

Item:  
**23**



## Report to Partnership Meeting of 6 February 2026

### FINANCE

#### Review of HITRANS Contract Standing Orders

##### 1. Purpose of Report

This report seeks Partnership Board approval to adopt **The Highland Council Contract Standing Orders 2025** for HITRANS procurement activity.

The updated Contract Standing Orders will be circulated as an **appendix** to this report and will replace the Contract Standing Orders previously adopted by HITRANS.

##### 2. Background

HITRANS is required to maintain robust governance and assurance arrangements in respect of procurement activity, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and delivery of best value.

The Highland Council has issued updated **Contract Standing Orders 2025**, applicable from **1 April 2025**.

The purpose of the Contract Standing Orders is to ensure consistent contracting procedures, compliance with the law, achievement of best value, and protection of the Council and its staff. As HITRANS utilise Highland Council Financial Processes we follow on from the Council procedures in terms of procurement and Contracts. The 2021 Contract Standing Orders were adopted by HITRANS in November 2021.

##### 3. Summary of Changes

The proposed adoption relates **only to Contract Standing Orders**.

The **Financial Regulations remain unchanged** from the version previously approved by the HITRANS Partnership Board in **2021**, and no amendments are proposed at this time.

The updated Contract Standing Orders provide a comprehensive framework covering procurement governance, procedures, tendering requirements, contract award and contract management, including:

Scope and application across contracting activity

- Threshold-based procurement procedures and authorisation requirements
- Requirements for sustainable procurement and community benefit considerations
- Tender issue, evaluation and award processes
- Contract management and reporting requirements

#### **4. Implications for HITRANS**

Adoption of The Highland Council Contract Standing Orders 2025 will ensure HITRANS procurement activity remains aligned with current governance and compliance requirements, and continues to support transparency, proportionality, and value for money.

HITRANS officers will continue to ensure that procurement activity is undertaken in accordance with the approved Standing Orders, and that appropriate internal processes and record keeping are maintained.

Where a senior Council official is suggested as the person with Delegated Authority in the Highland Council Contract Standing Orders these roles would fall within HITRANS Scheme of Delegation leaving the responsible officers being the Partnership Treasurer, Partnership Director and Senior Partnership Manager.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the updated Contract Standing Orders.

The updated Standing Orders support the effective control of procurement activity and the achievement of best value.

#### **6. Legal / Governance Implications**

The Contract Standing Orders are designed to support compliance with applicable procurement legislation and to provide a clear governance framework for procurement activity.

Adoption by HITRANS will strengthen assurance and auditability of procurement processes and decision-making.

#### **7. Next Steps**

Subject to Partnership Board approval, the Contract Standing Orders 2025 will be adopted for HITRANS procurement activity with immediate effect.

Officers will ensure that relevant internal procedures and guidance are updated accordingly and that procurement activity continues to be undertaken in line with the adopted Standing Orders.

#### **8. Risk Register**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Comment</b>
RTS delivery	Yes	The Partnership's Contract Standing Orders frame how the Partnership delivers procurement activities and ensure best value is achieved.
Policy	Yes	It is HITRANS Policy to adopt best practice in Financial Management following the model set by The Highland Council.
Financial	Yes	Implementation of the Contract Standing Orders provide a sound basis for minimising risk to the Partnership from a financial perspective.
Equality	-	

## **9. Recommendations**

The Partnership Board is asked to:

1. **Approve** the adoption of **The Highland Council Contract Standing Orders 2025** for HITRANS procurement activity; and
2. **Note** that this update relates only to Contract Standing Orders, and that **Financial Regulations remain unchanged** from the version previously approved by the Partnership Board in 2021.

**Report by:**

Ranald Robertson/Brian Porter

**Designation:**

Partnership Director/Treasurer

**Background Papers:**

Highland Council Contract Standing Orders 2025

**Date:**

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026