

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 27 November 2015**

### **PARTNERSHIP**

#### **Annual Report 2014/15**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To seek approval from Members on the content of the draft 2014/15 Annual Report and on the proposals for publication of the Annual Report.

#### **Background**

HITRANS is required to produce an Annual Report each year detailing the activity of the Partnership in that year. This follows on from the implementation of the Business Plan produced in advance of the year and gives anyone with an interest detail of what we have achieved and how this relates to our initial plan for the year.

#### **Publication Requirement**

The Partnership is required to produce the Annual Report in timely fashion with a target date of 31 December 2015 set against this activity. Audit Scotland highlighted a need to improve performance in this area in the Annual Audit Statement for 2014/15 having identified the late production of the 2013/14 Annual Report in February 2015 as a concern. We have therefore moved away from the normal practice of producing the Annual Report following the presentation of the Annual RTS Monitoring Annual Review (which forms a core and necessary part of the Annual Report) to ensure we publish the report at the earliest possible stage.

#### **Structure and Contents of Annual Report**

In previous years the HITRANS Annual Report has provided useful information on the Partnership's activities over the course of the year. This has included in particular information on the areas of delivery, research and development.

The structure of the 2014/15 Annual Report will see the following topics highlighted:

- Foreword Chair and Partnership Director
- The HITRANS Team
- The Regional Transport Strategy
- Supporting Single Outcome Agreements
- European Funding
- Research and Strategy Development
- Intelligent Transport Systems
- Air Route Development
- Rail Development
- Bus Service Development
- Active Travel Project Support
- Road Matters
- Travel Planning
- Equalities Scheme
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Budget

- Public Service Reform Act (Scotland) 2010 Statement of Efficiency
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the Regional Transport Strategy

### **Production of Annual Report**

The Annual Report must be accessible and easy to read as the target audience should be wide and include anyone with an interest in the activities of HITRANS as a public body. A limited number of hard copies are printed each year with the main focus being electronic publication of a pdf report. The estimated production costs of the limited run of hard copies and graphic design is £1,000.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Members are asked to note the report.
2. Members are asked to approve the allocation of £1,000 from the Publicity budget to meet the graphic design and printing costs of the Annual Report.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Comment</b>
RTS delivery	✓	Completion of Annual Report including RTS Monitoring Information is a duty the Partnership is required to complete.
Policy	✓	The Annual Report is an important tool in disseminating HITRANS policy and delivery work.
Financial	-	Funds are available in the Publicity Budget for the production cost.
Equality	-	No Equality Implications.



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

### **CONTENTS**

**Foreword by James Stockan, HITRANS Chair and Ranald Robertson, HITRANS Director**

**The HITRANS Team**

**The Regional Transport Strategy**

**Supporting Single Outcome Agreements**

**European Funding**

**Research and Strategy Development**

**Intelligent Transport Systems**

**Air Route Development**

**Rail Development**

**Bus Service Development**

**Active Travel Project Support**

**Road Matters**

**Freight**

**Travel Planning**

**Equalities Scheme**

**Stakeholder Engagement**

**Budget**

**Public Service Reform Act (Scotland) 2010 Statement of Efficiency**

**Monitoring and Evaluation of the Regional Transport Strategy**

## FOREWORD

2014/15 has been an exciting year for HITRANS with some excellent results and interesting challenges.

We have also seen some change in our organisation welcoming a new Vice Chair and the team being boosted with the appointment of a Travel Information Officer to deliver our HiTravel project. The post is an innovative example of shared services with HITRAS and our partner Councils working together to fund the post and this facilitated an application for additional funding through Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund.

Active Travel has been a real success story in 2014/15 with a number of new initiatives implemented by the team and the year was capped with the Highlands and Islands securing a significant proportion of the budget allocated to Community Links. This has helped support the delivery of the Inverness Campus South Bridge and Ballachulish to Connel active travel route. 2014/15 also saw the opening of the Inverness Campus to Inverness City Centre Walking and Cycling scheme which has significantly improved pedestrian and cycling facilities along Milburn Road.

One of the key challenges for business is to effectively access markets and opportunities across the globe and the Highlands and Islands relies on our links to the world to service our outward facing economy. The Inverness to Amsterdam air service is an important direct link to a global hub airport and we welcome the continued growth that has been achieved by FlyBe on the route particularly the high levels of passengers using the service for onward connections from Amsterdam to the rest of the world. We are proud to have helped support the establishment of this route. We continue to work with partners on making the case for Inverness Airport to have excellent access to hub airports and have submitted evidence throughout the year to the Independent Airports Commission Chaired by Sir Howard Davies. The importance of our current link to Gatwick was underlined early in 2013 when FlyBe announced they were to discontinue the service to Gatwick. easyJet's decision to extend the frequency of their service on the route was welcome and we continue to work hard to secure improvements and new routes that grow the international connectivity for Highland residents and to attract more visitors.

At a research and project level we have continued to work innovatively with partners in Scotland and across the European Union to deliver meaningful improvements in transport services within the Highlands and Islands. In February 2014 we were particularly pleased to learn that our application to the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme as lead partner of the SPARA 2020 project was successful. We now look forward to working with our partners in Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Australia to deliver an excellent project that focuses on developing smart airports in remote and peripheral areas with a strong emphasis on innovative and sustainable operations.

Rail services continue to show growth throughout the Highland network. We have continued working with partners including Transport Scotland, ScotRail and Network Rail to support the implementation of national priorities such as the Inverness – Aberdeen and Highland Mainline major projects. We have also seen real progress on the development and delivery of a number of regional and local schemes, notably the planned increase in services to Oban and which is of great benefit to tourists and locals, including the 130 Oban High School pupils who from August 14 have travelled by train from their local station. Work on Dalcross Station reopening continues with technical discussions and business case analysis.

We continue to work with operators and Transport Scotland to support the development of our ferry services. We are looking ahead to the next tendering of the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service network and beyond that to the Northern Isles retendering. The Ferries Plan has set out some truly ambitious plans for improving these networks and we will work with partners to support their development from proposal to fruition. We have continued to gather evidence on

ferry capacity constraints for online booking and the completion of routes and service methodology work for local authority operated ferry services.

Working with partners at Transport Scotland, Orkney Islands Council, ZetTrans and Shetland Islands Council we have made real progress on key issues relating to internal travel in Orkney and Shetland as well as for planning for the next Northern Isles Ferry Service contract tender. In December 2014 HITRANS and the other partners mentioned above signed a joint statement establishing Partnership commitments to jointly addressing Ferry Replacement issues in Orkney and Shetland. This Agreement was itself linked into the Empowering Scotland's Islands Communities Prospectus which identified the benefits of close working to establish a fair and effective solution to service requirements for the future. It was recognised in these Statements that there was a need for evidence gathering to support future funding and investment decisions. It was further recognised that the evidence gathering should follow the established Transport Scotland Routes and Services Methodology and STAG Appraisal approaches to ensure consistency and legitimacy alongside other services in Scotland.

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 2014/15 HITRANS has helped improve intelligent transport information systems building on our existing real time information provision. We have supported the development of innovative new projects and secured funding from the Bus Investment Fund for our HiTravel transport information project and continued to deliver the east Inverness bus improvement corridor. These projects are delivering bus priority, infrastructure, information and new buses across the region.

We would like to thank our many public and private partners for their support in making 2014/15 such a successful year and look forward to building upon this in the year ahead.

Cllr James Stockan  
HITRANS Chair

Ranald Robertson  
Partnership Director

## **THE HITRANS TEAM**

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 James Stockan, Chair (Orkney Islands Council)  
Cllr Thomas Prag, Vice Chair (Highland Council)  
Cllr John Cowe, (Moray Council)  
Cllr Duncan MacIntyre (Argyll and Bute Council)  
Cllr John MacKay (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)  
Wilson Metcalfe  
Prof David Gray  
Okain MacLennan

### **Advisors**

Brian Archibald (Orkney Islands Council)  
Fraser Grieve (Scottish Council for Development and Industry)  
Fergus Murray (Argyll and Bute Council)  
Iain MacKinnon (Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar)  
Stuart Black / Malcolm MacLeod (Highland Council)  
Tony Jarvis (Highlands and Islands Enterprise)  
Stephen Cooper / Nicola Moss (Moray Council)  
Pip Farman (NHS)

### **Executive Team**

Ranald Robertson (Partnership Director)  
Katy Cunningham (Office Manager – Inverness)  
Christine Kendall (Office Manager – Lairg)  
Neil MacRae (Partnership Manager)  
Fiona McNally (Active Travel Officer)  
Frank Roach (Partnership Manager)  
Julie Cromarty (Travel Information Officer)

## 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 strategic vision and objectives as included in the Strategy link very closely with those of Government. The Strategy identifies the links between Government's aims and those of HITRANS and its constituent Councils.

The core of the Strategy can be viewed as 10 horizontal themes applying to the whole region which aim to:

- Promote the long term development of walking and cycling.
- Prepare a sub-strategy for investment in the region's bus services.
- Enhance aviation connections between islands and peripheral areas and national gateways.
- Improve the region's community and demand responsive transport provision.
- Increase efficiency of urban travel by tackling congestion, reducing car use on short journeys, and improving public transport.
- Assist freight transport to shift from road to less environmentally damaging modes.
- Develop a programme of investment to improve the locally significant rural road network.
- Prepare a sub-strategy for investment in ports and ferries.
- Develop initiatives to reduce the cost of travel.
- Develop ways to reduce the climate change impact of transport in the region.

The Strategy also identifies policy for the transport network. Priority action is required:

- To reduce journey times and increase journey reliability on our three strategic corridors linking the western parts of the region to Glasgow; the north of the region and the Inner Moray Firth to central Scotland; and Inverness to Aberdeen.
- And on the regional network to improve the Orkney inter isles services; to improve the Western Isles spinal route and sea crossings; and to reduce journey times and increase reliability on the roads on Mull; the road between Oban and Lochgilphead; the roads to north west Sutherland and Wester Ross; and on the Moray Firth coastal route.

HITRANS are required to measure the success achieved in delivering the core aims and objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy. To this end we have developed a monitoring and evaluation framework that has been approved by Audit Scotland to show progress across a range of key performance indicators. This framework is detailed in full at the end of the annual report.

## **SUPPORTING SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS**

The Concordat between the Scottish Government and CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) sets out the terms of the relationship between the Scottish Government and local government. A central proposal of this agreement is the creation of a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) between each Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government, based on achieving 15 key national outcomes agreed in the Concordat. The outcomes reflect the National Performance Framework and aim to deliver the National Purpose.

In taking forward its focus on Sustainable Economic Growth HITRANS has completed the development of a Regional Transport Strategy which aims to deliver a more successful Highlands and Islands, with opportunities for the whole region to flourish, through increasing the competitiveness of the region as part of Scotland as a whole. Economic sustainability and growth is a core purpose for the HITRANS partnership, and to which all the constituent Local Authorities and Community Planning partners are committed, support and actively contribute where appropriate. The Strategy identifies how improvements in transportation across the Highlands and Islands can directly support the Government in achieving its National purpose across a number of its national outcome areas.

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.



## EUROPEAN FUNDING

### Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme- SPARA 2020 Project



**Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports 2020 (SPARA2020)** is a Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme area project aimed at addressing some of the special needs of the smaller civilian airports in the region. This three year €2.4 million project brings together a range of public authorities, academic institutions, airports, SMEs, and specialists to focus on the particular challenges of airports serving remote and peripheral areas. The project partner were notified of the success of the application in February 2015 and this followed the completion of an initial preparatory project in 2014.

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020, is funded by the ERDF, and more generally aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential.



**Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme**  
2014-2020



**EUROPEAN UNION**

Investing in your future  
European Regional Development Fund

SPARA2020 has been designed both to address the region's needs, but also to explore issues that have resonance beyond Northern Europe, and to develop outputs that will deliver enduring benefits after the project concludes in May 2018. The project commences in June 2015. The lead partner for the project is The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) who are the statutory regional transport partnership covering Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Orkney, Highland, Moray and most of the Argyll and Bute area. Other Scottish partners include the University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University whilst Sweden is well represented with Trafikverket (The Swedish Transport Administration), Sundsvall *Timrå* Airport and Storuman Municipality. The North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) of Ireland will represent airports such as Donegal and Ireland West (Knock) in the project. Molde University in Norway and the University of Sydney in Australia are the other project partners.

The project budget allocation is listed in the table below:

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS)</b>	<b>€494,253.21</b>
<b>University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)</b>	<b>€350,216.16</b>
<b>Robert Gordon University (RGU)</b>	<b>€180,797.00</b>
Trafikverket (Sweden)	€250,008.58
Sundsvall <i>Timrå</i> Airport (Sweden)	€357,143.00
Storuman Municipality (Sweden)	€379,871.00
North and West Regional Assembly (Ireland)	€234,306.80
Molde University (Norway)	€115,500.48
University of Sydney (Australia)	€60,000.00

The project will include work on Innovative Technologies to improve airport performance and control cost. These involve a close examination of Remote Air Traffic and Remote Security technologies as well as distributed training, benefitting in essence from broadband and communication technology advances. With the support of Eurocontrol the project will also examine the business case for Airport Collaborative Decision Making (lite), as suited to the smaller airport (and budget) context

Mindful of aviation's carbon footprint two work strands have been developed to foster more sustainable energy use in the sector. Low carbon fuel airport surface access demonstrator trials are being developed by HITRANS in partnership with their member Councils, Energy Savings Trust and Highlands and Islands Airports at airports in the Highlands and Islands. These are designed to be low carbon exemplar projects on how to decarbonise links from the airport to its local

population centre and it is hoped this will include support for electronic bus operation on airport service, EV car hire and EV / Hybrid Taxi roll out to serve airports. The business case for offering biofuels to incoming aircraft at the region's airports will be examined in some detail learning from some pioneering work at Karlstadt Airport in Sweden.

Based upon the recognition that the performance of many peripheral airports' scheduled traffic is structurally constrained by their small catchment size, significant budget has been assigned to examining non aeronautical sources of income and diversification of roles for these facilities. A whole gamut of possibilities will be examined and best practice will be publicised and disseminated, and some more in depth pilot projects will be undertaken. Optimising an airport's role as an employment cluster will be explored extensively. The locations selected for these activities are Ireland West (Knock), Donegal, Inverness and Oban.

The project also intends to examine in some detail the distinct socio-cultural role that airports play in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area and also to refine and improve economic impact assessment methodologies of SPARA airports with a view to better guide future public investment. This will include studies led by RGU at airports in Ireland, Scotland and possibly Sweden.

### **Highlands and Islands Partnership Programme (ERDF)- Green and Active Travel Improvements**

The Green and Active Travel Improvements ERDF project is a 3 year project 2011-2014. The £560,000 project for which The Highland Council are lead partner is supported by match funding from HITRANS as well as Sustrans and the Inverness Common Good Fund.

The aim of the project is to develop, upgrade and promote key walking and cycling routes in Highland which were identified as priorities in the HITRANS funded Active Travel Audits that were undertaken in 9 settlements across Highland. It is hoped that the new routes together with promotion of existing facilities will not only encourage greater use of sustainable modes but also provide new health, social and economic opportunities in these areas.

Projects completed in the first two years included improvements to the NCN in Culloden, Fort William and Tain as well as the completion of a shared use path connecting the towns of Alness and Invergordon in Easter Ross which has been named as the Diamond Jubilee path by the local community.

