

Item:  
**11**



## Report to Partnership Meeting 6 October 2022

### RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

#### Demand Responsive Transport App – ‘Moove Flexi’

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides members with an update on the Demand Responsive Transport App being deployed by HITRANS to help support the operation, booking and marketing of non-scheduled transport services across the Highlands and Islands.

#### BACKGROUND

While the cost of providing public transport services has been increasing, the funding available has been reducing in recent years. This has meant that even without the increased challenges posed by Covid, the existing level of public transport and the model by which it is provided is becoming increasingly challenging.

The deployment of the DRT app ‘Moove Flexi’ will seek to increase the utilisation of these services which have sometimes struggled to attract the anticipated level of passengers for a variety of reasons:

- Limited or no budgets to promote awareness of them locally let alone to visitors to the area who might be interested in using them.
- The flexibility of the service makes them difficult to promote via many standard websites developed for scheduled services
- Many require journeys to be booked at least 24 hours in advance which removes the opportunity for passengers to use them for anything other than pre-planned journeys
- Coordination of the services is manually based which reduces the ability for efficiencies to be made
- There is no consistency of marketing or branding making it difficult for brand awareness to be developed.

In December 2021, HITRANS awarded Liftango an initial three year contract to deploy a DRT platform consisting of a user application, operators platform and a driver platform. The deployment of this system will:

- Provide a single point where locals and visitors will be able to book a number of different non-scheduled transport services through the one app.
- Provide both the passenger and operator with the information on the vehicles position and individual journeys in real-time with passengers informed if their service has been delayed.
- Enable services to be more efficiently utilised especially where there is more than one vehicle involved in providing a service.

- Includes features such as driver duty management and extensive reporting modules.
- API to facilitate integration of the solution with the HITRANS GO-HI MaaS platform.

## PROGRESS UPDATE

HITRANS have been working with Liftango to develop the branding, marketing and advertisement of the DRT app and have recently finalised the brand name as '**Moove Flexi**'. The in-app design has been finalised (please see appendix 1) and the app set up is currently underway.

Following a series of initial meetings with each Local Authority to identify services that could benefit from the DRT system, the phased rollout of these services is underway. A summary of the services involved and work to date for each Local Authority is as follows:

### Highland

**Confirmed:** Ferintosh Community Bus: Currently working with the FCB to configure their service onto the Liftango system. Once this has been done the next step is to arrange a training session for the drivers and operating staff, before launching the app and beginning the trial at the end of September.

**Confirmed:** The Durness Bus: They will be the next service to launch after the FCB, aiming towards the end of September. Initially, the Dial-A-Bus T-13 will be configured before getting the 803,804,805 and 806 services setup.

Requests will be going out to the following services to involve them in the next phase of the Highland rollout:

<u>Operator</u>	<u>Service</u>
H J MacDonald	T1
Lochinver Taxi	T2
Douglas L Jack	T6
Ormlie Taxis	T12

### Moray

Moray's m.connect Dial a Bus service has been using the DRT system for a 6 week soft trial which started at the end of June. Live bookings are being made by the call centre staff via the operations portal on the system, and drivers have been using the in-vehicle tablets to receive their bookings. Feedback from the trial has been very positive so far.

### Argyll and Bute

An ongoing conversation is being had with A&B council to get the Tiree Ring n Ride service involved in the project. The service's model of operation would work well with the system and an in-person meeting with the operator is being pursued to move this forward.

### Orkney

A community transport review is currently being undertaken by Orkney council which has so far shown an interest in app and web based booking, however there has been some reluctance amongst operators. The council are working on the next service level agreement to make app based booking a mandatory requirement for operators, and have asked if HITRANS can coincide the DRT

platform with these proposed changes in April 2023. This will definitely be possible and services will include the Orkney Dial-a-bus and potentially a new community operator consisting of two electric vehicles.

### Western Isles

Two services on the radar at the moment are the Barra Public Bus and the Benbecula Local service. Further discussions will be had with the council to get these confirmed and identify any additional services that should be included.

## **RISK REGISTER**

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Local bus services support a number of RTS priorities relating the Public Transport and access to employment, education, healthcare and social inclusion.

### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS report on the Rural Bus Service Support and Funding (March 2021) sets out the variety of challenges facing local bus services not just in the Highlands and Islands but across rural Scotland. One of the actions it identified was the ‘Investigation of the potential for more regional collaboration on Public Transport and DRT management and operations.’

