



HITRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2022 / 2023



FOREWORD



Ranald Robertson,
HITRANS Partnership Director

2022/23 was another exciting year for HITRANS.

Highlights included continuing to deliver really strong innovation focussed projects while continuing to work with our partners on supporting sustainable and active travel and improving passenger transport information across the region.

Of course the year has seen continued challenges in connecting our communities not least those who rely on an ageing fleet of ferries. We have also continued to see the changing impacts on our transport infrastructure from climate change and the need for adaptation and investment just to maintain current levels of connectivity is an added challenge.

2022 saw local government elections with a number of Board Members of HITRANS stepping down after long careers of public service. In the event only one former HITRANS elected member returned to our Board for the new Council term. The new Chair of HITRANS is Cllr Uisdean Robertson of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar with Cllr Amber Dunbar of Moray Council appointed as Vice Chair. The other new Council Members to HITRANS are Cllr Ken Gowans from Highland Council, Cllr Andrew Kain from Argyll & Bute Council and Cllr David Dawson from Orkney Islands Council. They are joined by our three Non Council Board Members Naomi Bremner, Robert Andrew and David Gray.

We have continued to work with partner Councils on shared service activity in Public Transport Information, EU projects, UKRI projects and key delivery areas including active travel. Transport Scotland have provided very welcome support for HITRANS in Active Travel again increasing the level of funding support we are entrusted to deliver our Regional Active Travel Fund.

At a research and project level we have continued to work innovatively with partners in Scotland, the rest of the UK and across the European Union to deliver meaningful improvements in transport services within the Highlands and Islands. As lead partner in the PAV project we delivered Scotland's first ever Connected and Autonomous (Self Driven) bus service at Inverness Campus while other work supported by EU funding is improving passenger transport services and digital information systems.

We continue to work with operators and Transport Scotland to support the development of our ferry services. We are well engaged in the development of the Islands Connectivity Plan that will replace the Ferries Plan.

Bus services are the backbone to our public transport system providing vital access to employment, education, health and leisure services and connecting with other modes. In 2022/23 HITRANS has helped improve intelligent transport information systems building on our existing real time information provision. An exemplar of this is our award winning GO-HI app which is the UK's largest scale Mobility as a Service Platform. GO-HI offers passengers to plan, book and pay for travel on a range of transport modes including Stagecoach bus, rail, air, car club and taxi. It even allows people to book a hotel stay at the same time as their travel.

We would like to thank our many public and private partners for their support in making 2022/23 a successful year and look forward to building upon this in the year ahead.

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BOARD, ADVISORS AND STAFF

The HITRANS Board comprises a Councillor from each local authority area covered by the partnership and 3 non-council members appointed in a personal capacity by the Board and approved by the Minister for Transport following open advertisement and selection. The Board has appointed a group of professional advisers who play an important role, working with the executive team, in developing strategy. The executive team report to the Board.

BOARD

Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Chair (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)
Cllr Amber Dunbar, Vice Chair (Moray Council)
Cllr David Dawson (Orkney Islands Council)
Cllr Ken Gowans (Highland Council)
Cllr Andrew Kain (Argyll and Bute Council)
Mrs Naomi Bremner
Prof David Gray
Mr Robert Andrew

ADVISORS

Jim Buck (Orkney Islands Council)
Grant Campbell (Scottish Council for Development and Industry)
Fergus Murray (Argyll and Bute Council)
David MacLeod (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)
Malcolm MacLeod (Highland Council)
Nicky Sobey (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)
Nicola Moss (Moray Council)

STAFF TEAM

Ranald Robertson (Partnership Director)
Katy Cunningham (Business Manager)
Neil MacRae (Partnership Manager)
Vikki Trelfer (Active Travel Officer)
Frank Roach (Partnership Manager)
Shirleen Ariwi (Public Transport Information Officer)
Jayne Golding (Projects and Policy Manager)
Gemma Robinson (Project Officer – FASTER)
Rachael Fraser (Project Officer – Finance)
Kelly Martin (Project Support Assistant)
Sarah Compton Bishop / Katy Beasley (Project Manager - Scottish Islands Passport)