Direct Pedestrian / Cycling route linking Inverness city centre with the new UHI Campus via the new 'Golden Bridge' over the A9 – it was identified that additional funding would be required to complete the full link and further contributions were made by both HITRANS and The Highland Council via its Carbon Clever initiative. In order to complete this scheme and other elements of the project an extension to the project has been agreed. In addition to the completing the link to the new University Campus in Inverness the project also includes funding for;

- Expansion of cycle parking facilities at Inverness Rail Station to encourage more rail – cycle or cycle-rail journeys in the Highlands busiest rail station which now handles in excess of 1 million passengers per year.
- Active Travel Maps for towns in Highland where an Active Travel Audit was undertaken.

## RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership at its meeting of 4 April 2014 agreed the HITRANS Business Plan for 2014/15 which included a programme for Research and Strategy Development for 2014/15 in support of development, implementation and delivery of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy. The table below summarises the programme and provides some information on projects. The programme was subject to regular reporting throughout the year and some items featured as individual reports. Detailed information is available on at [www.hitrans.org.uk](http://www.hitrans.org.uk) including where appropriate the final study report / output.

Area	Project	Budget	Comments
Active Travel	Community Links (Match Funding)	25000	Match funding to support Moray Council Community Links scheme at Elgin.
	Community Links (Sustrans Award)	1200000	Budget for the North Ballachulish to Corran Ferry active travel route and Inverness Campus (north and south bridges)
	Sustrans Partnership / Active Travel Projects	100000	Partnership with Sustrans for Active Travel Officer to deliver active travel projects across the region.
Aviation	Development and promotion of case for sustainable air connectivity through London / EU hub	13000	Further work to provide evidence in support of the need for the Highlands and Islands to have secure connectivity to world markets including development work on Inverness – Amsterdam.
	Skye Air Service Project Development	5000	Development of the case for a new Skye Air link including development work to support CAA engagement on GNSS and airport infrastructure.
	Regional Air Service Development Support	36000	Funding to support de minimis air service enhancement of Glasgow - Barra service as a 3 way partnership project with HIE and CnES. HITRANS contribution is £12k (1/3 of total).
External Funding	ERDF - REPUTE Project	20000	Funding to support the delivery of the REPUTE project that will see the provision of solar / wind powered passenger information systems and personalised travel planning in the region.

## **INTELLIGENT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS**

### **Real Time Bus Information Systems**

HITRANS continues to lead the way in Scotland in providing real time information to bus passengers despite challenges in the form of the areas geography and the telecommunications available in much of the area.

The successful Bus Investment Fund application for the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor provided an opportunity to not only improve and expand the coverage of real-time bus information on-street and online for services in the project area but also make improvements that will be of benefit to the whole HITRANS area.

One such innovation is the incorporation of Near Field Codes (NFC's) and QR codes onto bus stop timetable notices which will enable any passenger with a smartphone to obtain real-time or scheduled information for that unique bus stop.

The real time information system in Argyll and Bute was significantly developed in 2014/15 when the main bus operator in the area (West Coast Motors) moved the remainder of their fleet to a new ticket machine provider. This allowed the on bus element of the system to be tracked from the ticket machine with a feed of the vehicle location sent to the HITRANS real time system.

The Highland real time information system has continued to develop in 2014/15. The system has been extended with the introduction of new displays throughout the area.

Combined project management and maintenance arrangements for the Argyll, Highland and Orkney real time information systems have helped streamline delivery and avoid duplication of effort across the delivery of intelligent transport system solutions to passengers across the Highlands and Islands.

### **Severe Weather Information for Transport (SWIFT)**

Following a number of severe winters in recent years. HITRANS have worked with its member Local Authorities to develop severe weather information systems on the strategic local road network to compliment the Traffic Scotland information web portal which provides a vital service to both car drivers and public transport users trying to plan journeys and make travel plans in the face of this disruption.

The Traffic Scotland service provides the travelling public with real-time traffic information on the Scottish Motorway and Trunk Road network. It provides up to date information to the travelling public about current and planned road works, accidents, journey times, Live Eye Camera views, congestion, weather events, park and ride facilities, a carbon calculator etc. The website supports drivers in making informed choices as to the timing, routing and travel mode for current or future journeys. It also signposts drivers to public transport options particularly when there is heavy demand on the network or adverse weather conditions. The website is supported by a telephone helpline operated by Traveline Scotland on a 24 hour per day 365 day of the year basis.

HITRANS has allocated budget in partnership with our member Councils to expand Severe Weather Warning Information Systems in the Highlands and Islands. This included funding for an additional webcam site in Lewis to compliment the successful one on the Clisham and funding to The Highland Council to develop its [www.travelhighland.info](http://www.travelhighland.info) website which is now live and provides live information on bus, rail and air and ferry services as well as trunk and local road webcams, parking and roadworks information. Consideration is being given as to how this may be expanded to cover the whole HITRANS region.

## **AIR ROUTE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Inverness – Amsterdam**

A long standing ambition of HITRANS and a number of our partners in the region to secure access to a hub airport to improve the connectivity of the Highlands and Islands to our global markets and to make it easier for people to travel to our region was realised in 2011/12 with the launch by FlyBe of their Inverness to Amsterdam route.

The Amsterdam service was made possible by the determination of HIAL, HIE, Highland Council, Visit Scotland and HITRANS to work with the airline to develop a funding package to support the introduction of the new route and allow it to bed in before it continues as a fully commercial operation. The partners continued to support the second year of service operation and HITRANS were pleased to play our part in securing the route. This second year of operation saw continued growth in demand for the service particularly after the introduction of a codeshare agreement with Air France / KLM (the main carrier into Amsterdam Schiphol Airport) in 2012 which opened up through booking opportunities to their large network of onward travel connections.

2014/15 has seen continued growth on the route and the need for the region to have direct access to a global hub airport has been amply demonstrated by the extremely high proportion of passengers who use the service to connect for onward travel from Amsterdam.

### **Glasgow – Barra**

One of the main recommendations in the Regional Air Service Development Study - undertaken by Northpoint Aviation in 2012/13 and 2013/14 - was for key stakeholders to share the study findings (including results of an online survey to capture potential new demand on various existing and new routes) with Loganair to allow them to consider whether the evidence supported additional flights between Barra and Glasgow.

Loganair have commercially operated additional double rotations on this route five days per week over the peak season in addition to the single rotation they are obliged to provide for the Public Service Obligation (PSO). Following discussions with Loganair - and within the banner of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership - HITRANS, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and HIE agreed to support the provision of additional rotations on Tuesday and Wednesdays from the end of May until October for a period of 20 weeks giving an additional 40 rotations at a cost of £32,000. The project proved a huge success with passenger demand being high on most flights. Key highlights of the service results and passenger survey undertaken on each of the additional flights included:

- Average load factor on the additional rotations in May, June and August was between 61 and 68%.
- Average load factor peaked in July at 82% but passenger figures tailed off considerably in September and in particular in October.
- 38% of respondents would not have made the journey if the service had not been available.
- 39% would have travelled by ferry and car/rail/bus services to reach their destination
- 14% would have travelled by ferry to use an alternative air service on Benbecula or Stornoway.
- 9.5% would have used an alternative air service from Barra

### **Independent Airports Commission**

On 7 September 2012 the UK Government announced its intention to create an independent commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies, to identify and recommend to government options for maintaining the UK's status as a global aviation hub. The commission's role is to identify and

evaluate how any need for additional capacity should be met in the short, medium and long term whilst maintaining a UK-wide perspective.

The Commission published its Interim Report in December 2013 where a series of short term measures mainly focussed on surface access were made along with a shortlisting of three options for new runway capacity in the South East of England. The three shortlisted options are:

- Heathrow - A new runway north of the current runways and offset to the west compared with the 2003 scheme.
- Heathrow - Extending the alignment of the northern runway west to create a 6000m of runway;
- Gatwick - A second wide-spaced runway at Gatwick capable of independent mixed mode operation.

The Commission agreed to undertake further study of the proposal championed by the Mayor of London for a new Hub Airport in the Thames Estuary. The Commission has now decided not to include this option as a fourth short listed option.

The Commission will make its final report in the Summer of 2015.

HITRANS have had a long standing concern about the erosion of Inverness's key air links to London. These concerns are shared with our neighbouring RTP for the North East of Scotland (Nestrans) for their region. This shared agenda saw the two RTPs coordinate our efforts in responding to the Department for Transport's Aviation Policy Framework consultation and has seen shared activity in responding to the Airports Commission calls for evidence.

The focus of our efforts has been on retaining high quality air links to London in the medium to long term and ensuring both regions interests are considered in the event of any new airport capacity being realised in the south east and in the case of interim measures before such capacity is finally delivered.

HITRANS and Nestrans commissioned MVA and Northpoint Aviation Services to prepare an 'evidence based' case for the retention, and in HITRANS case expansion, of services to London Heathrow and Gatwick and the resultant 'Evidence Note' has been refreshed with the latest 2013 CAA passenger data.

## **RAIL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Rail Franchise Renewal**

Serco were appointed by Transport Scotland to run the Caledonian Sleeper franchise for 15 years, starting on 1 April 2015. New trains will be built for operation in 2018, featuring pod flatbeds/seats and cradle seats in seated accommodation, new standard class berths and business berths with ensuite facilities. There will also be new Club cars. The trains will continue the current practice of telescoping 5 trains into 2 arrivals in Euston and vice versa with the same calling pattern as today. Serco have elected to base their main office in Inverness.

Abellio, the UK arm of Nederlandse Spoorwegen, were appointed by Transport Scotland to operate the ScotRail franchise for ten years from 1 April 2015, with a possible break point at five plus two years. In the HITRANS area they plan to introduce: High Speed Trains between Inverness-Central Belt (hourly), and Inverness-Aberdeen; timetables that accommodate Dalcross Station; scenic trains on the North and West Highlands; new entrance, façade and concourse at Inverness Station; and vegetation clearance on the WHL.

Stagecoach/Virgin were awarded the East Coast franchise commencing 1 Mar 15 by the Department for Transport. The bidder will introduce new Inter City Express Trains. The 8 year franchise covers services from London to Edinburgh via stations including Peterborough, York, Newcastle and Berwick-upon-Tweed, with a major branch to Leeds. A few trains continue from Edinburgh to Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness. The total route lengths is 1480km. East Coast had an operating profit of £183m in 2012-13. Key points include: a new fleet of 43 Hitachi Super Express Trains as part of the DfT's Intercity Express Programme; continuation of services to all destinations served by current franchise; faster average journey times for services from London to Leeds and Edinburgh from May 2020; and the introduction of a new innovation fund.

### **Points North**

A multi-disciplinary working group was established in September 2014 to examine ways to restore performance and reliability on the routes north of Inverness. The reopening of Conon Bridge exposed flaws in the timetable, and this was altered in December 2014, with journey times lengthened in order to get the railway back on track. There are now a number of workstreams investigating short, medium and long-term interventions.

HITRANS organised a seminar in Dingwall on 2 March 2015, chaired by James Stockan, with 55 attendees including MPs, MSPs, Highland Councillors, Community Councillors and other passenger and freight stakeholders up and down the lines. Presentations were made by HITRANS, ScotRail and Network Rail. The question and answer session was moderated by Iain Macdonald, late of the BBC.

HITRANS will organise a similar event in the coming to review progress, and meanwhile we will continue to work with industry partners, including the new operator Abellio, to establish permanent solutions and to make the case to for investment.

### **Inversparkie- the Case for Rail Electrification**

In 2012 HITRANS commissioned Steer Davies Gleave to analyse the demand for Inverness-Central Belt services and to make the case for future investment. The InverCity report was well received and used in our evidence submitted for Transport Scotland's Rail 2014 consultation. In conjunction with our other studies Turboboost and Sleepers Uncoupled we were able to influence the thinking of the bidders for both ScotRail daytime and sleeper franchises.

With the award of the ScotRail franchise to Abellio the basis of a dedicated Scottish InterCity operated by HSTs, Inter City Express procurement and the award of the East Coast franchise to Virgin/Stagecoach, and it appears timely to produce an update focusing on the electrification of the Highland Main Line (HML) – Inversparkie- concentrating on strategic issues and uncertainties and the need to plan for them, in the light of:

- The planning horizon of the Scotland Route Study, which is likely to be to the mid-2040s
- The uncertainty over how long the 2+5 HST can be operationally reliable and commercially attractive, as they will be approaching 50 years old at the end of the Abellio franchise
- The risk that ever-tighter emissions standards make manufacturers unwilling to develop new engines for diesel stock
- The momentum to increased electrification, and the declining viability of operating isolated diesel fleets
- The potential flexibility of IEP bimodes to facilitate incremental electrification or to run beyond the wires
- The long term need to decarbonise, and the opportunity that electrification provides
- The issue of aligning the loop requirements for hourly fast diesel services with those needed for electric traction.

#### Summary of key findings

- By 2050, the UK is committed to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80%
- By 2043, Network Rail already envisages that the HML will be both electrified and be upgraded to W12 gauge.
- By 2025, Scottish Ministers are likely to need to decide on a replacement fleet for Abellio's 2+5 HST's, which by then will be over 45 years old.
- New diesel stock, with an InterCity ambience, might be difficult to procure at acceptable prices and, once procured, would have a working life extending beyond 2050.
- Existing diesel stock, if available, would have a shorter remaining life but might not have the ambience, comparable with HST and IEP, appropriate to an InterCity service.
- New electric stock with an InterCity ambience, whether similar to IEP or of an improved design, could maintain and enhance onboard quality, have better performance and lower maintenance costs, and operate on power generated from green energy sources.
- To make use of new electric stock, however, it would be necessary to electrify the HML, indicatively by 2027, 2-3 years into CP7.
- Electrification of the HML would also allow bimode IEPs to operate on electric power or, depending on electrification elsewhere, to be converted to electric-only operation.

#### **Inverness Station Development- Platform 4 Change**

HITRANS began devising a Masterplan to ensure ensuring that the station can rise to the challenge of being a regional interchange for with more trains and more passengers while continuing to plays its role as the beating heart of the Old Town.

Inverness station currently handles 1.28m passengers a year, representing a 57% growth since 2005. It has other users on rail passes, meeters and greeters, people using the retail facilities on the concourse and those who use the station to cross from one side of the city to the other. Since 2005 there have been a number of developments, including: Invernet services; more trains on Inverness-Aberdeen and the Highland Main Line; increased retail activity at Eastgate; and Inverness Streetscape works.

The introduction of ticket gates has exacerbated the problem of free movement around the station, with up to 5m40 for a Wick train's passengers to egress, and sometimes over 10m for East Coast arrivals to get through.

The station has three access points: Station Square, Falcon Square and Platform 6.5. Flanked by the original buildings Station Square represents is the former public facing entrance, containing the War Memorial to the Cameron Highlanders, and also one to the Highland Railway Company's employees. It currently has car parking and a taxi



concession. Falcon Square is becoming increasingly important to the city for access to retail, to buses and for cultural events, yet the access to the station is unwelcoming, thanks to signs that imply 'Keep Out', a gauntlet to be run across a road past inappropriate car parking, and fencing left over from a penal institution upgrade. Platform 6.5 is simply unpleasant, framed by aggressive ironwork, ill-placed bollards, poor surfacing and the refuse facility and leading to a car park where pedestrians may fear to tread. The station itself is characterised by a draughty concourse, a shortage of TVMs, inadequate seating, heating and eating places, curved platforms of differing lengths (but a fine barber's).

