

## 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 18months 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               |
| Culduhel, opp ASDA  | Tay 3 line                   |
| Culduhel, 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                  |
| 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 Styne 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 |