New HITRANS chair Councillor Uisdean Robertson (right) is pictured with his vice-chair Councillor Amber Dunbar and HITRANS Director, Ranald Robertson

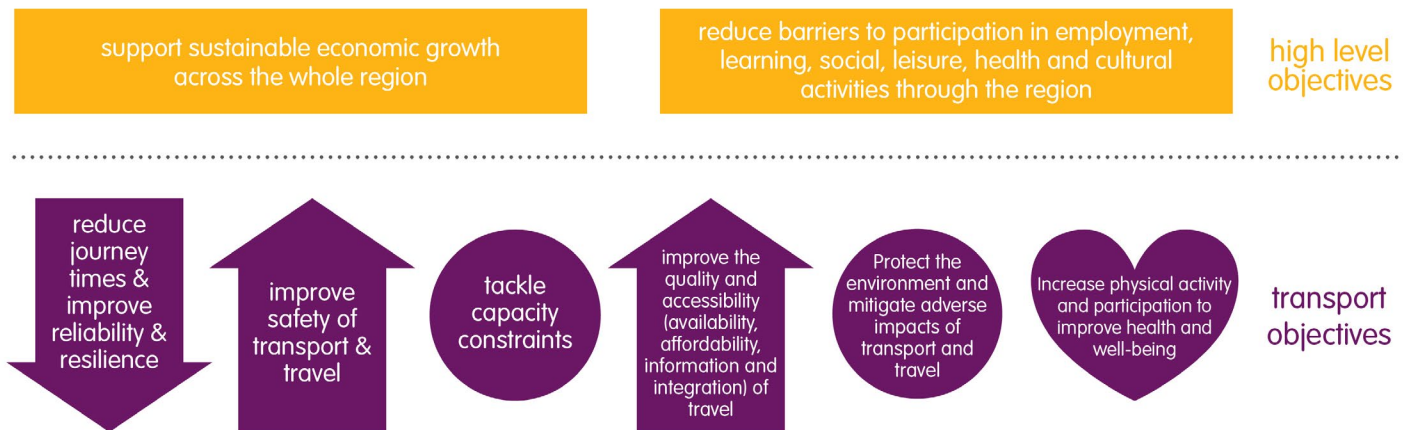
THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Transport Scotland Act 2005 placed the preparation of the Regional Transport Strategy as the first duty of the Regional Transport Partnerships. The Strategies are strategic high level documents that focus on the transport strategies necessary to support Government's key objectives and the single outcome agreements of the constituent local authorities.

HITRANS updated Regional Transport Strategy (2018), sets out a vision **to deliver connectivity across the region which enables sustainable economic growth and helps communities to actively participate in economic and social activities.**

The RTS objectives were also updated as set out below. They were underpinned by two high level objectives which were to;

- Support sustainable economic growth across the whole region
- Reduce barriers to participation in employment, learning, social, leisure, health and cultural activities throughout the region



Following input from Members at the Partnership meeting on 17th September Officers have commenced the process of developing an updated Regional Transport Strategy that will update our 2018 Strategy to reflect the National Transport Strategy and the emerging STPR2 when that document is published in draft.

SUPPORTING LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLANS

As a statutory community planning partner HITRANS works across our five CPP areas to provide transportation support to the process. The work of CPPs continues to evolve and Single Outcome Agreements are now to be replaced with Local Outcome Improvement Plans that will enable priority areas to be identified and addressed by Partners.

The modern transport system that is detailed in the Regional Transport Strategy will support a smarter community through better access to learning opportunities. The Strategy and the joint working of the Partnership, its Councils and Community Planning partners will help people across the Highlands and Islands to sustain and improve their health, ensuring faster, more reliable, and more affordable access to healthcare, and greater opportunities to lead an active lifestyle through active travel access to local services and facilities. HITRANS is actively engaging in the SOA process covering each of the five Community Planning Partnerships in our region.



RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY



The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and an associated RTS Delivery Plan set out the key priorities, proposals and interventions required to support successful implementation and realisation of the Strategy's Vision and Objectives. Each year the Partnership approves an annual Business Plan which sets out the Partnership's key delivery priorities for the financial year concerned.