Pre-feasibility assessment work carried out by HITRANS, IDP Architects and Douglas Binns. Twenty-seven delegates attended, representing the commercial operational and statutory interests in the station and its environs. Options for increasing station capacity were explored, in the light of:

- Abellio's proposed multi-million pound spend on the concourse, façade and retail including 2go kiosk and Bike & Go
- 4 and 5 car High Speed Trains from 2018 to Aberdeen and Central Belt
- Virgin Stagecoach Trains East Coast 9 car Super Express Train from 2018
- Serco's new sleeper franchise with extended platforming requirements
- Serco's new main office on Union Street
- Inverness-Elgin resignalling by 2016
- Highland Council's Streetscape project
- Eastgate Shopping Centre expansion plans
- Royal Highland Hotel expansion plans

### **Branchliner**

Over the next 10-15 years the timber industry needs to transport 4 million tonnes of timber from the wider Flow Country catchment to distant markets. This will have consequences for the fragile public road network, the environment and the neighbouring communities. The carrying capacity of the road network is a major constraint. The Highland Timber Transport Group's Flow Country Strategy 2014-16 highlights the still unrealised potential for rail to play a part. This investigative study is a first phase which, if it proves positive, will lead towards a demonstrator project that will trial timber deliveries by rail.

HITRANS will bring together a high level strategic group to establish the importance of the issues at stake – the environmental peatland interest, the economic timber interest and the critical infrastructure constraints – and to ensure there is commitment to finding a viable solution. This group will set the context for and agree a brief for consultants to develop the options and make recommendations. The consultants will gather existing knowledge and experience of timber transport by rail in the UK to see how it can be best applied to the Far North Line. They will establish gaps in knowledge and understanding of physical, cost, logistical, environmental and community issues and, where necessary, commission consultancy services to fill these gaps.

Suitably experienced consultants will investigate the optimum location and size of loading facilities, the cost of their upgrade or creation. It will take account of train lengths, terminal operation and train path metrics and consider the role of demountable ISO flatracks, conventional dedicated timber wagons and freight multiple units. All options will be reviewed, to determine the costs and to identify any logistical barriers to delivery of Flow Country timber by rail to Inverness and beyond. The environmental benefits of mode shift to rail from the Flow Country will be calculated.

## **Inverness Airport Dalcross**

HITRANS is the promoter of Dalcross Station reopening. Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan 2012 outlined the following intention for Control Period 5 2014-2019:

*Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Line Improvements Phase 1, delivering the network capability to enable the operation of enhanced commuting services from Aberdeen to Inverurie and from Elgin to Inverness. In addition, working with station promoters to deliver new stations at Kintore (Nestrans) and Dalcross (HITRANS).*

This was confirmed in the Office of Rail Regulation's final determination of the Periodic Review in autumn 2013. Full hourly, sub 2 hour journey times are not due to be completed until 2030 under Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan.

The station is planned in two phases, with Phase 1 being the construction of a single platform station on the north side of the line with associated car parking. This will be on a similar basis to the original planning permission that was approved in 2007/08. The car park will be within the control of Inverness Airport Business Park. The station opening will be conditional on the closure of the level crossing.

Network Rail have confirmed in its CP5 Enhancements Delivery Plan (Dec13) that Dalcross (Petty) Level Crossing has to be closed to permit operation of the new station. The document states one of its key assumptions: agreement will be reached with relevant stakeholders for the closure of Dalcross Level Crossing prior to the construction of the new Dalcross station.

Dalcross is an Automatic Half Barrier Crossing (AHB). The crossing is actuated by the train striking a treadle in the track, with sufficient time at a regulated speed being allowed for the barriers to come down and lights to come on before the train passes. The system relies on trains all travelling at the same speed. The crossing is incompatible with the safe operation of the new proposed Dalcross station and the additional Elgin-Inverness trains. The crossing closed time will be greatly extended, leading to misuse and thus safety risks.

The station will comprise a single 175m platform with a waiting shelter on the Inverness-Aberdeen line, to the south of the airport. A new access road will be constructed with cycling/pedestrian provision from the existing road network and associated drainage works. The station is scheduled for opening in 2017.

Phase 2 will see a need for a long passing loop to increasing capacity on the Nairn-Inverness section, enabling a half hourly train service, at which time the second platform and associated footbridge will need to be provided.

HITRANS commissioned consultants to carry out the Business Case Analysis and the Transport Assessment, with Highland Council PDU providing assistance with the planning process. An application to the Scottish Stations Fund will be made.

## **BUS SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

### **East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project**

The Scottish Government Bus Investment Fund aims to enable the development of projects which have the potential to deliver improvements in bus services and infrastructure through partnership working between local transport authorities, bus operators and others. The fund is expected to run for at least another two years, providing up to £3m/year. Projects are required to be sustainable in the long term and self-funded (or funded by partners) from the end of the project period.

HITRANS secured a contribution from BIF of £700,000 towards our £2.7 million East Inverness Bus Improvement Fund project. The project seeks to develop a Quality Partnership between HITRANS, The Highland Council and Stagecoach North Scotland to improve local bus services in East Inverness through a series of information, infrastructure and service enhancements.

The project was awarded funding on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The Transport Minister attended the launch of the project at the new Inverness Campus, UHI site on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The Campus is one of the many key destinations which will benefit from the proposed enhancements.

In the first phase of the project, Stagecoach deployed fifteen new vehicles on two of their busiest city services. This exceeds the original twelve proposed in the application and helps make the fleet of vehicles operating in Inverness among the youngest of any city in Scotland.

The project will also see £1million of new investment into improving the infrastructure and provision of information on Inverness' bus network. Over £500,000 of this spend has already been delivered and significant improvements included the installation of over 180 new bus stop flags and display cases which following the appointment of a public transport officer we have been busy filling with information. Once this is completed the intention is to roll out NFC and QR codes at these stops and to then promote the Traveline Scotland app from which passengers with smart phones will be able to obtain real-time passenger information from any stop equipped with the NFC / QR code.

The focus of the project in 2015/16 will be to deploy strategic bus priority at up to 13 signalised junctions in the city following the successful trial at two pilot junctions on Millburn Road. The intention is to achieve this predominantly through wireless communication between the Real-time information system deployed on the city bus fleet and the traffic signals rather than through expensive on street infrastructure improvements. It is anticipated that the proposed solution adopted will also provide widespread Wifi access for passengers.

A final key element of the project will be the introduction of the first Statutory Quality Bus Partnership in the Highlands and Islands for which initial meetings have taken place to discuss its extent, implementation and governance.

### **HI-Travel**

Transport Scotland awarded the HITRANS HI-travel project £300,000 from the Scottish Government Bus Investment Fund. The project which was developed in partnership with Local Authority colleagues, involves the employment of a Public Transport Officer on a shared services basis with the responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across

the HITRANS area and in so doing improve the quantity and quality of public transport information available to the public.

A new Officer was appointed to the post on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 and has since been involved with implementing the HI-Travel project.

In addition to undertaking necessary ICT and database training the Officer has met each of the Local Authority public transport teams help to establish the baseline information available as well as priorities for investment and support.

Since the project began investment in the following areas has been committed:

- 250 High Quality Information poles / displays / timetable cases. Priority locations / routes identified to date are Kirkwall, Stornoway, Oban, Fort William and the Service No 35 between Buckie and Portgordon.
- Poster display cases for shelters where we hope to engage with other organisations such as Outer Hebrides Tourism to install local tourist information as well as public transport information in time.
- A new contract for the supply of 5 solar e-paper displays at 5 interchanges in Skye and Lochalsh
- 4 additional Solar Chronos units at busy stops within the Cairngorm National Park area.
- Supply of real-time displays at locations in Orkney (including the Airport), Stornoway, Thurso and Elgin Bus Station.
- Maintenance and support for the JourneyGenie website.
- 5 new bus shelters for key interchanges
- Real-time display and Wifi hotspot in Portree Square

In addition to the funding from the Bus Investment Fund the shared service approach to the HiTravel project is underpinned with a further collective funding contribution of £235,000 from HITRANS and all five partner Councils.

### **Bus Investment Fund – Local Authority led projects**

HITRANS also financially supported a number of other successful applications to the Bus Investment Fund. These are detailed below.

### **Moray – Urban Freedom Health Cycle**

Moray Council successful application focuses on access to health and healthy living in Moray. It will see services enhanced to the new Forres Medical Centre by increasing the frequency on an existing bus service. In addition to this other bus service frequency enhancements and Sunday services are planned elsewhere in Moray as part of Stagecoach's contribution to the project. The project will also see bike racks installed on buses and some on bus bike carriage to allow people to access the Moray coast for cycling. Bus interchange and information facilities will also be enhanced.

HITRANS have agreed to provide match funding of £20,000 over two years towards this project from the Business Plan allocation for BIF support.

### **Argyll & Bute: Oban to Fort William Sunday Service**

Argyll and Bute Council were successful with their application for funding to support the development of a Sunday service on the route between Oban and Fort William which will provide improved onward connections to Inverness and Skye for the Oban area and access to the islands and south of Oban for people in Fort William and surrounds.

The proposal is to operate three journeys each way on summer Sundays and reduce this to two journeys during the winter at times similar to the weekday service giving a consistent seven day a week service to test the market in the hope that the enhancement may be continued commercially or become sustainable with minimal financial support.

The provision of the service is an important and necessary addition to the public transport network of the area and it is hoped that passenger facilities at Oban, Fort William and key points along the route can also be improved as part of the project.

The project is supported by The Highland Council and HITRANS including a £5,000 contribution towards the total project cost of £101,840.

### **Tasga Uibhist Community Transport**

Tasga Uibhist application to the Bus Investment Fund will allow the improvement of an invaluable community transport scheme within the HITRANS area.

Tasga Uibhist provide a vital local service and this proposal in partnership with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Tasga Uibhist and HITRANS will help enable much needed investment in the demand responsive services which they provide to the local community in North Uist, South Uist and Benbecula. This project will see investment in two new vehicles (four seater with wheel chair access and a nine seater minibus), help support the employment of a driver for the Dial a Bus service, promotion of their services and wider staff training.

HITRANS have matched the Comhairle's contribution by allocating a budget of £10,000 over the two years of the BIF project to support the Tasga Uibhist project proposal.

### **The Highland Council: Badenoch & Strathspey Integrated Transport Service**

The aim of this project is to develop an improved integrated transport service for the Badenoch and Strathspey (B&S) area. This will be delivered through a pilot project which links to the needs of the NHS and would be facilitated by the Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport Company (BSCTC) which is a registered charity. The project will improve access to services for elderly and vulnerable members of the community who can be at a disadvantage due to a lack of regular, and accessible, public transport.

The two main elements of the project will be to deliver an improved fleet for BSCTC to enable cross-over with NHS requirements, i.e. new disabled compliant car and minibus to allow NHS non-emergency patient travel; and secondly the implementation of routing /

scheduling software to enable optimisation of BSCTC fleet, maximising available driver resources and funding.

If successfully piloted, there should be an opportunity for community groups across the HITRANS area to benefit from similar routing / scheduling software.

## **ACTIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS**

### **HITRANS/Sustrans Partnership**

The previous work on Active Travel Audits has produced an Active Travel Prioritised Action Plan for regional centres and this has been a very effective tool in attracting external funding. To further support this work and help our partner local authorities attract funding HITRANS have joined in partnership with Sustrans with the creation of an Active Travel Officer post, initially for the next two years, based within the HITRANS offices to provide support and guidance on Active Travel throughout the region. This includes a £100k budget per annum to add value and assist Active Travel project development.

The officer joined the team in October 2013 and has been working with partners to develop applications for capital investment during the 2014-16 financial period through Sustrans Community Links fund.

During the 14/15 financial year the £100k budget was spent on a range of projects including:

- Active Travel Masterplan Development
- HiBike Maps
- Cycling and Walking Friendly Street Pilots
- HiTravel Marketing Projects

### **Community Links Fund**

During 2013 it was announced that Sustrans would administer a £14M Active Travel fund through 14/15 with an additional £10M for projects during 15/16 as part of their Community Links Programme. This money is required to be match funded on a 50:50 basis from the Local Authority or RTP through a range of sources to enable partnership working, and a range of capital projects to encourage the feasibility, design and construction of Active Travel Projects. Applications opened in January, with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014.

Objectives of the Community Links Programme are to:

- Link the places people live in with the places they want to get to
- Encourage people to cycle or use another active travel mode on everyday journeys and increase cycling modal share
- Meet an identified community need and demand
- 

HITRANS applied for 3 projects, 2 of which were successful in this period:

- £450k NCN78 Corran Ferry to Ballachulish cycle route.
- £195k Inverness Campus South Bridge (in partnership with HIE for additional £195k))

In total 33 applications were submitted from the HITRANS area to the Community Links fund during this period. 22 projects were successful in gaining funding for 2014-16, including several infrastructure projects identified through the Active Travel Audits. This amounted to £2,678,169 of funding, which was matched by the Local Authorities and key stakeholders, resulting in significant investment of over £5.3M in the region over the next two years.

## **ROAD NETWORK**

HITRANS continues to work with its member local authorities and Transport Scotland in order to improve and upgrade the Trunk Road and Regionally Significant Road Network. These strategic links are vital for connecting us both to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and people to their main regional centre.

HITRANS has been engaging with Transport Scotland as it develops proposals for the ambitious Dualling of the A9 and A96 Trunk Roads which connect Inverness with Perth and Aberdeen respectively. HITRANS have been working with other key stakeholders to ensure that the final schemes deliver the optimum solution for all forms of transport including freight, public transport and cycling.

HITRANS have also worked with Transport Scotland and Local authorities on proposals to upgrade the A82 and A83 trunk roads where the Scottish Government are funding works to upgrade pinch points at Crianlarich and Pulpit Rock and also solutions to address the impact of major landslips at the Rest and Be Thankful. This included a £3million upgrade of the Old Military Road as a diversion route in the event of the trunk road being blocked.

In 2014/15 HITRANS also provided match funding support for the development of potential improvement schemes on both the A95 in Moray and the Western Isles 'Spinal Route'. It is hoped that by developing schemes to a 'drawer ready' stage it will increase the likelihood of funding becoming available for construction.



## Freight

### **HITRANS response to Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee inquiry into freight transport in Scotland.**

Freight in the Highlands and Islands use all four modes- road, rail, sea and air- to enable even the remotest island communities to participate in the economic life of the country. Because of the geography, transport links have a lifeline nature. Infrastructure resilience in the face of climate change is key to ensuring that networks operate around the clock. Weakness in infrastructure provision leads to: road closures with detours of a hundred miles, island supermarket shelves becoming empty due to adverse sea conditions, fresh fish failing to get to market, livestock suffering, timber remaining icebound in forests and bottling halls in Central Scotland idly awaiting the supply of whisky.

#### Rail

Unlike roads, the railway is not open 7 days, nor 24 hours per day. Access to the track is limited by maintenance access requirements, and signaller shifts. A new freight flow, for example, may require signal boxes on trunk routes to be opened up specially, incurring substantial costs borne by the logistics supplier(although one advantage of the RETB signalled network north of Helensburgh and Inverness is round the clock staffing to for level crossing and maintenance access). Overnight freight gets the goods to the customer when it is required, and more quickly as there are few or no passenger trains competing for paths. The largely single track nature of the network in the Highlands also limits capacity in terms of the number of train paths. A much-discussed, commercially viable early arrival in Inverness of a retail goods train is simply impossible.

The Highland Rail Network has a restricted loading gauge which reduces the railway's ability to compete effectively against road. Container clearance on the Highland Main Line is restricted, while on Inverness-Aberdeen improved gauge is available from Elgin east only. The restricted loading gauge on all Highland routes reduces the railway's ability to compete effectively against road. Electrification will of course bring about a significant improvement in gauge. On the Far North and West Highland Lines a number of structures are weight restricted, and track geometry suboptimal which limits access by certain types of freight locomotive, and reduces the speed of all locomotives.

