport Information Officer / Senior Partnership Manager

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Appendix A****Real-Time Displays in HITRANS Area**

Site Name	Unit Name
Inverness Bus Station	65 inch Departure Screen
Inverness Rail Station	55 inch Departure Screen
Inverness Airport - Reception	32" TFT
Inverness Airport - Entrance	32" TFT
Fort William - in railway station	32" TFT
Fort William - at bus stances	32" TFT
Kirkwall Travel Centre - Concourse	TFT
Kirkwall Orkney Islands	Samsung 32 inch Screen with Embedded PC (Airport)
Stornoway Bus Station	Samsung 32 inch Screen with Embedded PC 1 (window mount)
Stornoway Bus Station	Samsung 32 inch Screen with Embedded PC 2 (wall mount)
Elgin St Giles Shopping Centre	Samsung 43 inch Screen with Shuttle PC
Invergordon Ferry Terminal	46" Freestanding TFT (Allsee display)
Loch Ness Visitor Centre	55" Double sided freestanding Totem (Allsee display)
Nairn High Street	Bann 3 line
Longman Road, o/s Tisos	Bann 3 line
Tower Road	IBIS
Holm Dell Drive	Avon Flag
Stuart St (Manse Road)	Avon Flag
Church (High St), Ardesier	Avon Flag
Corbett Gardens, Ardesier	Avon Flag
High St/Outside Police station, Ardesier	Avon Flag
Post Office (Ardcroy Road, Croy)	Bann 6 line
Castle Street	Bann 3 line
Mackay Rd @ Hilton Shopping Centre	Bann 3 line
Milburn Road @ Morrisons	Bann 6 line
Retail Park	Bann 6 line
Falcon Square	Tay 3 line
Eastgate shopping Centre - display removed	42" TFT
Union St Stop A	Tay 3 line
Union St Stop B	Tay 3 line
Union St Stop C	Tay 3 line
Union St Stop D	Tay 3 line
Queensgate - Stop C	Bann 3 line
Queensgate - Stop B	Bann 3 line
Queensgate - Stop A	Bann 3 line
Bridge Steet o/s Gellions Pub	Bann 3 line
Inshes, Tesco Old Perth Road, Inbound	Tay 3 line
Inshes, Tesco Old Perth Road, Outbound	Tay 3 line
Young St, opposite Tesco	Bann 3 line

Longman Road, Inverness College	Bann 3 line
Millburn Rd @ Thistle Hotel	Bann 3 line
Raigmore Hospital	Bann 6 line
Tomatin Road	Bann 3 line
Fort Augustus Car Park	IBIS
Glenurquhart Road (o/s Council HQ)	IBIS
Holm Park Turning Circle	IBIS
Cradlehall Road, opp shops	IBIS
Ft William Middle St - Car Park	Shannon 3 line
Ft William Nevis Sport/Middle St - South	Shannon 3 line
Culduthel, opp ASDA	Tay 3 line
Culduthel, at ASDA	Tay 3 line
Holm, opp Tesco	Shannon 3 line
Holm, at Tesco	Shannon 3 line
Inverness Airport, o/s main building	Bann 3 line
Grant St (Inbound)	Shannon 3 line
Grant St (Outbound)	Bann 3 line
Academy St @ Farmfoods	Bann 6 line
Inverness Campus	Bann 6 line
Inverness Campus	Bann 6 line
Inverness Falcon Square o/s M&S	Shannon 3 line
Inverness Scorguie Road MFR	Bann 3 line
Alness High St Northbound	Bann 3 line
Alness High St Southbound	Bann 3 line
Invergordon High St southbound	Bann 3 line
General Booth Road (o/s Charleston Acad)	IBIS
Dingwall Royal Hotel	Bann 6 line
Cairngorm - TFT	42" TFT
Barnchurch Road	Bann 6 line
Barnchurch Road	Bann 6 line
Barnchurch Road	Bann 6 line
Barnchurch Road	Bann 6 line
Thurso Olrig street	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Wick Bus Terminal	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Elgin, A96 West Road close to Braelossie Place, Westbound	3 line LED
Elgin, A96 at Reiket Lane Westbound	3 line LED
Elgin, A96 at Reiket Lane Eastbound	3 line LED
Keith, Reidhaven Square (covers services in both directions)	3 line LED
Mosstodloch, old A96 at Stynie Road, Eastbound	3 line LED
Forres, St. Leonards Church, opposite Leys Road, Eastbound	3 line LED
Buckie, West Cathcart Street adjacent to Cluny Place, Westbound	3 line LED
Buckie, East Cathcart Street adjacent to Shanks Lane, Eastbound	3 line LED

