Item:
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HITRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 6 November 2026

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2026/27

SUMMARY

This Report provides the Partnership Board with an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development programme and seeks approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2026/27 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 24th April 2026.

DETAIL

The Partnership at its meeting of 24th April agreed the HITRANS Business Plan for 2026/27 which includes a programme for Research and Strategy Development for 2026/27 in support of development, implementation and delivery of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

Work is progressing on delivery of the Programme as indicated in the Appendix to the report.

The Programme has been amended to reflect changes that have been identified to the circumstances surrounding some projects. The changes are summarised below and more information is provided on each change in Appendix A to this report.

Summary of key Programme changes:

- Increase the budget for People and Place Programme by
- Increase the Transport to Employment budget by £91,629 following the award of additional Scottish Government funding to support delivery of this workstream. This increases the total budget to £1,123,777.
- Following completion of the assessment of proposals submitted for Active Travel Infrastructure Tier 2 by Transport Scotland confirmation has been received of the award for the Skye Cycle Way (£900,000) and Lochbroom Link (£351,500) totaling £1,251,500.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery
Impact - Positive

Comment – The Research and Development Programme is the key mechanism by which HITRANS promotes delivery of the Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands

Policy
Impact - Neutral

Financial
Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – This item reports on the 2026/27 Business Plan research and strategy delivery programme

Equality
Impact – Positive

Comment – Actions within the programme will have a positive impact on Equalities including Accessibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2026/27 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Report by:	Ranald Robertson
Designation:	Partnership Director
Date:	14th September 2026
Additional Information:	Appendix – Research and Development Programme

Appendix – Research and Development Programme

Area	**Project**	**2026/27**	**September Update**
Sustainable Travel (Active Travel and ITS / DDRT)	ATIF Funding subject to competitive bidding	TBC	1251500
	People and Place Programme RTP Funding	2479278	2047778
Aviation	Sustainable Aviation (Future of Flight Challenge / IHCRD/ICNZ)	400000	400000
External Funding	RURALITIES	100000	100000
	Transport to Employment Programme		1123777
	Fort William ITP	100000	100000
	Renewable Energy Transport Opportunities Study	25000	25000
	ERDF / INTERREG / SG Bid Project Support	3000	3000
Travel Information / Bus	Bus Partnership Fund / BSIP and CCAM	10,000	10,000
	Regionally Significant Scheme Development	40000	40000
RTS	Climate Adaptation Study	20000	20000
	EV Infrastructure Fund Shared Service	145000	145000
	EV Fleet and Strategy	5000	5000
Rail	Inverness Station Masterplan	10,000	10,000
	Rail Policy Development	30000	30000
	Total Identified Project Expenditure	**3367278**	**5311055**
	Current Estimated Budget (R&D)	350000	350000
	Current Estimated Budget (External - EU, Transport Scotland, UKRI)	3,250,000	3,750,000