Terminals in the North are limited in number and capacity, particularly for multimodal traffic. Fort William has only dedicated terminals for oil and alumina, Inverness handles bulk cement and supermarket goods, Lairg has oil discharge facilities and Georgemas receives nuclear and pipe trains, although traffic to regrettably Orkney ceased some years ago While access is regulated by ORR it would be perhaps helpful if Network Rail took a more proactive role in terminal development and management, possibly for timber which may have an otherwise detrimental effect on fragile roads.

Our area requires good cross border rail links to East Coast ports via the East Coast Main Line and to the Midlands/South East via the West Coast Main Line. High Speed 2 will release capacity for freight on the classic lines, and growing electrification in Scotland will allow fast, all-electric freight to the south. Timely access to Central Scotland terminals at the right time to connect with trunk flows is very important.

#### Road

The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy identifies a hierarchy for the region's multi-modal transport network including the strategic links connecting the area to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, and the regional links which connect people and freight to their main regional centres. For many areas these are the only links to the wider economy which a community has hence the

term 'lifeline roads'. With no feasible alternative the economic viability on an area is fundamentally linked to the resilience of the road network.

The significant investment planned for the A9 and A96 is welcomed and will transform access to these areas but the investment on these routes needs to be complemented by upgrades to other trunk roads such as the A95 on which huge volumes of whisky and other freight is transported, and the A9 to Caithness and Orkney via Berriedale. Similarly, the A82 and A83 which serve the West Highlands and Islands and which have suffered from long delays and diversions as a result of frequent landslips and essential maintenance in recent years. Significant impacts are not restricted to the trunk road network and the cost of providing resilience on lifeline local roads is often beyond the means of a Local Authority. This is the case on the A890 Stromeferry bypass where major landslips have closed the road for extended periods and a created a detour in excess of 100 miles. The Western Isles Spinal Route has been included within the HTRANS RTS as a "Regionally Significant Road" and its improvement has been assisted considerably with ERDF funding over the last 15-20 years. However, with a significant reduction in such funding for infrastructure projects, there is a real risk that the recognition of its importance at a regional level and the continuing need for improvement will "fall off the radar". The move away from the previous traditional ERDF funding areas will undoubtedly negatively impact on the ability of local authorities to enhance and sustain road freight capacity.

The road network performs many functions which are unique to the HTRANS area including acting as the equivalent of a pipeline in that gas is supplied to places like Wick, Oban and Campbeltown by road and while the supply for Stornoway is imported generally by sea freighter it is often moved by road tanker, a situation that could be replicated in Orkney. The transport of other products such as timber or the lands potential for development is often compromised by the weakness or physical constraints of the fragile road network.

Furthermore, HTRANS completed a lorry parking study three years ago which highlighted the need for freight to be properly managed with planned lorry parking particularly in times of disruption and severe weather.

Significant volumes of high value exports rely on the fragile road network which serves the Highlands and Islands. Any disruption in these essential arteries can have a major impact on the cost and reliability of getting freight to the rest of the UK and beyond. The planned investment on the A9 and A96 needs to be complemented by investment in the other key trunk road routes, in particular the A82, A83 and A95.

## Sea

Ferry capacity is a constraint. There can be a conflict between passenger traffic desires (including private vehicles) and freight requirements in terms of ferry timetabling, pre-and block booking of haulage. This becomes particularly evident in peak periods and at weekends.

For freight movement commercial vehicle fares have an impact on sustainable economic growth in our island and peninsular communities. These costs will be added to goods and commodities imported to and exported from the islands. The recent work by Transport Scotland to establish a clear and transparent system for freight fares across the Scottish Government funded ferry contracts is welcome as there is little logic or fairness to the existing charging system. However it would be desirable for the new system to achieve consistency and transparency without increasing costs on any part of the network as an increase will inevitably have an impact on the fragile economies of our islands.

Infrastructure at ports can have an impact on freight movement. For example there are constraints such as limited marshalling areas that prevent the layover of vehicles or the opportunity to develop a drop trailer system that would allow trailers to travel on ferries without a tractor unit. The introduction of a drop trailer system would have environmental benefits and would free up deckspace for other vehicles. The poor condition of ports and harbours across our

ferry networks is also a limiting factor; this is particularly evident with the continued use of crane loading at some ports in the Orkney internal ferry network.

Appropriate investment in the connecting ferry services from the outer isles to those ferry services linking to the Scottish Mainland. These connecting services have not benefitted from Scottish Government support and are in danger of becoming a major constraint on the economic health of those islands locations not linked directly to the Scottish Mainland.

### Air

Reinstating and securing Regional access – including for Inverness – to the UK's principal hub airport is an essential policy intervention if the Highlands and Islands economy is to thrive. This should be a minimum requirement of any move to increase Airport capacity in the South East of England and wherever a new runway is built be it London Heathrow, London Gatwick or elsewhere there should be a planning condition on the need for secure access to UK regions particularly those remote regions where rail and road do not offer viable alternatives to air. The fact is that Heathrow continues to dominate airfreight exports from the UK, making access to this form of distribution system sub-optimal for Highland based firms in the absence of a service to the UK's primary air cargo hub. This is particularly significant for the high value seafood export markets that local firms would like to access, because in 2011 Heathrow accounted for 95% of UK long haul seafood exports by air, although the ageing fleet may not provide the necessary reliability for time sensitive cargo.

The following improvements to Air Freight to, from and within the Highlands and Islands would assist the region's export capacity and access to markets:

- Scottish Regional Access to air freight opportunities through London Heathrow including for Inverness where no linking service with bellyhold capacity is available.
- The development of air freight facilities and routes such as Inverness to a Midlands Airport.
- The availability of air freight facilities for island-based exporters to use the internal Scottish air service network for the transport high value goods quickly to the Central Belt for onward transit to London Heathrow, Dubai, EU etc.
- Investment support to ensure aircraft reliability.

### Support

We acknowledge the state aid issues with supporting rail freight but serious mode shift will only occur when there is parity of cost, opportunity and reliability for new entrants on road and rail networks. The barriers to new entrants to rail can be lowered if Government can simplify the application process, allow non-commercial applicants and set realistic targets and budgets.

EU funding does offer an opportunity to support and develop sustainable freight projects. This includes specific funds such as the TEN-T Networks that are very well focussed towards freight flows.

HITRANS have also enjoyed success in other EU funding sources including the INTERREG funding stream where HITRANS participation in the Food Port North Sea Area project enabled the innovative trial of modal shift from road to rail for the transport of Whisky product from Elgin / Speyside to central Scotland distribution and bottling plants. This "Lifting the Spirit" project was a HITRANS led initiative delivered in partnership with Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) HIE, Moray Council and our Food Port partners which enabled a wide range of distillers the opportunity to move bulk spirit and other food products by rail to/from Elgin during autumn 2013. The objective was to offer this on a cost neutral basis as many of the potential customers had not used rail transport from the north of Scotland in the last 20 years, although most had recent experience of intermodal transport for cased goods and bulk spirit from Central Scotland.

In majoring on an iconic product we were able to demonstrate the availability of alternative transport infrastructure and thus enhance or at least retail the area's competitive position at a

time of growing transport costs and increasing demand for transport. The spirit was moved in demountable container tanks on rail wagons. Lifting equipment was procured at Elgin to facilitate transfer from local hauliers, and the tanks were sent to an intermodal terminal in Central Belt for onward delivery. Key outputs included:

- modal shift to rail
- maximising the use of rail's capability, demonstrating resilience and performance
- assisting with the development of the Moray economy
- encouraging collaboration among producers
- making the case for further infrastructure investment

The Lifting the Spirit project highlights the opportunity that EU funding can offer and was a useful way of proving demand and costs ahead of developing a longer term project through commercial business case and/or freight facilities grant.

While EU funds can attract a favourable intervention rate (Food Port secured 60% of costs met by EU sources for Lifting the Spirit) the need for the Scottish partner to provide match funding is a barrier to participation in these projects. Indeed at the time HITRANS was working on Food Port (and another two INTERREG projects) the opportunity to participate in the EFFIPLAT INTERREG Atlantic Area project had to be turned down due to the lack of available staff and match funding resources. If a fund was established to support Scottish public bodies in their participation in EU projects there would be a real opportunity for Scotland's return from EU funding to increase significantly.

The EU has set a target of 30% of all >300km freight movements to be by sustainable mode by 2030, 50% by 2050. This needs to be reinforced, by promoting load sharing, break bulk, rail electrification and low emissions shipping. However, we accept that many movements will be by truck, and are keen to see road continue to demonstrate a willingness to move forwards with lower emissions engines, and advanced telematics involving load and driver management. For sea freight, investment support for environmentally less damaging marine propulsion systems, such as LNG, hydrogen fuel cells or electric power on shorter routes, would achieve significant improvements on most routes.

The sulphur directive will impact on Scotland's East Coast ports and the Northern Isles, while the poor uptake of the Rosyth ferry demonstrates hauliers still find it convenient to use English East Coast ports despite the service being available. Government's commitment to the Rosyth ferry is commendable and there might need to be consideration of ways of incentivising its use.

In terms of the ports throughout the Highlands and Islands infrastructure needs to be fit for purpose and fares need to be proportionate to support the continued flow of goods through these ports. The delivery of the Scottish Ferries Plan proposals will support this end very well. To really achieve growth the focus must be on economic development throughout the Highlands and Islands and the growth in the whisky, food and fish farming sectors are all acting as catalysts for the increased flow of goods on our ferry networks.

## **TRAVEL PLANNING**

HITRANS recognition of the need to reduce over-dependence on the private car for travel was at the core of our Travel Plan policy in 2014/15.

To support employers across the private and public sectors in implementing good travel planning we offer a set of leaflets aimed at managers and employees which give good advice on the benefits of changing their travel behaviour. We have distributed these leaflets to a number of employers across the region and are happy to meet any requests for copies made by employers. It is widely agreed that a good communications strategy is essential in encouraging the acceptance of Travel Plans.

HITRANS journey sharing website is [www.IfYouCareShare.com](http://www.IfYouCareShare.com)

HITRANS has worked closely with the Scottish Government, local authorities, NHS and with other Regional Transport Partnerships to develop shared experience in the delivery of travel plans. We have played an active part in encouraging the activities of the Scottish Sustainable Travel Group and the ACT TravelWise Association in Scotland.

Our key focus on travel planning in 2014/15 was our participation in the Action Renewables led REPUTE project where we have delivered a personalised travel planning (PTP) project in Fort William and developed a PTP toolkit for use in other parts of the region in the future.

## **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 five ferry user groups. These are:

- Clyde (Arran Bute, Cumbrae and Cowal including Kilcreggan)
- Argyll (Mull, Iona, Lismore, Coll and Tiree, Barra and South Uist, Colonsay, Islay and Gigha)
- Hebrides (Barra, the Uists, Lewis and Harris)
- Raasay, Skye and the Small Isles, Ardnamurchan and Mull
- Orkney Transport and Travel Forum

### **Transport Integration Forum**

HITRANS hosted an inaugural Transport Integration Forum in Oban on 30th October 2014. The objective of the event was to bring together all the key operators and organisations involved in delivering transport in the North and West Highlands to help understand the main barriers and opportunities for providing a more integrated transport network for passengers.

The forum underscored a general willingness from all stakeholders to work together for the common good which provides a promising platform upon which to build. A report and Action Plan was subsequently produced which identifies a number of recommendations to tackle these issues which participants put forward on the day. Officers have already been able to address some of the short term actions.

Following the success of this Forum, the intention is for HITRANS to host similar events in the focussing on areas such as the new rail franchises and services to/from Caithness and Orkney.

### **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.

### **Rail Stakeholder Engagement**

HITRANS runs three tiers of Rail Forums.

The Rail Advisory Group (RAG) is the working group consisting of representatives from HITRANS, Network Rail, First ScotRail, Passenger Focus, Transport Scotland and local authority transport officers. This body meets 2 times per year and directly informs HITRANS policy and workstreams.

The Rail Stakeholder Group (RSG) acts as the umbrella group for wider industry, public sector, voluntary and heritage interests and features formal presentations from leading industry figures in a conference style format.

The Rail Users Group (RUG) covers the voluntary rail user groups for the rural North Highland and West Highland Lines. Chaired by Robert Samson of Passenger Focus, this forum enables the views of the members of the groups to engage with HITRANS in twice yearly meetings. Their views are then taken by Passenger Focus to the Rail Advisory 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.



## Budget Performance Statement For the year ended 31 March 2015

	<b>2014/15</b>		
	Budget	Actual	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Staff costs	314	314	-
Property costs	16	22	6
Travel and subsistence costs	36	43	7
Administration and meeting costs	32	36	4
Research and strategy development costs	841	953	112
Publicity costs	10	14	4
European projects costs	-	44	44
Support services	40	37	(3)
Interest on revenue balances	-	2	2
	<u>1,289</u>	<u>1,465</u>	<u>176</u>
<b>Gross expenditure</b>			
Government grants	(989)	(1,099)	(110)
Other grants	(100)	(152)	(52)
Other income	-	(42)	(42)
<b>Gross income</b>	<u>(1,089)</u>	<u>(1,293)</u>	<u>(204)</u>
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<u><u>200</u></u>	<u>172</u>	<u>(28)</u>
Committed expenditure carried forward		28	28
		<u>200</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Requisition Income</b>		<u>200</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Transfer to Balances</b>		<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

The net budgeted expenditure of the Partnership in 2014/15 was £0.200m (2013/14 - £0.200m). The actual expenditure to be met by the constituent authorities is £0.200m (2013/14 - £0.200m). Overall the budget balanced for the year (2013/14 - £0.000m). The main variations from budget during the year were as follows:

- Property costs are overspent as a result of an increase in rental charges at the Inverness office due to utilisation of further accommodation space.
- Travel, subsistence, administration and meeting costs are overspent. The increase in costs reflects the increase in staff numbers from 5 to 7, and the increased activity on project work throughout the year.
- Included in research and strategy development costs is expenditure of £0.378m for the East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor Project, £0.150m for Community Links Project and £0.028m for the Hi-Travel Project. All of these projects are funded by Scottish Government grants. Included in other income is £0.038m of third party contributions to project work.
- The overspend on European projects relates to the final costs in respect of Connecting Food Port Regions – Between and Beyond (Lifting the Spirit) and Sustainable Transport in Rural Tourism (Giant Puffin).
- The budget for other grants relates to a grant from Sustrans for cycling project work. However this sum was unclaimed and is carried forward to 2015/16. Other grant income includes a sum of £0.147m in respect of a European part-funded project, Seamless Travel

across the Atlantic area Regions using Sustainable Transport (START). The project was completed in 2011/12. However the final claim was only agreed in 2014/15.

All government grants in respect of 2014/15 were received in the financial year with the exception of the grants from the Bus Investment Fund and Community Links Fund. The committed expenditure at the end of the financial year will be met by carrying forward the unused government grant, as permitted by the awarding body.

## **Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 Sustainable Economic Growth Statement**

### **HITRANS 2014/15**

#### **Introduction**

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. This statement is intended to fulfil the requirement of the Act in relation to Sustainable Economic Growth. This statement should be read in conjunction with the statement on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy and the financial information provided on the HITRANS website that are also required by the Act.