Buckie, Netherha Road Westbound	3 line LED
Buckie, Barhill Road, Seafield Hospital, Northbound	3 line LED
Aberlour Square, Northbound	3 line LED
Elgin, Lossiemouth Road at Bonnie Earl Public House opposite Covesea Road, Southbound	3 line LED
Elgin, Station Road at Railway Station, Westbound	3 line LED
Fochabers, The Square, Westbound	3 line LED
Fochabers, The Square, Eastbound	3 line LED
Elgin, Edgar Road at B and Q Store, Westbound (site of original ASDA store 1970's), Westbound	3 line LED
Elgin, Haugh Road Road at Bibby Place, Northbound	3 line LED
UHI outside Student Accommodation	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
UHI opp Student Accommodation	3 line Bann LED
UHI outside Main Campus	3 line Bann LED
Inverness Bus Station Café	42" TFT
Inverness Bus Station Ticket Desk	42" TFT
Elgin Bus Station	55" TFT
UHI opposite Main Campus	3 line Bann LED
Conon Bridge - after Wyvis Crescent	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Conon Bridge - opposite Wyvis Crescent	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Conon Bridge - Primary School	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Conon Bridge - War Memorial	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Conon Bridge - Car Park	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Badenoch & Strathspey Community Hospital - Aviemore	3 line Bann LED
St Mary's Village	Avon Flag
Kirkwall Orkney Islands	Solent Display + Win10 + 4G (outside Kirkwall Tesco)
Finstown, Opposite Allans of Ginnock	Avon Flag
Finstown, at Allans of Ginnock	Avon Flag
Dounby	Avon Flag
Burray Village	Avon Flag
Kirkwall Travel Centre Stand 2	Tay 3 line
Kirkwall Travel Centre Stand 3	Tay 3 line
Kirkwall Travel Centre Stand 4	Tay 3 line
Kirkwall Travel Centre Stand 5	Tay 3 line
Stromness Ferry Terminal/Council offices	Bann 3 line
St Margarets Hope, Ferry Terminal	Tay 3 line
Kirkwall Orkney Islands	Solent Display + Win10 + 4G (outside Kirkwall Airport)
Inveraray Shoreside	Tay 3 line
Inveraray Townside	Tay 3 line
Lochgilphead Shoreside	Tay 3 line
Lochgilphead Townside	Tay 3 line
Ardrishaig South	Tay 3 line
Ardrishaig North	Tay 3 line
Tarbert	Avon Flag



Campbeltown Bus Terminus - Townside	Bann 6 line
North Pier, Oban	Shannon 3 line
Tesco's, Market Street, Oban	Shannon 3 line
Oban Station Square - Stance 1	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Oban Station Square - Stance 2	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Oban Station Square - Stance 3	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Oban Station Square - Stance 4	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Oban Station Square - Stance 5	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Portree Somerled square	Solent display - Win 10 + 4G
Oban Square	Totem
Carrbridge	IBD-3750
Cairngorm Hotel, Aviemore	IBD-3750
Burnside Aviemore	IBD-3750
Nethy Bridge	IBD-3750
Deshar Road, Grampian Crescent (Boat of Garten)	IBD-3750
Railway Station, Aviemore	IBD-3750
The Square, Granton on Spey (Outside British Legion)	IBD-3750
Kyle of Lochalsh, Harbour Slipway	IBD-3750
Kyleakin, Shorefront Shelter	IBD-3750
Uig, Pier	IBD-3750
Broadford, Post Office, Opp	IBD-3750
Broadford, Post Office, At	IBD-3750
Stornoway - Western Isles Hospital	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Nairn Bus Station	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Lochmaddy Shop	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Tarbert - Pier Road	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Stornoway - Cromwell St	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Balivanich Hospital	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Aviemore Railway Station	Axentia Totem Display
Nairn Sainburys Westbound	Shannon 3 line
Kennacraig - currently not working.	TFT
Campbeltown Bus Terminus - Shoreside	Bann 6 line
Fairways Business Park	Avon Flag
Nairn Tradespark westbound	Bann 3 line
Inverness Charleston Academy	Bann 3 line
Broadford Community Hospital - Isle of Skye	Shannon 3 line
Badenoch & Strathspey Community Hospital - Aviemore	Summary TFT (Thin Client only)
Broadford Community Hospital - Isle of Skye	Summary TFT (Thin Client only)
Lairg	Battery Display - IBD3750 + TTS
Raigmore Hospital - TFT1	Allsee - 55" High Brightness TFT
Raigmore Hospital - TFT2	Allsee - 55" High Brightness TFT