The Business Plan details the projects the Partnership is involved in and an update is reported to the Partnership Board which meets five times per annum. These projects link to the aims of the strategy and the Annual Report provides a report of performance against objectives, targets and performance indicators as outlined in the Regional Transport Strategy.

During 2022/23 the Business Plan set out a wide range of regional, local regional and national scale projects that have been delivered. These include:

- Ongoing development, monitoring and refresh of the RTS
- Scottish Islands Passport
- Real Time Passenger Information
- Inverness Airport (Dalcross) Station Opening
- Inverness Station Masterplan
- Fastline Faslane local rail development
- Green Freeport
- Bus Partnership Fund Projects – Highland and Argyll & Bute
- HiTravel Shared Service Travel Information Project
- GO-HI MaaS Project (MaaS Investment Fund)
- MOOVE Flexi Digital Demand Responsive Transport
- G-PaTRA North Sea Area Project
- MOVE North Sea Area Project
- PAV North Sea Area Project
- RURALITIES Horizon Europe Project
- Stronger Combined North Sea Region Project
- FASTER SEUPB Programme Project
- eHubs North West Europe Project
- ERDF Smart Cities – Scotland's 8th City ERDF
- Low Carbon Transport and Travel ERDF
- Horizon 2020 Ride2Autonomy Project
- Sustainable Aviation Test Environment Project (SATE) - UKRI



HITRANS also received direct budget from Transport Scotland to support the delivery of a Regional Active Travel Fund and at the end of the financial year an allocation from the unallocated Transport Scotland Active Travel programme to deliver the following projects:

- HI Bike – Inverness and Fort William
- Feasibility and Design of Active Travel Routes
- Bikes on Buses – including Scottish Citylink Bike Booking
- Cycle Parking at Interchanges
- Mobility Hub Development
- Quiet Routes Pilot Development
- Active Travel Masterplan Implementation
- Transport Integration at Ferry Terminals

In addition to the above projects, the Active Travel partnership with Sustrans during 2022/23 secured a grant allocation of £100,000 to support the development and provision of Active Travel projects across the region.

During 2022/23 projects delivered under this programme include:

- 20 Minute Community baseline mapping tool – now available via HITRANS website
- Active Travel Masterplans for the Outer Hebrides
- Ullapool Sustainable Transport Plan
- Multi-modal counters in Nairn, Fort William, Stornoway, and Orkney.

In addition to its principal focus on developing and delivering the RTS through work on the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme a significant proportion of staff time and resource was committed to supporting Community Planning engagement and to work on activity in all five partner Council areas.

Further information on the Partnership's activity, the Regional Transport Strategy and our Revenue and Strategy Delivery Programme work can be obtained by visiting our website www.hitrans.org.uk.

EQUALITIES SCHEME

HITRANS as the Transport Partnership for the Highlands and Islands has statutory duties to have an Equalities Scheme and take very seriously engagement in matters relating to equality. Since the Partnership was established at the beginning of 2006, we have made significant progress in adopting and implementing policies in the human resources area which have equalities of opportunity enshrined within them. In addition, a major theme throughout our Regional Transport Strategy is the need for equality of access to transport facilities and services and through these to jobs, health care, education, shopping and social activities.

We have a statutory duty to publish an equalities scheme under legislation covering Race, Gender and Disability and we chose to introduce a single scheme addresses what we intend to do in these areas. It also addresses our proposals in other areas as well, for example age, religion/belief and sexuality.

We have chosen to combine these commitments in one equalities scheme rather than publish a series of individual schemes addressing specific legal duties but we have made it clear in the scheme which sectors of society should benefit from our proposals. The publication of this scheme is not the end of our duty to promote equal opportunities but simply the beginning. We hope that stakeholders and service users find this scheme informative and we welcome constructive feedback with a view to its improvement.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

ACTIVE TRAVEL ADVISORY GROUP

The Active Travel Advisory Group (ATAG) meets twice per year. The Group is attended by local authority transport officers, Sustrans, Cycling Scotland, cycle campaigners, access officers, and representatives from the health sector and transport operators.

The group has been engaged in the Active Travel Town Audit/Masterplan process and acts as a forum for those interested in the greenest form of transport to share ideas and expertise at a regional level



FERRY CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Scottish Government tasked the Regional Transport Partnerships to put in place arrangements to provide consultative mechanisms between the operator, users and public agencies for the ferry network serving the Clyde, Hebrides, and Northern Isles.