#### **Government purpose and performance framework**

The Government in 2011 updated its Economic Strategy as originally published in November 2007. This sets out the Government's clear priority to accelerate economic recovery, with a range of measures to tackle unemployment and promote employability. The Strategy focusses action on six Strategic priorities which will drive sustainable economic growth and develop a more resilient and adaptable economy. The priorities are supportive business environment, transition to a low carbon economy, learning skills and wellbeing, infrastructure development and place, effective Government, and Equality. Transport is recognised within the Strategy as one of the key enablers for enhancing productivity and delivering faster, more sustainable, economic growth.

A Purpose Framework has been developed as part of the National Performance Framework and between them they provide a clear focus and direction for the whole of the public sector in Scotland. All public bodies are expected to align their activity in support of the Purpose, Purpose Targets and the National Outcomes set out in the Framework, and HITRANS Transport Strategy is linked through our monitoring framework with delivery of the Government's priorities.

#### **Sustainable Economic Growth**

HITRANS primary function is to produce and implement its Regional Transport Strategy. The Strategy was approved in 2008 and the monitoring framework put in place to identify our success in working with partners towards achieving its Objectives. The vision for transport is to enhance the region's viability, enhancing the region's place and competitiveness, and thereby attracting and retaining people in the region and making the Highlands and Islands a more attractive place in which to live, to work and conduct business, and to visit.

Transport has long been recognised as a significant contributor to sustainable economic growth. The HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy was developed in conjunction with our five Member Councils.

The principal ethos in setting and determining the Regional Transport Strategy has therefore been to encourage and permit sustainable economic growth.

**The Partnership Approach to sustainable economic growth through delivery of our RTS.**

HITRANS is committed to working with all sectors and interests within transport in adding value to the transport services delivered across the region.

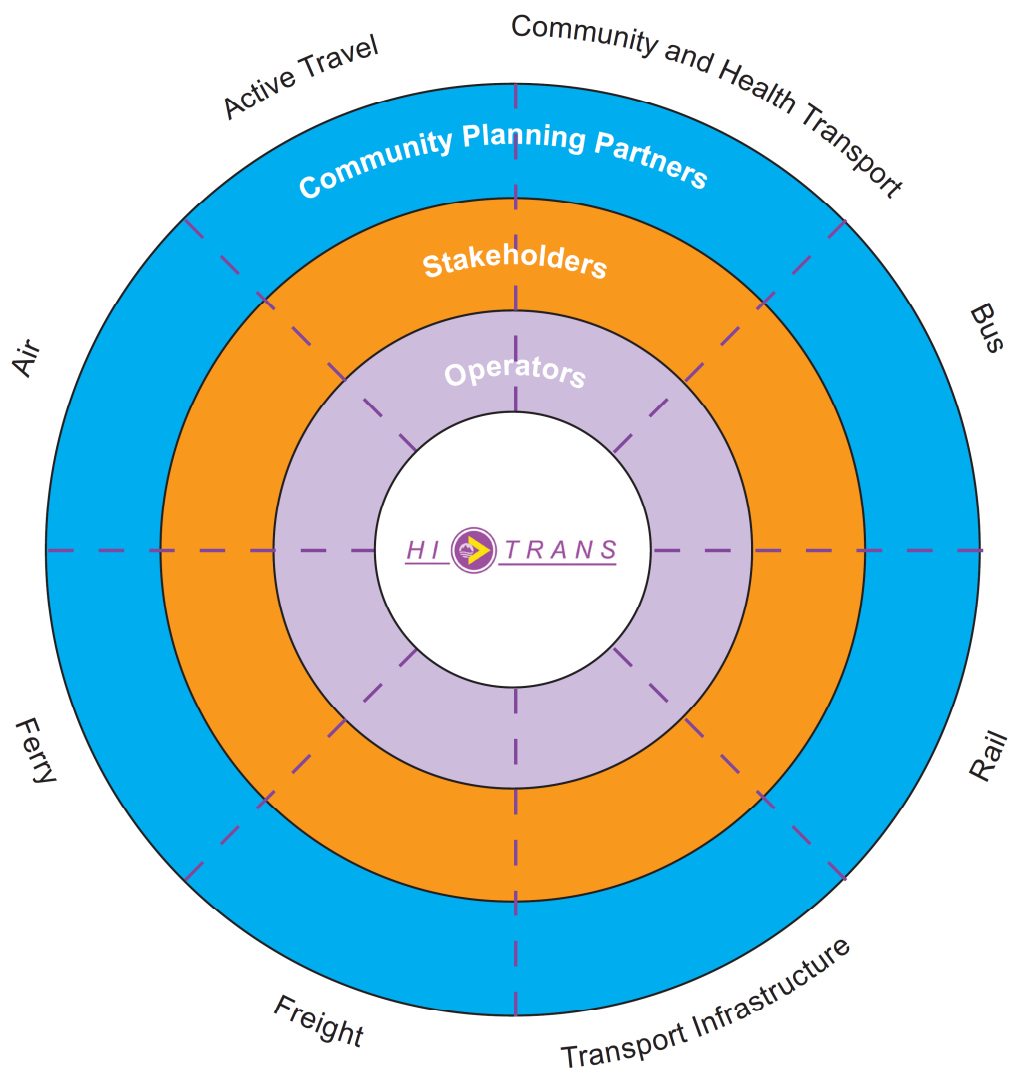
The partnership has identified eight areas in which it would aim to work towards improving services. These are listed in the table below:

Area	Description
Active travel	Walking, cycling
Community and health transport	Third sector transport, social and health transport, car sharing schemes
Bus	Supported and commercial bus services, and taxis
Rail	Passenger and freight rail services
Transport Infrastructure	Roads (both trunk and local), Rail Infrastructure, Airports, Ports, Harbours, and Ferries
Freight	Cross modal, road, rail, ferry, air and sea
Ferry	Supported and commercial ferry services, national and local
Air	Supported and commercial air passenger services, including charter and freight

In each area HITRANS seeks active participation from the 5 partner Councils, our Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders, Operators, Permanent Advisors and the Partnership Board. HITRANS encourages its Community Planning Partners, Stakeholders and Operators to participate in policy development and delivery options appraisal. Operators in particular are encouraged to interact not only within their individual area of expertise but across the 8 areas and are given the opportunity individually to discuss issues with Board Members. This allows HITRANS the greatest opportunity to learn from their knowledge and experience and maximising our effectiveness in delivering sustainable economic growth.

HITRANS wishes to ensure maximum effective involvement of all groups and has devised, in each service area, mechanisms and structures that ensure that each group's views are heard and their input valued in ensuring the Partnership delivers improved transport services across the region. HITRANS has formed and continues to develop advisory and consultative groups both within and between linked transport areas, to promote improved integration across the Highlands and Islands. Regular meetings of these groups are arranged to obtain valuable input and provide information on developments and proposals.

The chart below diagrammatically reflects the approach HITRANS is taking to achieve this aim.



**Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010**  
**Statement of efficiency, effectiveness and economy**  
**HITRANS 2014/15**

During 2014/15 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.

**Shared Services**

**Shared accommodation, administration and supplies**

HITRANS moved office from Inverness Airport to Ardross Terrace in the city centre in December 2013. The new office achieves a lower annual rental by square metre and provides extra space including a meeting room that has reduced the cost incurred by HITRANS in hiring meeting rooms. The office floor is shared with the Scottish Council for Development and Industry who share the rental cost of the meeting room. This is an excellent initiative which has strengthened an important relationship between the RTP and SCDI.

By improving our IT systems we have been able to reduce the number of telephone lines to our office from 4 to 3 and negotiated a new phone usage contract which reduced bills further. The increase in staff as a result of our success in attracting external project funding has not required an increase in landline costs.

In 2013/14 we reinstated the fifth Board meeting to allow better governance of the unaudited accounts sign off but made this a single day Board Members only meeting with Telephone and Video Conferencing available to Members. This meant a saving of £1,500 when compared to previous years when 5 Board meetings took place.

We have managed travel expense costs by increasing our use of telephone and video conferencing equipment to reduce the cost of traveling to meetings. There has been some increase in travel costs owing to the increase from 5 to 7 members of staff.

HITRANS is a member of Scotland Excel and gains from the resultant efficiencies that joint purchasing of supplies across the public sector in Scotland brings to our partnership.

**Legal, Financial and HR Services**

HITRANS has service level agreements covering Legal, HR, and Financial services with two of our member Councils with de minimis costs unchanged since 2008/09. The services provided are outlined below.

**Legal and HR Services**

Legal and HR services are provided by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Legal Services include legal advice, contractual advice, and provision of clerking for the Board. HR Services include drafting and review of HR policies and procedures, monitoring any changes in legislation, and support in dealing with staff matters. Day to day routine HR matters are managed directly by HITRANS employees. The quality of support is excellent and rates are considerably lower than comparative rates in the private sector. The cost of this service in 2014/15 was £8,000.

**Financial Services**

Financial services are provided by The Highland Council. Services covered include invoice and payment processing, financial ledger, regular reporting to the HITRANS Board, internal audit, liaising with external audit, budget preparation and control, pension fund management, accountancy and

audit support for EU projects and investment management. The quality of support is excellent, and again, rates are considerably lower than in the private sector. The cost of this service in 2014/15 was £18,514.

### **Accessibility Modelling**

HITRANS has developed an accessibility model covering the Highlands and Islands using Accession and this has been available to member Councils for a number of years, operating mainly through consultants MVA. The model gives a graphic presentation of the accessibility of specific locations to other locations, including areas of employment, healthcare, education, retail and leisure, by various modes.

HITRANS continues to use the arrangement with Tactran and SEStran through which we use a common contract between SEStran and MVA to access accession software with the benefit of reduced fees as a result of the larger volume of work, single licence fee for all three RTPs.

### **Sustainable Development**

HITRANS has carried out active travel audits of all the key settlements across the region in partnership with the five authorities in the HITRANS area and provided the results to the partner authorities. The central provision of these services has saved the partner authorities significant costs in developing an effective methodology and undertaking individual audits when compared with the local development option. The Highland Council have used the outputs from the Audits as a basis for their Green and Active Highland project which has attracted ERDF support, as well as HITRANS funding as part of the funding package. Likewise Moray Council used the Elgin Audit to attract ERDF and Sustrans support for the Urban Freedom project.

### **Partnership Working**

#### **European Projects**

HITRANS was involved in the delivery of two European Projects during 2014/15 which each achieved efficiencies and economies while working towards improvements in the effectiveness of delivery of transport services and related infrastructure within the Highlands and Islands and at wider national and international levels.

In the Northern Periphery and Arctic area HITRANS secured funding initially for a preparatory project but ultimately for a full application as a partner in the SPARA 2020 project to help prepare a main project application for this project which has as its focus the development of Smart Peripheral Airports. We are leading this project and will work with partners in Ireland, Sweden and Norway as well as other Scottish partners. This project has secured **€494,253.21** for HITRANS over the next three years. This figure should not be looked at in isolation as SPARA 2020 is a strong collaborative project that will bring a total budget spend in the Highlands and Islands of €1,025,266.37 as HITRANS work closely with University of the Highlands and Islands and Robert Gordon University on initiatives within the project targeted at locations in the region. This project has attracted a 65% eRDF intervention rate.

In 2014/15 HITRANS completed our participation in the innovative Food Port North Sea Area INTERREG IVB project. HITRANS secured approximately 290,000EUROS to fund trial movements of bulk spirit by rail at a 50% intervention rate with the pilot project phase completed in the previous year.

HITRANS has continued to work in partnership with The Highland Council to access ERDF funding to deliver a series of infrastructure improvements to deliver increased active travel in key settlements as identified through our Active Travel Audits mentioned above, and these are now being delivered

on the ground with significant progress made in 2014/15 with the completion of works at Milburn Road to link Inverness Campus and City Centre.

HITRANS has continued our membership of Scotland Europa in an effort to access further opportunities to work with partners across the European Union to the benefit of the Highlands and Islands. We have entered into a joint membership with Tactran and SEStran significantly reducing the cost of membership which we would have otherwise incurred.

### **Bus Investment Fund**

Working in partnership with Highland Council and Stagecoach North Scotland HITRANS was able to prepare a funding application to the Bus Investment Fund (BIF) that represents a project with a total value of £3Million including £700,000 of BIF support from Transport Scotland. The project will deliver a range of improvements to bus services in the East Inverness area including bus priority, information and infrastructure improvements and has been complemented by the introduction of 15 new buses by Stagecoach.

HITRANS has secured funding totaling £535,000 for the HiTravel project including a £300,000 contribution from Transport Scotland's Bus Investment Fund. This project also saw the employment of a Travel Information Officer as we have taken responsibility from our partner Council's for the production of bus information including roadside publicity and real time information. This shared service approach has been the result of the strong positive relationship HITRANS enjoy with the public transport teams at each Council.

HITRANS close working relationship with our Partner Councils has seen us financially support Bus Investment Fund applications by Argyll and Bute Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Taga Uibhist) and Moray Council that have secured significant funding in each area.

### **Sustrans Partnership**

Our innovative partnership initiative with Sustrans has continued in 2014/15 following its introduction the previous year. This has seen HITRANS and Sustrans pool resource to fund an Active Travel Officer embedded within the HITRANS team with a budget to deliver Active Travel policy and projects in the region. The initial value of this project represents an annual investment of £150,000 which includes £100,000 from Sustrans. The post also allows HITRANS to focus much more closely on Active Travel and investigate funding opportunities such as ERDF and Community Links.

### **Risk Management**

To support our development of sound management of risk a formal Risk Management Strategy has been developed and implemented by HITRANS. The Strategy describes the constituent parts of good Risk Management, our overriding Risk Management Aims, the range of risks we face, the processes we will put in place, and the actions we are taking. During 2013/14 HITRANS has created, updated and monitored its associated Risk Register identifying the key risks, associated controls and actions needed to minimise the impact of risk on the activities of the Partnership.

### **Equalities**

In undertaking all of our activities HITRANS has fully considered equalities issues as required through our statutory body status as defined in the Race, Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality legislation. We have set up a system and are ready to take feedback on transport related equality issues from our Member Councils and Advisory Groups as has been agreed as the most appropriate means of capturing these issues. In addition promote the discussion of any issues at each of our regular Permanent Advisors Meetings, and ensure that the equality impacts of any proposals and



## Nil return.

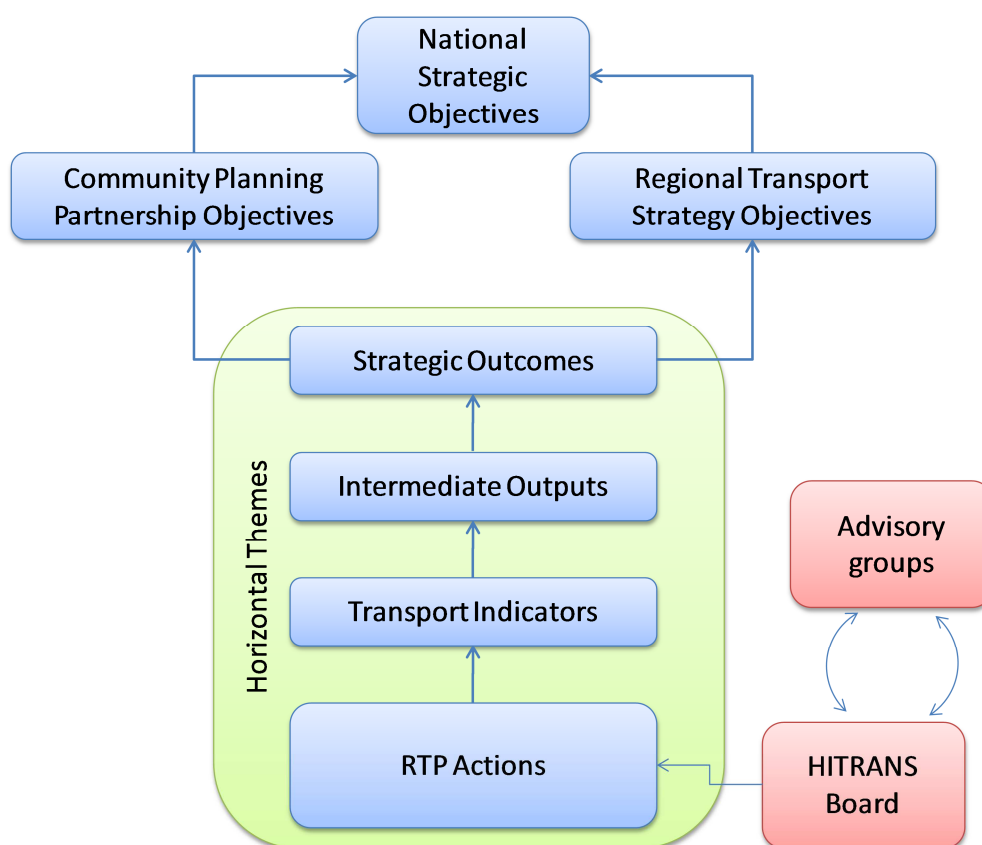


## Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation

HITRANS developed a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Regional Transport Strategy.

