

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Fort William Integrated Transport Plan Update**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide Members on progress to develop an Integrated Transport Plan for Fort William in accordance with Recommendation 32 of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and other parallel work within Fort William which HITRANS are leading or supporting.

#### **Background**

HITRANS chair a Client Delivery Group that is overseeing the development of an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) for Fort William. Membership consists of Transport Scotland, HITRANS and The Highland Council who have provided funding to support the commission and have responsibility for the assurance of the outputs. Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Fort William 2040 are also represented on the CDG in an advisory role.

Transport Scotland published STPR2 in December 2022. Recognising the need to address the challenges across different transport modes in Fort William, STPR2 recommended the development of an Integrated Transport Plan (ITP) for the town:

*Recommendation 32: Trunk road and motorway renewal for reliability, resilience and safety, specifically recommends continued and increased investment in the trunk road and motorway network over and above current maintenance levels to keep the network reliable and resilient for road users. Potential measures would include, but are not limited to, carriageway and structure schemes, strengthening of major bridges, removal of accessibility barriers and development of integrated transport plans for Fort William and the A90 Kingsway through Dundee*

The Fort William ITP aims to support a connected, inclusive, safe and resilient Fort William. It is seeking to address long-standing issues including the reliability and resilience of the trunk road network in the town.

#### **Project Update**

HITRANS appointed a partnership between Aecom and Stantec to undertake the 18 month study in May 2025. Initial work focused on the refresh and validation of the evidence-base and findings of work previously undertaken. Extensive traffic data collection was undertaken in August and November to support the development of an updated transport model that is used in the appraisal of different options.

In addition, the project team and client group has engaged with a wide range of key stakeholders and businesses including through the Partnering for Progress – Lochaber Community Event, Fort William 2040 transport group and local Council Ward Business meetings.

## **Fort William Integrated Transport Plan Consultation – Survey & Drop in Session**

Residents and businesses were subsequently invited to help shape the future transport vision for Fort William a 6 week public consultation ran from 2nd March to 13<sup>th</sup> April. A copy of the consultation material can be found at the following link [\*\*Fort William Integrated Transport Plan \(ITP\)\*\*](#). A leaflet drop to every household was issued to every household within the project catchment area to help promote the consultation. An informal drop-in event was also held on March 17 in the Nevis Centre to provide an opportunity for the public to view designs and speak directly with members of the project team.

The consultation invited feedback on a series of multi-modal that had been shortlisted through earlier stages of the STAG process and to consider the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) against which the remaining 34 options would be appraised.

The TPOs and shortlisted options are summarised below.

### ***Vision and Transport Planning Objectives***

The Vision for the Integrated Transport Plan is ***to support a connected, inclusive, safe and resilient Fort William.***

Setting Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) based on evidenced problems is central to the appraisal process and aim to support the Vision. The TPOs identified for the study are as follows:

1. Reduce travel time delay and variability whilst minimising the generation of additional traffic
2. Improve the resilience of the transport network
3. Increase the proportion of people walking, wheeling, cycling and using public transport
4. Support sustainable economic growth, including improving opportunities for freight movement by non-road modes
5. Reduce the negative effects of severance (i.e. physical division of communities caused by the A82 and the volume of traffic on this route)
6. Improve integration between different modes

These objectives are then used within the options appraisal, along with the five STAG criteria (Environment; Climate Change; Health; Safety and Wellbeing; Economy; and Equality and Accessibility), to determine which options should be progressed.

### **Active Travel Options**

- **Active Travel 1: Improve active travel links between Fort William Town Centre and the bus and rail stations**, including consideration of opportunities to improve the existing connection via the underpass and any opportunities to introduce an at grade crossing.
- **Active Travel 2: Implement localised active travel improvements throughout Fort William**, including new and improved bike storage/parking, new pedestrian crossings of the A82 and A830 and improved quality and quantity of active travel signage.
- **Active Travel 3: Create a north-south active travel route between Ben Nevis (Visitor Centre) and North Road Retail Park** to offer a safer and more direct link. The alignment of this link is still to be defined, with potential route options available both to the east and west of the River Nevis.