The first line of consultation is between island groups and the ferry operator (Tier 1), with three second tier committees largely concerned with longer term planning and route development. The arrangements are now well established and the Tier 1 groups meet two to three times per annum.

There are four ferry user groups. These are:

- Clyde, Kintyre and Islands
- Argyll, Lochaber, Skye, Raasay and Small Isles
- Hebrides
- Orkney Transport and Travel Forum

AVIATION CONSULTATION GROUP

Our strategy for aviation is to enhance connectivity within the region and to our national gateways; to increase links with countries outside the UK; to retain the London services particularly through Heathrow and Gatwick; and to manage the environmental impact of aviation on the region without adversely affecting economic growth and sustainability of our communities.

To help us take forward these strategic aspirations HITRANS has established the Aviation Consultation Group with membership drawn from representatives of our key aviation stakeholders. The Group is chaired by HITRANS Board Member Wilson Metcalfe who brings a wealth of practical real world experience to the Group.

FREIGHT FORUM

Meeting yearly the HITRANS Freight Forum (HFF) draws together local authority representatives, logistics providers and users of freight services. The Forum concentrates on practical Highland issues, and has involved visits to new freight infrastructure and terminals. It was involved in the Lorry Parking and Whisky Logistics Studies.

TRANSPORT COORDINATORS GROUP

The HITRANS Transport Coordinating Officers Group (HITCOG) is formed of officers from HITRANS and local authority transport officers and aims to deal with technical issues and share good practice in relation to the management and delivery of passenger transport coordination across the Highlands and Islands. The group meets two or three times each year.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Audited Annual Accounts presented a public statement on the stewardship of funds for the benefit of both members of the Transport Partnership and the public. The Partnership is funded by The Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Argyll & Bute Council (excluding Helensburgh and Lomond).

The Partnership's financial results for the year, compared against budget, are as shown below. The full Audited Accounts are available at this [link](#).

BUDGET PERFORMANCE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

| 2022/23 | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| | Budget £000 | Actual £000 | Variance £000 |
| Staff costs | 416 | 739 | 323 |
| Property costs | 22 | 17 | (5) |
| Travel and subsistence costs | 20 | 33 | 13 |
| Administration and meeting costs | 25 | 23 | (2) |
| Research and strategy development costs | 1,405 | 1,719 | 314 |
| Publicity costs | 10 | 11 | 1 |
| European projects costs | 188 | 1,942 | 1,754 |
| Support services | 40 | 55 | 15 |
| Gross expenditure | 2,126 | 4,539 | 2,413 |
| Government grants | (1,638) | (1,637) | 1 |
| Other grants | (288) | (2,480) | (2,192) |
| Other income | 0 | (240) | (240) |
| Constituent Council requisitions | (200) | (200) | 0 |
| Gross income | (2,126) | (4,557) | (2,431) |
| Net deficit/(surplus) | 0 | (18) | (18) |

Overall the budget was overspent by £0.003m and this sum was transferred to the General Fund Reserve with the main variations from budget during the year being as follows:

- Government grants exceeded their target. The excess was specific to particular projects included in the research and strategy development costs budget.
- The overspends in both research and strategy development costs and European projects costs are offset by third party contributions, included in other income, for project work and grant income received in respect of European projects. Given the nature of the

unpredictability of both the expenditure and income profiles at budget setting time it is very hard to set a definitive budget. However, going forward, a more realistic budget will be set and adjusted through the regular financial monitoring reported to the Partnership Board.

- The budget for other grants relates to a grant from Sustrans for cycling project work. The majority of the favourable variance relates to grant income for European projects.

PUBLIC SERVICES REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

HITRANS 22/23

Section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year each listed public body must publish a statement of the steps it has taken during the financial year to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions.

HITRANS, as a statutory Regional Transport Partnership, is a listed body within the Act.