The key aims of the monitoring and evaluation framework are:

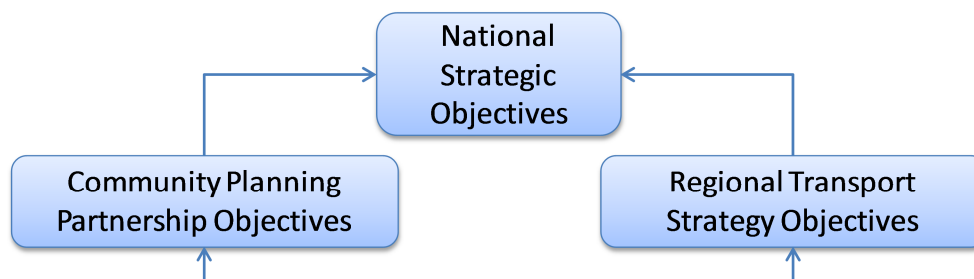
- To determine the extent to which RTS objectives have been met, and if not met, why.
- To provide evidence on overall performance and to assess to net additional value obtained from RTS actions.
- To diagnose where under or over performance has taken place and to identify and assess the causes.
- To provide a link between transport planning and wider community planning across the HITRANS area and to demonstrate the contribution of transport to the Community Planning Partnerships' own agendas.



The RTS monitoring and evaluation framework follows a logical structure from actions on the ground right up to how the RTS contributes to the Scottish Government's National Strategic Objectives.

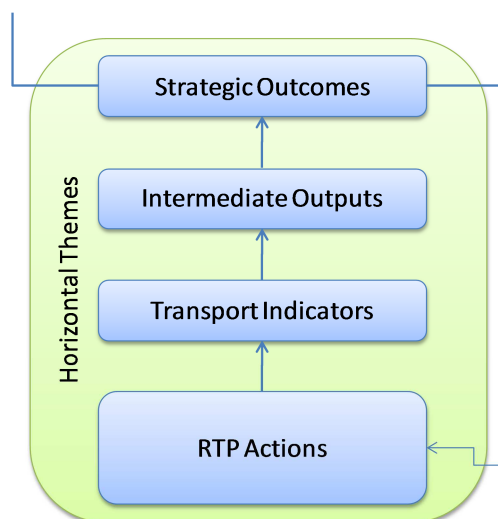
The Single Outcome agreements produced by the Community Planning Partnerships in the HITRANS region are also aimed at higher level government objectives – either the National Strategic Objectives or the National Outcomes.

This gives both the RTS and the Single Outcome Agreements a set of shared objectives that will allow HITRANS to engage more meaningfully with the CPPs, to make the case for the wider benefits of transport interventions.



For each of the five objectives in the RTS, a chain of indicators has been developed, linking implemented measures to the objectives. The chain of linkages varies slightly between objectives but on the whole, it is as follows:

- A set of high level **Strategic Outcomes** for the region as a whole, which result from the intermediate output, and which will indicate whether objectives are being achieved.
- A set of **Intermediate Outputs** which would be achieved as a result of the transport intervention.
- A set of **Transport Indicators** to determine the direct impacts of transport interventions.



Horizontal themes are the set of issues identified in the RTS through consultation with stakeholders that, in many cases, cut across the objectives and outcomes in the monitoring and evaluation framework.

HITRANS' monitoring activity also takes into account the impact on these themes by linking them with specific actions and indicators (see next page).

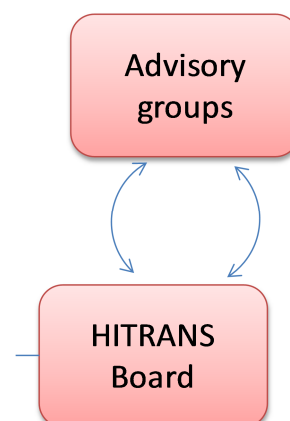
The Horizontal Themes are:

- Active travel
- Aviation
- Community and health transport
- Congestion and urban issues
- Freight transport
- Locally significant network and road maintenance
- Mainstream passenger transport
- Ports, ferries and waterways
- Costs of transport and travel
- Environmental impacts
- Strategic network
- Regional network

All RTS actions are ultimately passed by the HITRANS board. The decision making process is informed by the various advisory bodies that report to the board.

The relationship between the board and the advisory bodies is two way.

In its simplest form, the role of the advisory bodies is to present papers to the board analysing issues and recommend actions. The board will consider the paper and ultimately add actions to the programme. Advisory bodies then provide feedback on implemented actions.



## Monitoring Framework by Objective

The following diagrams show the linkages from transport indicators to objectives.

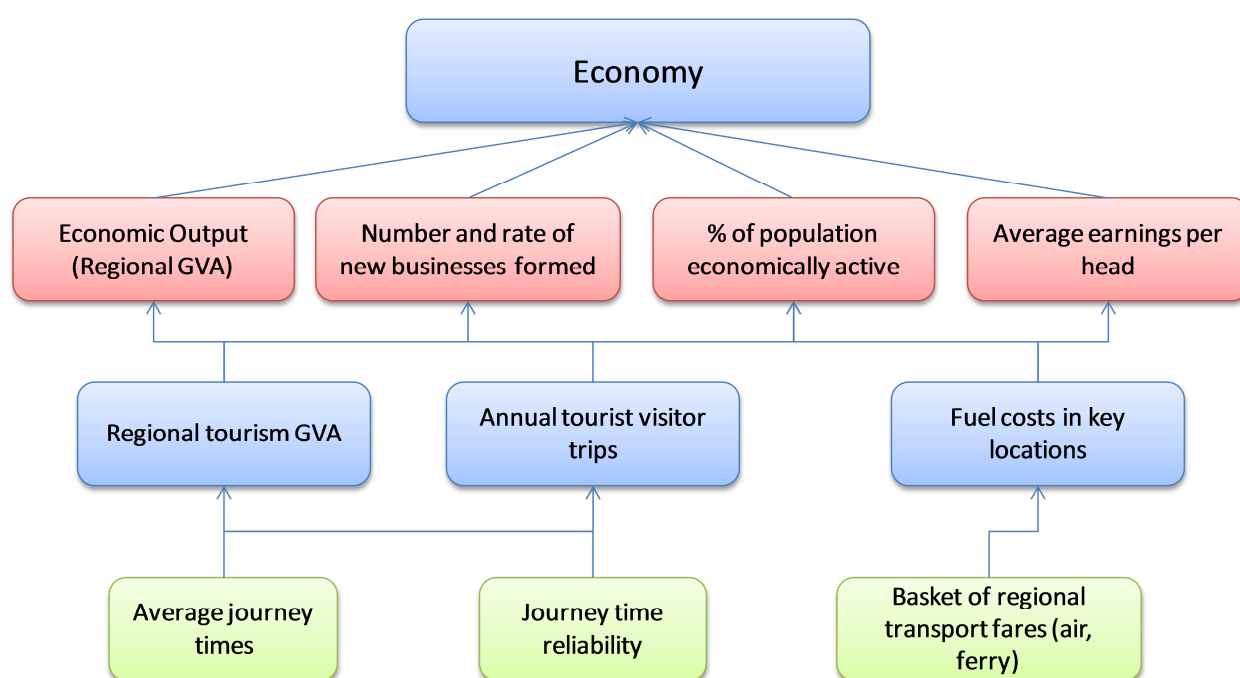
In most cases there is a full set of outcomes, outputs and indicators. In some cases, such as the Safety objective, the linkages are more straightforward and therefore do not require three levels of monitoring to draw linkages between actions and objectives.

In most cases, there is an expected relationship between different levels of the framework

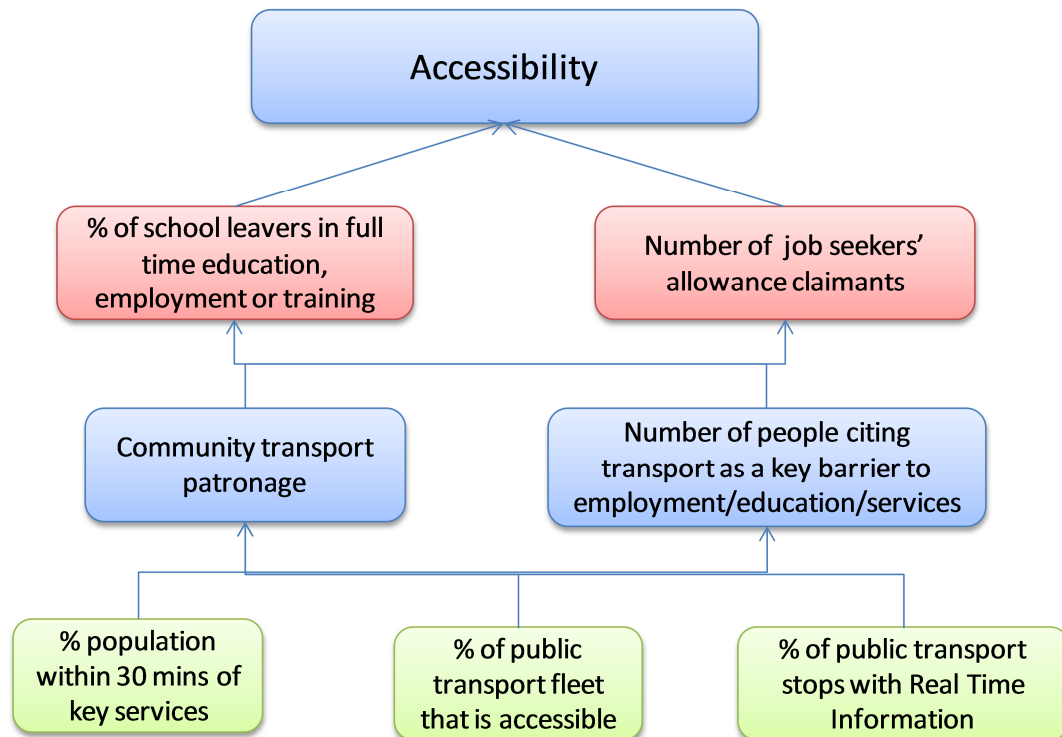
In an ideal world, for example, increasing the % of population within 30 minutes of key services by public transport (Transport Indicator) should show a positive relationship with the % of people citing transport as a key barrier to accessing key services (Intermediate Output) and impact positively on the number of people in education and training and in employment.

In reality these relationships are not so clear cut. External factors will impact on these indicators, but this framework allows us highlight these anomalies and understand what the wider picture is with regards to transport