- **Active Travel 4: Address pinch points on the existing active travel network**, including Nevis Roundabout, the bridge over the railway line from Inverlochy and pinch points on the Spine Route, Caol Links Route and the Torlundy Spur Route.
- **Active Travel 5: Create an Outer Orbital Route extending from the Old Fort / Fort William Travel Centre in the south to the north-west of the study area** via the A82 and A830, through Inverlochy, Banavie and Corpach.
- **Active Travel 6: Create the Retail Park Links route providing two connections to the A82 from the Fort William Spine Route – the retail park on North Road and the Fort William Retail Park.**
- **Active Travel 7: Create the College Link route providing a connection between the Fort William Travel Centre, NCN78 and Great Glen Way, and West Highland College with the Fort William Spine Route.**
- **Active Travel 8: Create the Upper Achintore Links route including on Lundavra Road from West End Roundabout to Lundavra Primary School; Connochie Road / Heathercroft Drive; Plantation Path (via Pine Grove Park) from Kennedy Road to Nairn Crescent (via Heathercroft Drive); and Ross Place / Lochaber Road.**
- **Active Travel 9: Create a new, more direct active travel link between Caol and Inverlochy.**
- **Active Travel 10: Create a path directly through the land to the east of Glenmallie Road, linking into the existing path on the flood defences.**

#### Bus Options

- **Bus 1: Enhance bus timetables through an additional vehicle and improved frequencies, including during peak hours, evenings and Sundays.**
- **Bus 2: Improve local and long-distance facilities for bus services in the centre of Fort William, including at the bus station and on Middle Street.** Possible considerations include the relocation of the bus station to Middle Street or aligning the stops opposite each other to enhance integration.
- **Bus 3: Implement bus priority along North Road.**
- **Bus 4: Increase the frequency of long-distance coach services** between Fort William and locations including Oban, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness and Skye.

#### Rail Options

- **Rail 1: Increase the frequency of rail services to / from Mallaig, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Corpach and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks**, providing an alternative option for commuters and contributing towards reduced road traffic volumes within the study area.
- **Rail 2: Introduce new stations near Carrs Corner and near Annat Farm and increase the frequency of local services.**
- **Rail 3: Improve the arrival experience at the railway station through upgrades / provision of a new building**, with an opportunity to support regeneration of the area alongside works to improve the bus station.
- **Rail 4: Increase frequency of rail services on the West Highland Line between Fort William and Glasgow Queen Street, including the introduction of a commuter rail service between Spean Bridge and Fort William during the morning and evening peaks**, providing an alternative option for commuters and contributing towards reduced road traffic volumes within the study area.

#### Multi-modal options

- **Multi-Modal 1: Introduce smart ticketing for rail, bus and ferry** to reduce costs, improve reliability and allow pre-booking for easier trip planning. This could include consideration of tap-on / tap-off facilities or daily / weekly contactless capping. It could

also include consideration of ticketing options that would allow passengers to travel on more than one mode without paying the premium cost for each mode.

- **Multi-Modal 2: Reallocate road and parking space in the town centre for active travel and public transport** to encourage higher footfall and manage vehicle movement. Options under consideration include provision of a widened pedestrian / cycle promenade and a dedicated bus lane on the A82 waterfront, converting the road to single carriageway in both directions, removal of vehicles from the front of the railway station building on Macfarlane Way and removing a section of Middle Street between the A82 Belford Road and Linnhe Road.
- **Multi-Modal 3: Develop mobility hubs at key locations within the study area** including West End roundabout, Carrs Corner, Banavie Station, Corpach Station and Corran Ferry Dock and promoting use of these locations as part of emergency response planning e.g. allowing local traffic to park at mobility hubs and walk to their destination in the event of an incident.
- **Multi-Modal 4: Introduce variable message signage on the A82 and A830 approaches / exits to / from Fort William** to inform drivers about current traffic conditions and guide them towards alternative travel options, such as Park and Ride or other car parks. Signage could also display wide load alerts and real-time updates on Banavie Swing Bridge operations.
- **Multi-Modal 5: Review opening hours of Banavie Swing Bridge**, considering restrictions on the number of openings or on the timings of openings, particularly during summer months.

#### Freight Options

- **Freight 1: Develop facilities to move freight via water**, including a deep-water port on Loch Linnhe linked to Corpach rail sidings and BSW Timber mill.
- **Freight 2: Improve rail freight capacity at Fort William and Corpach, integrating with passenger services.** Options under consideration include creating a rail freight hub at Corpach and making use of the Tom-na-Faire depot to load / unload trains and for storage of goods.