During 2022/23 HITRANS has continued implementing a number of initiatives that have improved efficiency, effectiveness and economy and these are outlined below, following on from our actions the previous year. The table below details the information we publish under the Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 which can also be accessed at this [link](#).

| HITRANS Public Reforms Act Information Period covering 01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023 | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1) | Public Relations Statement | | | |
| | Category | Supplier | External costs - invoiced | Supplier Total |
| | Annual Membership MaaS Scotland | Technology Scotland | £500.00 | |
| | Drafting June newsletter, and 3 news releases | Gordon Fyfe | £280.00 | |
| | 24/6/22 Photocall PAV Vehicle and finished images | Ewen Weatherspoon | £100.00 | |
| | Sub : SSL - Period 2yrs | Velocity Design | £395.00 | |
| | SCDI Membership 2022-23 | SCDI | £1,100.00 | |
| | Support Services - 1 year | Velocity Design | £1,000.00 | |
| | News release x 3 | Gordon Fyfe | £175.00 | |
| | Orkney transport guide | Orkney Council | £135.00 | |
| | News release | Gordon Fyfe | £210.00 | |
| | Photo of msp visit to campus | Ewen Weatherspoon | £100.00 | £200.00 |
| | SCOTS Membership 2022/23 | Improvement Service | £300.00 | |
| | Local Authority Membership | Modeshif | £599.00 | |
| | ECMA Contribution | Edi City Council | £1,500.00 | |
| | Thistle assistance, Marketing & Management support | Edi City Council | £2,692.57 | £4,192.57 |
| | Spring Newsletter | Gordon Fyfe PRR | £245.00 | £910.00 |
| | Annual reports and spring newsletter | EllenP Design | £192.50 | |
| | Total | | £9,524.07 | £5,302.57 |

| 2) Overseas Travel | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|--|
| Reason | Origin / Destination | No. Employees | Travel Costs | Subsistence | Accommodation / Meals | Other Expenditure | Total | |
| ehubs Partner meeting - funded by EU project | Amsterdam - June 2022 | 2 | £1,170.04 | | £726.74 | £21.96 | £1,918.74 | |
| ehubs Partner meeting - funded by EU project | Ireland - October 22 | 1 | £143.64 | £25.00 | £342.09 | £82.90 | £593.63 | |
| G-Patra Partner meeting - funded by EU project | Hannover - September 2022 | 1 | £700.76 | | £226.05 | £25.79 | £952.60 | |
| Ruralities Partner meeting - funded by EU project | Bratislava - October 2022 | 1 | £698.36 | | £462.32 | £62.12 | £1,222.80 | |
| Ruralities Partner meeting - funded by EU project | Brussels - March 2023 | 1 | £382.92 | | £386.86 | £55.93 | £825.71 | |
| Total | | | £3,095.72 | £25.00 | £2,144.06 | £248.70 | £5,513.48 | |

| 3) Hospitality & Entertainment | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| Date | Reason | Cost |
| N/A | | |
| Total | | £0.00 |

| 4) External Consultancy | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|----------------|
| Supplier | Project / Service | Total | Supplier Total |
| AECOM | Evanton Station Study | £6,000.00 | |
| West Highland Community Rail Partnership | Research report for Glenfinnan on the Road | £5,000.00 | |
| Urban Foresight | Pathfinder/Inception Project | £6,000.00 | |
| Urban Foresight | Pathfinder/Inception Project | £6,000.00 | |
| Urban Foresight | Pathfinder/Inception Project | £6,000.00 | |
| The Routing Company | CIVTECH | £15,000.00 | |
| Externiture | Bus Partnership Fund - amount reimbursed by THC | £13,816.80 | |
| Simply wifi | Hitravel - 50% | £108.00 | |
| Socient Ltd | RTS Case for Change | £2,824.48 | |
| Andrew Ferguson | Fees for work in connection with EVIF agreements | £385.00 | |
| Derek Halden Consultancy | Completion of scoping, consultation and analysis - Lochaber redesign | £7,200.00 | |
| Eyland Skyn | STPR2 | £1,440.00 | |
| Urban Foresight - amount recovered from Orkney Isles Council | Orkney/Hitrans Pathfinder | £6,000.00 | |
| Urban Foresight - amount recovered from Shetland Isles Council | Shetland/Hitrans Pathfinder | £6,000.00 | |
| Urban Foresight - amount recovered from Shetland Isles Council | Western Isles/Hitrans Pathfinder | £6,000.00 | |
| SMTS | Contribution to preparation costs UrbanZeroMOB | £3,636.07 | |
| AAI Employability | Recruitment fee - Public Transport Information Shared Service | £2,100.00 | |
| Tom Davy | BFP Support | £1,120.00 | |
| Total | | £94,630.35 | |