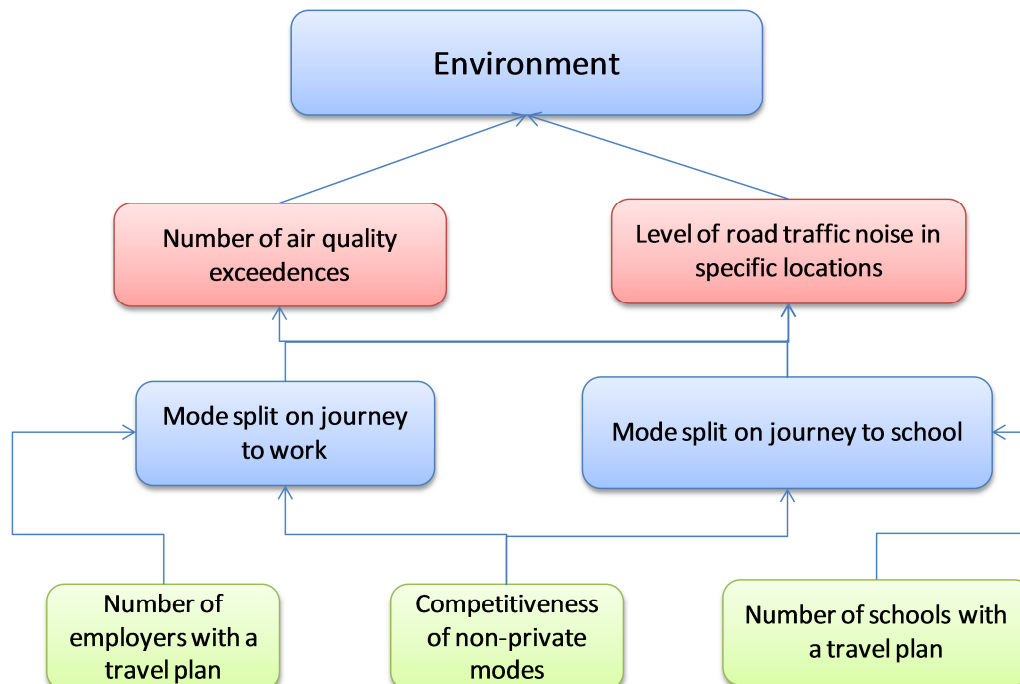
### Linkages Economy Objective



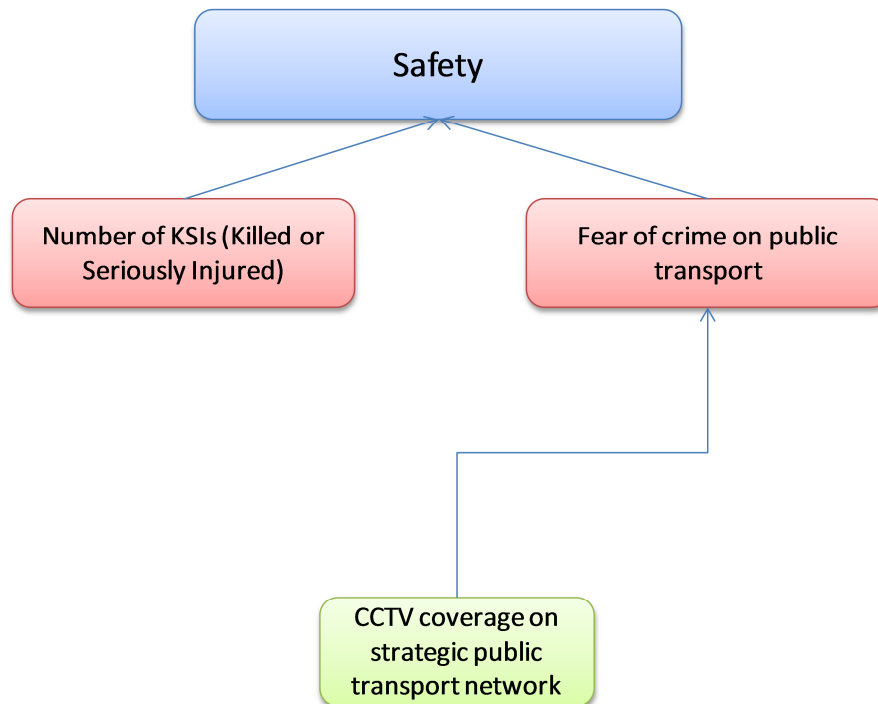
## Linkages – Accessibility



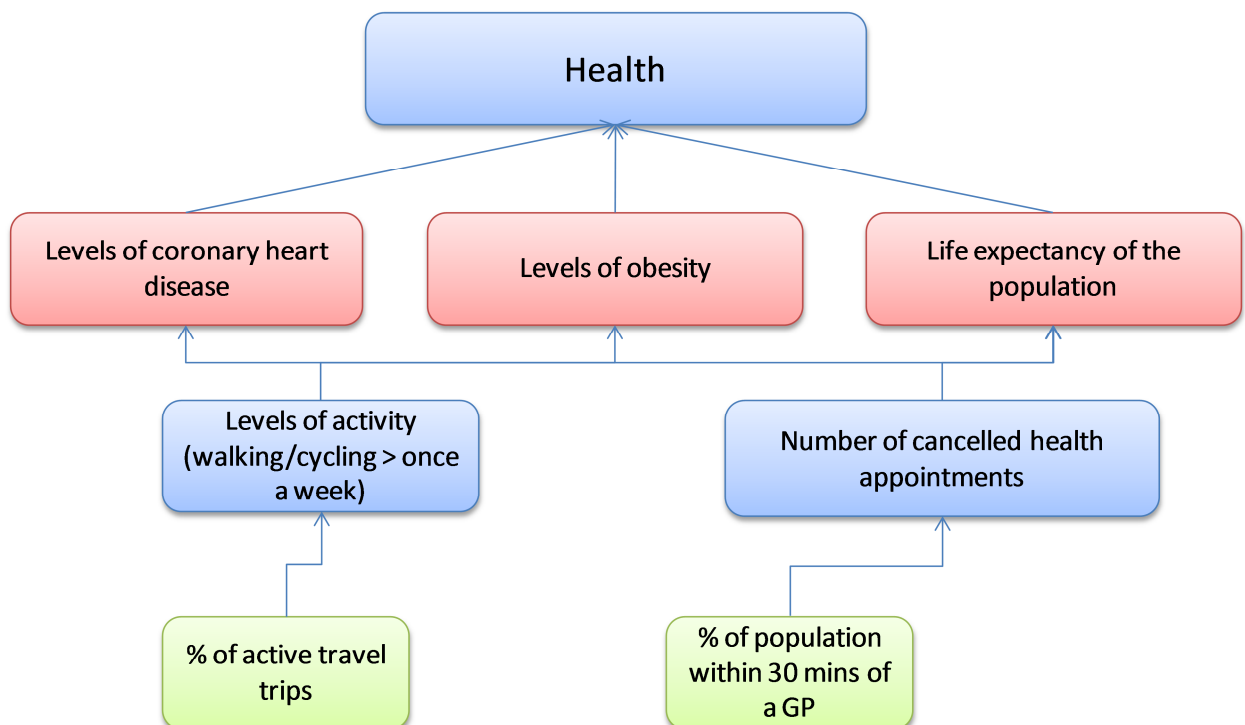
## Linkages – Environment



## Linkages – Safety



## Linkages – Health





*Eyland Skyn* was commissioned by HITRANS to update the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Monitoring Spreadsheet for the 2014/15 monitoring period, to include the most up-to-date available data.

This annual report is also tasked with commenting on any trends in data, regionally and by local authority area, and where data is available or unavailable to comment on any relevant issues that might be useful for HITRANS to consider.

This report is structured as follows:

- Overview of emerging trends, highlighting key trends for the region and / or by local authority area.
- A comparison of the 2014/15 trends to the prior years' assessment.
- Commentary on data availability and any other pertinent aspects, including the availability of new data sources; and reflecting on the pending refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy.

## EMERGING TRENDS

As has been the case in prior years' monitoring reports, the emerging trends are presented in this section by way of setting out the monitoring framework and commenting on the headline position of each linkage in the framework.

Five tables follow for each of the **economy, environment, safety, accessibility** and **health** Regional Transport Strategy objectives. In each case, the objective and linkages have been assessed with a 'traffic light' score to depict overall performance, on a scale of:

Green: progress, generally significant, made towards objective or outcome
Amber: some progress made towards objective, but generally a mixed picture of progress across the region
Red: negative results across the monitoring period
Blue: data not available across the time period under review

For each indicator with available and up-to-date information, commentary is provided as to the movement over the last year and compared to earlier in the Regional Transport Strategy period as appropriate, from the base year of 2006.

### Economy Objective

<b>Linkages – Economy Objective</b> The regional economy displays mixed performance from the start of the RTS to date. There are improvements in terms of economic output and the number of new businesses formed in the most recent data, while there is a mixed picture in terms of the percentage of people who are economically active and the average earnings per head of the population. Accommodation GVA is up and fuel costs are down, while there is a mixed picture in terms of journey times and journey time reliability.			
Economic Output	Number of new businesses formed	% economically active	Average earnings per head
Regional GVA showed growth in 2007 and 2008, and after a slight decline in 2009, followed by	Data for 2013 has been added to the ONS Business Demography report. There has been	Over the time period of the RTS several years of decline in economic activity rates were observed; more recent	Argyll and Bute has seen a growth trend over the period and is showing at an all-time high in 20014, 14%

## Linkages – Economy Objective

The regional economy displays mixed performance from the start of the RTS to date. There are improvements in terms of economic output and the number of new businesses formed in the most recent data, while there is a mixed picture in terms of the percentage of people who are economically active and the average earnings per head of the population. Accommodation GVA is up and fuel costs are down, while there is a mixed picture in terms of journey times and journey time reliability.

subsequent growth in 2010 and 2011 there was a further decline seen in 2012. The most up-to-date data for 2013 shows a further increase bringing regional GVA to its highest level over the reporting period. There has been overall growth over the period, and an increase of 18.5% since the RTS baseline in 2006.	significant variation since 2006, with a peak of 450 business 'births' less business 'deaths' for the region in 2007 and a trough of -55 net ('births' less 'deaths'). 2013 has proven to be another positive year for this indicator with a net of 445 businesses across the region, and the best performing years over the RTS period for Eilean Siar and Orkney, with 30 and 45 net new businesses respectively.	data, up to and including for 2015 is showing continued growth however in this indicator. There is still some fluctuation in Highland data, and some decline in Moray, the latter which saw however a very slight improvement in 2015.	higher than the 2008 base. Highland also shows a generally increasing average earnings per head, also with an all-time high in 2014, 6% above the 2008 base. Moray started from the lowest base in 2008, around 15% lower than Highland, which had the highest average salary. Moray has grown over the period, and in 2014 sits in the middle if the five local authority areas, and has shown growth over the period of 17%. The isle authorities, Eilean Siar and Orkney, have both seen a decline in average earnings over the period, down 2% and 3% respectively.
Accommodation GVA		Fuel costs in key locations	
Accommodation GVA has demonstrated an upwards trend in the period 2008-2013 across all areas. Accommodation GVA was up across the HITRANS region in all areas in 2013 compared to 2012 by between 20% (Orkney) and 37% (Argyll & Bute). Comparing 2013 to the base of 2008, growth rates vary from 57% (Highland) to 98% (Moray).		In 2015 fuel prices are down consistently across the region compared to prices in 2014; the range is between 12 and 16%. Prices at the pump are now lower than the 2008 base, which was the previous lowest price across the monitoring period. Prices are at most 4% lower in 2015 compared to 2008, and at worst are on a par in 2015 compared to 2008 as is the case in only Fort William.	
Average journey times	Journey time reliability		Basket of regional transport fares
Car journey times across the 11 routes examined are on average 1% slower in 2015 compared to 2014, which masks some variation across the routes, with 6 routes being slower and 5	Now recorded for two years using the new source of Googlemaps (due to the cessation of transportinfo.org) - on the surface journey time reliability seems to be much		Not collected. That said much of the bus network is tendered with fares governed by the respective local authority. And, in 2015, ScotRail peak fares rose 2.5%, while off

#### Linkages – Economy Objective

The regional economy displays mixed performance from the start of the RTS to date. There are improvements in terms of economic output and the number of new businesses formed in the most recent data, while there is a mixed picture in terms of the percentage of people who are economically active and the average earnings per head of the population. Accommodation GVA is up and fuel costs are down, while there is a mixed picture in terms of journey times and journey time reliability.

routes being quicker than the previous year; notably Fort William – Inverness and Oban - Tyndrum are showing as taking an additional 5 minutes, Inverness – Thurso an additional 11 minutes and Inverness – Wick an additional 6 minutes. Elgin – Aberdeen and the journey through Inverness are both showing as being marginally quicker in 2015 compared to 2014.

Over the whole monitoring period from the 2008 baseline to 2015, 3 (out of the then 10) routes are quicker, notably Inverness to Perth, for which the improvement has in fact been specifically between 2014 and 2015, rather than earlier years, and Elgin and Perth (via the A95), and again a route that has seen improvement predominantly in the last year. Over the 2008-2015 period, the greatest slowing down is on the route between Fort William and Inverness and the route between Oban and Tyndrum, which are both in 2015 16% slower than in 2008.

improved with very little difference in recorded times between the am peak and the inter-peak periods.

For a number of routes googlemap now provides a range of journey times for each time period considered, and this has also been studied as a further measure of journey time reliability. This data have shown ranges from 4 minutes on the journey through Inverness to 40 minutes on the journey between Fort William and Glasgow. A number of the medium-length routes between key centres showed ranges of 20 minutes in journey times – Inverness-Perth, Elgin-Aberdeen and Elgin-Perth.

peak journeys did not increase.

#### Environment Objective

##### Linkages – Environment Objective

The regional environment has experienced decline through a reduction in public transport usage on the journey to work and school, and an accompanying increase in private car usage right across the region. There is also evidence of a worsening position in terms of the competitiveness of public transport compared to private car.

##### Number of air quality exceedances

There is one site in Highland – Inverness – with a declared active Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

##### Level of road traffic noise in specific locations

Not collected.

##### Mode split on journey to work

##### Mode split of journey to school

### Linkages – Environment Objective

The regional environment has experienced decline through a reduction in public transport usage on the journey to work and school, and an accompanying increase in private car usage right across the region. There is also evidence of a worsening position in terms of the competitiveness of public transport compared to private car.

The data for 2014 shows that there has been a further increase in the car mode share on the journey to work for the HITRANS region; showing 70%, compared to 66.7% for 2013, and compared to a low of 62.1% in 2012. This is accompanied by however an increase in the use of public transport for the journey to work, which is up to 6.9%, but then of course a decline in active travel modes, which are down to 19.8% combined – the lowest level over the monitoring period of the RTS.

Some Local Authority-based data is available for the most recent year, which shows that the growth in car use over the last two years for the region is predicated on significant growth in the Moray area (which has seen year-on-year growth between 2012 and 2014 of the car mode share of 15% and then 16%) and to a lesser extent in Argyll & Bute (9% growth between 2013 and 2014). All other areas have seen a reduction in the car mode share on the journey to work between 2013 and 2014.

Public transport usage has fallen by nearly 2.5 percentage points in Orkney between 2014 and 2012, while nearly 4 percentage points in Moray over the same period, while other areas have seen a significant increase. Use of active travel modes for the journey to work is down 9.6 percentage points in Moray and 2.5 percentage points in Highland; while it is up in other areas, and by as much as 4.8 percentage points in Orkney and 2.6 percentage points in Eilean Siar.

Use of car for the means of access to school across the region is up significantly in the 2014 data, which shows the car dominating with 27.8% of journeys, and compared to the 2008 base of 19.6%. Bus use has held with 27.9% share compared to 27.6% in 2008, although this is down from a high of 33.3% in 2012. Finally, it is the active travel modes that seem to have fallen by the way side in accompanying the increase in car use; as the share in 2014 is 44.3% compared to 52.8% in 2008.

Some local authority data is available only for Highland, which allows a comparison between 2014 and 2013, and which shows an increase in car share for Highland from 20.1% to 31.2%, accompanied by a decline in bus from 25.7% to 22.8% and also a significant decline in active travel from 50.2% to 44.6%.

Number of employers with a travel plan

Competitiveness of non-private modes

Number of schools with a travel plan

Not collected.

Generally public transport is observed to be less competitive than the private car across the region, with the exception of some of the routes that have a rail line – notably Inverness-Perth and Inverness-Elgin, when rail is 14% and 30% quicker than journeys by car. For Elgin to Aberdeen average public transport and car times are about the same.  
On the other 9 (out of 12)

Not collected.

**Linkages – Environment Objective**

The regional environment has experienced decline through a reduction in public transport usage on the journey to work and school, and an accompanying increase in private car usage right across the region. There is also evidence of a worsening position in terms of the competitiveness of public transport compared to private car.

	<p>routes public transport is slower than car, with the largest differences seen for Inverness-Thurso (50%), Inverness-Wick (43%) and Portree-Glasgow (38%). The competitiveness on these three worst-performing routes has also got worse in all cases in 2015 compared to the same analysis undertaken in 2014.</p>	
--	---	--

**Safety Objective****Linkages – Safety Objective**

There is evidence of some recovery in this area with a 10% reduction between 2012 and 2013 in the number of KSI casualties on the region's roads. Although it is also highlighted that there has been an increase in KSIs in the Moray area particularly.