#### Road Options

- **Road 1: Introduce localised junction improvements on the A82 that could reduce delays through Fort William.** Potential locations for junction improvements include the A830 Roundabout, Nevis Junction (North Road / Belford Road Roundabout) and the Nevis Terrace Junction. This option also includes consideration of signalling a series of existing junctions and integrating the signals through an Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system.
- **Road 2: Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment A).** Create a new link to the west of the existing A82 between a point close to Glenmhor Terrace to the north and the Internal Retail Park Roundabout to the south.
- **Road 3: Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B).** Create a new link between the North Road Retail Park Roundabout and the Internal Retail Park Roundabout to the west of the A82.
- **Road 4: Implement Caol Link Road to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate.** Create a new link to the west of the existing A82, closely following the Great Glen Way between An Aird and the River Lochy, crossing the river to the east of Lochyside before tying in with the A830.
- **Road 5: Implement Caol Link Road to B8006 Kilmallie Road.** Create a new link to the west of the A82, closely following the Great Glen Way between An Aird and the River Lochy, crossing the river to the east of Lochyside before tying in with the B8006 Kilmallie Road.

- **Road 6: Implement A82 Western Relief Road (Alignment B) with Caol Link Road to A830 East of Blar Mhor Industrial Estate.** Create a new link to the west of the existing A82 between a point close to Glenmhor Terrace to the north, and the Internal Retail Park Roundabout to the south alongside a new link road to the west of the existing A82 crossing the river to the east of Lochyside before tying in with the A830.
- **Road 7: Implement A82 Bypass between Carrs Corner and the Internal Retail Park Roundabout.** Create a new link between a point to the east of Carrs Corner and the Internal Retail Park Roundabout to the south.
- **Road 8: Relocate off-street parking within the town centre and Nevis Terrace to a new multi-storey car park on the site of the existing An Aird car park.**

#### Other Options

- **Other 1: Introduce a water taxi route between Corpach, the west side of Loch Linnhe and Fort William.**

A series of Frequently Asked Questions and Answers has been developed for the project and can be found on the project page on the HITRANS website <https://hitrans.org.uk/projects/fort-william-integrated-transport-plan/>.

#### Next Steps

In addition to all the one to one meetings with key stakeholders over 200 survey responses were submitted through the online portal. These responses are currently being reviewed along with any completed hard copies of the survey. A consultation report summarising the feedback will be provided at the next HITRANS partnership meeting alongside an update on the option design and appraisal work that the project team are undertaking in parallel with the public consultation.

- Option design and preparation of outline cost estimates (late 2025-mid 2026)
- Modelling of options (late 2025-March 2026)
- Appraisal of options (late 2025-May 2026)
- Preparation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (late 2025-May 2026)
- Final Integrated Transport Plan submitted to HITRANS (December 2026)

#### Bus Infrastructure Fund

In addition to the Fort William Integrated Transport Plan a number of other projects are being progressed in parallel by partners. These include projects that The Highland Council have been successful in applying for through the Bus Infrastructure Fund administered by Transport Scotland. HITRANS is supporting the Highland Council in progressing the delivery of two of these projects – A feasibility study to consider options for upgrading or relocating the Bus Station and a redesign of the A82 / Nevis Terrace / Middle Street Junction to facilitate signalisation with bus priority.

Proposals for each of these projects will be shared at the next Partnership meeting.

## **Recommendation**

Members are asked to:

- i. Note this report;

## **Risk Register**

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – This work supports RTS Strategic priorities to enhance regional connectivity.

### Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – This work supports several policies set out in the RTS including; improving journey time reliability and network resilience, promotion of sustainable transport options in Fort William.

### Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – HITRANS has allocated 25% of funding up to a value of £100,000 towards the undertaking of an Integrated Transport Plan for Fort William.

The Bus Infrastructure Fund projects that HITRANS are supporting deliver are fully funded through grant awards from Transport Scotland following successful applications by The Highland Council.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Improving regional connectivity helps improve the competitiveness of businesses in the West Highlands and improving journey times in Fort William helps local bus operators provide more reliable public transport services.

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