| 5) Payments in Excess of £25,000 | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------------|
| Payee | Commodity / Service Description | Payment Date | Amount |
| Bromton Bike Hire | EV bikes, dock and installation - Funded by CnES SCSP | 21/04/2022 | £69,264.00 |
| Off Beat Bikes | 4 x Tricycles & Accessories - Regional Active Travel Fund | 20/06/2022 | £28,979.04 |
| NAVYA | AV shuttle rental, support & training - Funded by PAV project | 15/07/2022 | £86,488.39 |
| Arup | Prep costs for Horizon Europe proposal - Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/06/2023 | £49,790.52 |
| Argyll & Bute Council | Arisaig Public Realm Active Travel Improvements - Regional Active Travel Fund | 25/06/2022 | £50,000.00 |
| Fleetondemand | Go-Hi App phase 2 development costs - Funded by MaaS project | 07/07/2022 | £53,400.00 |
| Bax & Co | 6 Month Project management & comms support - Funded by PAV project | 15/07/2022 | £46,563.28 |
| Bewegen | E-Bikes, docks, shipping & installation - Regional Active Travel Fund | 07/10/2023 | £62,135.80 |
| ARUP | Highlands Active Travel masterplan - Regional Active Travel Fund | 05/12/2022 | £26,981.29 |
| SSE | Electric connections for EV Chargepoints (11 sites) - Funded by FASTER project | 09/01/2023 | £46,821.80 |
| Flourish Marketing | Go-Hi App campaign activity - Funded by Stronger Combined Project | 20/12/2023 | £55,837.50 |
| Bax & Co | PMO and comms work - Funded by PAV project | 17/01/2023 | £44,394.22 |
| ARUP | Highlands Active Travel masterplan - Regional Active Travel Fund | 19/01/2023 | £26,981.29 |
| Enterprise Car Club | MIF2 (Hybrid Vehicles extended from MIF) - Funded by MaaS project | 18/01/2023 | £42,200.00 |
| Bax & Co | Additional PMO and comms work - Funded by PAV project | 08/03/2023 | £62,344.09 |
| Stagecoach | Supply of driver for driverless bus - Funded by PAV project | 08/03/2023 | £119,913.60 |
| Liftango | Feature builds (zone location & group bookings) - Funded by DRT App project | 07/03/2023 | £57,132.00 |
| Vix | Annual Maintenance - Funded by Smart Cities project | 15/03/2023 | £55,476.89 |
| Cne-siar Council | Lochmaddy Active travel measures - Regional Active Travel Fund | 20/03/2023 | £71,398.57 |
| Liftango | Feature builds (ticket pricing, M.Connect) & training - Funded by DRT App project | 20/03/2023 | £71,520.00 |
| Sweco | Road safety audit, quiet routes & traffic survey - Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/03/2023 | £37,011.58 |
| Barra and Vatersay Community Ltd | Tech design work, Herring walk project, Barra - Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/03/2023 | £117,020.40 |
| Argyll and Bute Council | Contribution towards designs costs Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/03/2023 | £95,200.00 |
| Argyll and Bute Council | Construction of Campbeltown Cycleways - Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/03/2023 | £461,500.00 |
| Jacobs UK Ltd | Design of Drumnadrochit active travel link - Regional Active Travel Fund | 27/03/2023 | £47,019.60 |
| The Highland Council | Fort William Active Travel Improvement Grant - Regional Active Travel Fund | 29/03/2023 | £95,500.00 |
| Stantec | RTS Refresh (Case for Change) - Revenue | 03/05/2023 | £43,680.00 |
| Total | | | £2,024,553.86 |

| | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|
| 6) | Members or employees who received remuneration in excess of £150,000 | | | |
| | | | | |
| | Nil return. | | | |



The Highlands and Islands
Transport Partnership (HITRANS)

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