### Financial

Impact – Neutral

Comment – HITRANS has successfully received a range of external funding to support the roll out of the app over the next 3 years.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Local Bus services help improve access to many of the most vulnerable groups within the area and also provide what can be described as a lifeline service to those communities where the local bus service is the only form of public transport available.

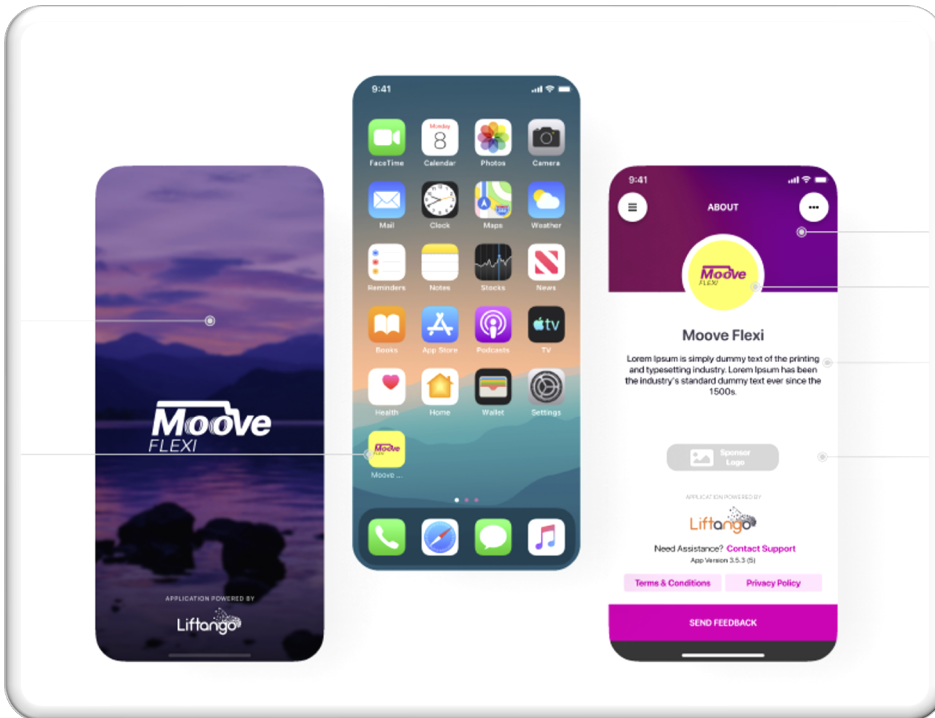
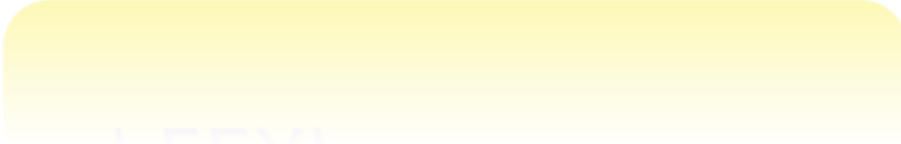
## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Partnership is asked to:

1. Note the report

**Report by:** Rebecca Purvis  
**Designation:** Project Officer – Digital and DRT  
**Date:** 1 September 2022

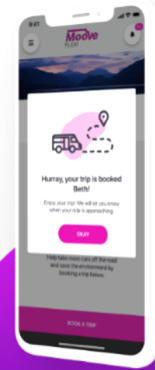
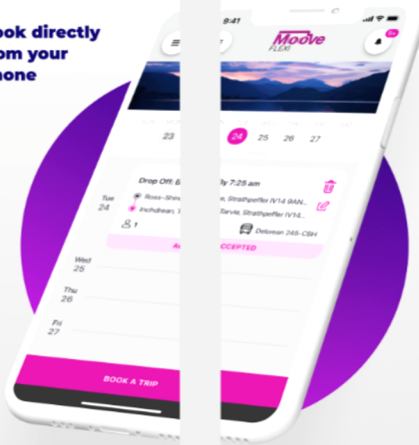
# APPENDIX 1 – MOOVE FLEXI BRANDING EXAMPLES





**On-demand public transport**

**Book directly from your phone**



**Enjoy flexible, reliable, and convenient transport**

transport  
on-demand



transport  
flexible, reliable, and convenient