Number of KSIs	Fear of crime on public transport
<p>In all areas, with the exception of Eilean Siar, there has been a decrease in the number of Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) Road Casualties when looking at the 2014 data compared to 2013. For Eilean Siar there was an increase from 2 in 2013 to 6 in 2014. Overall, the HITRANS area saw a decrease to 182 KSIs in 2014 compared to 213 in 2013, representing a near 15% reduction; the 182 for the year is also the lowest level since the RTS monitoring began, with the baseline in 2007 of 430; hence representing a near 60% reduction from that peak.</p>	<p>Those reporting that they feel safe when travelling on public transport in the evenings remained around the same for the HITRANS region when considering 2014 compared to 2012 – 71%. As reported in previous years this has been as poor a worrying low of 66.3% in 2010. That said, the baseline in 2007 saw the rate at 89%, which then began falling in 2009 at 82%; and so over the period of the RTS there has been significant fluctuation, but overall those reporting that they feel safe has fallen by around 18 percentage points and at the present time almost one-third of respondents report that they do not feel safe in the evenings on the bus. The decline is across all areas, but has been most pronounced in Highland, Moray and Orkney.</p>
	<p>CCTV coverage on strategic public transport network</p>
	Not collected

## Accessibility Objective

<b>Linkages – Accessibility Objective</b> There are some gaps in the availability of data for the accessibility objective again this year, notably from delays in updates to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation reporting regime. New data is expected for these measures now in 2016. That said, the headline indicators of % of school leavers in positive destinations and the number of job seekers' allowance claimants suggests a positive position in the region, while the number of people citing public transport as a key barrier decreased, albeit Moray stands out as not performing so well in terms of this indicator.		
<b>% school leavers in full time education, employment or training</b>		<b>Number of job seekers' allowance claimants</b>
The rate of school leavers having a positive destination has increased for the HITRANS region in each of 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14. Each local authority area, with the exception of Argyll & Bute (which has stayed largely the same), is also showing increases in the rate of positive outcomes in 2013/14 by between one and nine percentage points, with a HITRANS region-wide increase of 1.4 percentage points. Overall in 2013/14 93.9% of Highlands and Islands school leavers went on to a positive destination. Interestingly, a lot of the growth in recent years is attributable to further and higher education, while training is down 27 percentage points and employment is down 4 percentage points.		To 2015 there has been a further decline in the number of job seekers' allowance claimants; with the number in the HITRANS region down to 1.3 (3,827 people) compared to 1.9 in 2014; this is also at an all-time low over the monitoring period from 2.2 at the start of the monitoring period in 2006, via a peak of 2.9 (around 8,000 people) in 2011 and 2012. Rates have decreased across all local authority areas.
<b>Community transport patronage</b>		<b>Number of people citing transport as a key barrier</b>
Not collected.		The 2014 data shows that the percentage of people citing public transport in their area fairly or very inconvenient has decreased for the HITRANS area compared to 2012 – falling to 14% from 16.5%; and this has come down from a peak of 23.4% in 2006. All areas, with the exception of Moray, have contributed to this position; Moray has seen a return to 13% stating public transport is fairly or very inconvenient, which is the same as in 2008, while results had been as low as 9.8% in 2010.
<b>% population within 30 mins of key services</b>	<b>% public transport fleet that is accessible</b>	<b>% public transport stops with Real Time Information</b>
Data now next expected in 2016.	Not collected.	Not collected.

## Health Objective

<b>Linkages – Health Objective</b> Regional health demonstrate a generally poor and deteriorating picture. There is some evidence of improvement with life expectancy up across the area; while there is a worrying picture in terms of levels of obesity amongst the P1 school population. Levels of activity are down both in terms of functional and leisure walking.		
Coronary heart disease – hospital admissions rate/100,000	Levels of obesity	Life expectancy
No further data available.	Levels of obesity amongst P1 pupils are highest in Orkney (15.7%) – and indeed in Orkney the rate has risen from 13.3% in the prior year. The rates have also increased in Argyll & Bute (10.5% to 12.4%) and Highland (10.3% to 11.5%), whereas there has been a reduction for Eilean Siar (12.6% to 11.9%).	Life expectancy is up in all areas when comparing 2014 data to 2012 data, with the exception of Orkney, where life expectancy is down slightly, while Orkney does continue to hold the top spot across the region with the highest rate of life expectancy (78.7 years).
Levels of activity		Number of cancelled health appointments
In terms of use of walking as a means of transport there has been a decrease in the number of people across the HITRANS region stating that they have made such a trip in the previous seven days. The rate has fallen from a high of 61% in 2012 to 57% in 2014. Over the same period however the rate stating that they have walked for leisure / to keep fit has increased four percentage points from 56% to 60.1% Levels of functional walking are highest in Orkney (80.7%) and lowest in Eilean Siar (38.7%); and levels of leisure walking are relatively similar across the region, peaking in Orkney again (64.4%) and at their lowest in Eilean Siar (57.6%).		2015 data not available.
% of active travel trips		% of population within 30 mins of a GP
There was a decrease across the HITRANS region from 21.5% in 2013 to 19.8% in 2015, and which is significantly lower than the nearly quarter (24.4%) of respondents that reported that they travelled to work via active travel means in 2012. Across the local authority areas there has been particular improvement in Highland, which has seen an improvement to 23.3% in 2015 compared to 22.8% in 2013, although this is cancelled out somewhat for the region as a whole by reductions in other areas, including the greatest reduction in Moray which decreased from 18.6% in 2013 to 13.1% in 2015.		Data now next expected in 2016.

## Conclusions

As can be seen from the tables in this section, there are mixed results across the objectives, and evidence of a worsening position in some measures. In 2014/15 one out of the five headline objectives have scored a 'red' status, i.e. there are negative results across the monitoring period; two have achieved an 'amber' status, i.e. there is evidence of some or continued progress towards this objective, but perhaps with some mixed results across the region. And the environment and the accessibility objectives have scored 'green', i.e. there is evidence of significant progress. It is worth highlighting that the accessibility has scored 'green' for three consecutive years now, which should be celebrated, as well as the progress to 'green' this year for the economy objective. In terms of movement in the other three objective areas: safety has remained on 'amber' for two reporting periods, improving from a 'red' assessment in 2012/13. The environment has (arguably just) remained on 'amber', while disappointingly, the health objective has deteriorated to 'red' in 2014/15 from 'amber' the prior year. This objectives in fact having worsened from an earlier 'green' assessment in 2012/13.

In terms of the **economy** objective the 'green' assessment is based on indicators achieving either 'amber' or in the case of 'economic output' and 'number of new businesses formed' in the most recent data strong 'green' assessments. Notably, the regional GVA is at its highest level in the most up-to-date 2013 data than throughout the RTS monitoring period, with an 18.5% increase on the 2006 baseline. Similarly, despite significant variation over the monitoring period, 'number of new businesses formed' has had its best performing year in the most recent data, and notably with Eilean Siar and Orkney standing out with 30 and 45 net new businesses respectively in the year. Accommodation GVA has also continued to increase over the entire reporting period (2008-2013), with growth as high as 57% in Highland and 98% in Moray. All areas have seen growth in this indicator. The second intermediate output, 'fuel costs in key locations', is also in 2015 showing the lowest prices per litre over the period in all locations, with the exception of Fort William where the 2015 price was on a par with that in 2008, although it has been higher in the intermediate years. In terms of the **environment** objective the 'amber' indication is as a result of poor performance in the intermediate outputs, namely the mode split on the journey to school and to a lesser extent the journey to work, as well as a worsening of the transport indicator: 'competitiveness of non-private modes'. On the journey to work for the HITRANS area as a whole, active travel modes are at their lowest in 2014 at 19.8% (from a high of 24.4% in 2012), accompanied by an increase in car as the means of travel to work at 70.0% (compared to a low of 62.1% in 2012), although encouragingly public transport use is up to 6.9% (compared to just 5.7% the prior year) although this is set against an earlier high of 10.0% in 2007. There is a similar picture for the journey to school, with a large jump in the car mode share for the HITRANS area – in 2014 27.8% compared to a previous low of 18.5% in 2012, while public transport usage and active travel modes are both consistently down. In terms of the **safety** objective this has remained scored at 'amber' on the basis of a notable further reduction in terms of the 'number of KSIs' on the region's roads unfortunately counteracted in terms of the assessment by a decline in 'fear of crime on public transport'. In terms of KSIs on the region's roads there has been a 15% decrease in 2014 compared to the number in 2013, and at 182 KSIs in 2014, this is the lowest recorded throughout the period of the RTS. In terms of those reporting that they feel safe when travelling on public transport in the evenings in the region almost one third report that they do not feel safe, which compared to only 11% back in 2007. Next, looking at the **accessibility** objective this has been assessed as 'green'. This is notably due to improvements in the number of 'school leavers in positive destinations' and a reduction also in the 'number of job seekers' allowance claimants'. Also, encouragingly in the most recent data for the HITRANS area as a whole, only 14% state that public transport in their area is fairly or very inconvenient, which is down from a peak of 23.4% in 2006. There is however a mixed picture with this indicator across the region, for example Moray has seen an increase from just 9.8% in 2010 to 13% in the most recent data.



Finally, considering the **health** objective, this disappointingly is showing as 'red' in 2015, with increasing levels of obesity in P1 children and reduced levels of activity, notably walking for functional travel purposes. One glimmer of hope is that life expectancy continues to be up in all areas compared to the prior year data, with the exception of Orkney where there is a slight fall, albeit set against the context that Orkney has the highest life expectancy across the region. Overall then there are some interesting data profiles emerging for the HITRANS area from the most recent monitoring exercise. From the data the economy appears to be performing well, and the entrepreneurial spirit is blossoming across the region with a high level of businesses created. The cost of fuel is down across the region, perhaps due to the combination of fuel rebate and the global price of fuel. Likely related to the above, car use for the region is up, both on the journey to work and the journey to school, which results in a decline in sometimes public transport usage and always active travel use. The data on levels of activity indeed show a decline in walking for both travel and leisure purposes. At the same time, there is an increase in the number of people that stated that they don't feel safe on public transport; however accompanied by a reduction in the number stating that public transport in their area is inconvenient. All that said, public transport usage and walking are down, and we also see from the data a continuing increase in the levels of obesity amongst P1 pupils, which are as high as 15.7% in Orkney.

#### COMPARING 2014/15 to 2013/14, 2012/13 and 2011/12

This section presents the traffic light-based assessment for 2014/15 compared to 2013/14, 2012/13 and 2011/12 in order to demonstrate movement in relation to each of the Regional Transport Strategy objectives compared to the preceding years.

#### Economy Objective

Linkages – Economy Objective 2014/15				
Linkages – Economy Objective 2013/14				
Linkages – Economy Objective 2012/13				
Linkages – Economy Objective 2011/12				
2014/15	Economic Output	Number of new businesses formed	% economically active	Average earnings per head
2013/14	Economic Output	Number of new businesses formed	% economically active	Average earnings per head
2012/13	Economic Output	Number of new businesses formed	% economically active	Average earnings per head
2011/12	Economic Output	Number of new businesses formed	% economically active	Average earnings per head
2014/15	Accommodation GVA		Fuel costs in key locations	
2013/14	Accommodation GVA		Fuel costs in key locations	
2012/13	Accommodation GVA	Annual tourist visitor trips	Fuel costs in key locations	
2011/12	Regional Tourism GVA	Annual tourist visitor trips	Fuel costs in key locations	
2014/15	Average journey times	Journey time reliability	Basket of regional transport fares	

Linkages – Economy Objective 2014/15			
Linkages – Economy Objective 2013/14			
Linkages – Economy Objective 2012/13			
Linkages – Economy Objective 2011/12			
2013/14	Average journey times	Journey time reliability	Basket of regional transport fares
2012/13	Average journey times	Journey time reliability	Basket of regional transport fares
2011/12	Average journey times	Journey time reliability	Basket of regional transport fares

#### Environment Objective

Linkages – Environment Objective 2014/15			
Linkages – Environment Objective 2013/14			
Linkages – Environment Objective 2012/13			
Linkages – Environment Objective 2011/12			
2014/15	Number of air quality exceedances	Level of road traffic noise in specific locations	
2013/14	Number of air quality exceedances	Level of road traffic noise in specific locations	
2012/13	Number of air quality exceedances	Level of road traffic noise in specific locations	
2011/12	Number of air quality exceedances	Level of road traffic noise in specific locations	
2014/15	Mode split on journey to work	Mode split on journey to school	
2013/14	Mode split on journey to work	Mode split on journey to school	
2012/13	Mode split on journey to work	Mode split of journey to school	
2011/12	Mode split on journey to work	Mode split of journey to school	
2014/15	Number of employers with a travel plan	Competitiveness of non-private modes	Number of schools with a travel plan
2013/14	Number of employers with a travel plan	Competitiveness of non-private modes	Number of schools with a travel plan
2012/13	Number of employers with a travel plan	Competitiveness of non-private modes	Number of schools with a travel plan
2011/12	Number of employers with a travel plan	Competitiveness of non-private modes	Number of schools with a travel plan

#### Safety Objective

Linkages – Safety Objective 2014/15		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2013/14		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2012/13		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2011/12		
2014/15	Number of KSIs	Fear of crime on public transport
2013/14	Number of KSIs	Fear of crime on public transport
2012/13	Number of KSIs	Fear of crime on public transport

Linkages – Safety Objective 2014/15		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2013/14		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2012/13		
Linkages – Safety Objective 2011/12		
2011/12	Number of KSIs	Fear of crime on public transport

#### Accessibility Objective

Linkages – Accessibility Objective 2014/15			
Linkages – Accessibility Objective 2013/14			
Linkages – Accessibility Objective 2012/13			
Linkages – Accessibility Objective 2011/12			
2014/15	% school leavers in full time education, employment or training	Number of job seekers' allowance claimants	
2013/14	% school leavers in full time education, employment or training	Number of job seekers' allowance claimants	
2012/13	% school leavers in full time education, employment or training	Number of job seekers' allowance claimants	
2011/12	% school leavers in full time education, employment or training	Number of job seekers' allowance claimants	
2014/15	Community transport patronage	Number of people citing transport as a key barrier	
2013/14	Community transport patronage	Number of people citing transport as a key barrier	
2012/13	Community transport patronage	Number of people citing transport as a key barrier	
2011/12	Community transport patronage	Number of people citing transport as a key barrier	
2014/15	% population within 30 mins of key services	% public transport fleet that is accessible	% public transport stops with Real Time Information
2013/14	% population within 30 mins of key services	% public transport fleet that is accessible	% public transport stops with Real Time Information
2012/13	% population within 30 mins of key services	% public transport fleet that is accessible	% public transport stops with Real Time Information
2011/12	% population within 30 mins of key services	% public transport fleet that is accessible	% public transport stops with Real Time Information

#### Health Objective

	Linkages – Health Objective – 2014/15		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2013/14		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2012/13		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2011/12		
2014/15	Coronary heart disease – hospital admissions rate/100,000	Levels of obesity	Life expectancy
2013/14	Coronary heart disease – hospital admissions rate/100,000	Levels of obesity	Life expectancy

	Linkages – Health Objective – 2014/15		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2013/14		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2012/13		
	Linkages – Health Objective – 2011/12		
2012/13	Coronary heart disease – hospital admissions rate/100,000	Levels of obesity	Life expectancy
2011/12	Levels of coronary heart disease	Levels of obesity	Life expectancy
2014/15	Levels of activity	Number of cancelled health appointments	
2013/14	Levels of activity	Number of cancelled health appointments	
2012/13	Levels of activity	Number of cancelled health appointments	
2011/12	Levels of activity	Number of cancelled health appointments	
2014/15	% of active travel trips	% of population within 30 mins of a GP	
2013/14	% of active travel trips	% of population within 30 mins of a GP	
2012/13	% of active travel trips	% of population within 30 mins of a GP	
2011/12	% of active travel trips	% of population within 30 mins of a GP	

## Conclusions

Comparing 2014/15 to 2013/14, 2012/13 and 2011/12, there has been some movement, and in an adverse direction in the most recent year. Considering the headline objectives of economy, environment, safety, accessibility and health, the table below depicts the changes from 2011/12 through to the present 2014/15:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Economy	Economy	Economy	Economy
Environment	Environment	Environment	Environment
Safety	Safety	Safety	Safety
Accessibility	Accessibility	Accessibility	Accessibility
Health	Health	Health	Health

Overall, in 2014/15 one 'red' is showing, for the **health** objective, and on a par with 2012/13, at that time for the safety objective, which had reflected an increase in KSIs on the region's roads and a mixed picture in terms of the fear of crime on public transport across the region. Encouragingly this year **safety** remains on 'amber' with further improvement, particularly a reduction in the number of KSIs on the region's roads. The **environment** also is assessed at 'amber'. The two 'green' scores this year for the **economy** and **accessibility** are to be celebrated; both the improvement to 'green' for the economy objective and the consistent performance in terms of accessibility over the last three reporting periods.

## COMMENTARY

### Introduction

This final section provides commentary on the use and usefulness of data for the 2014/15 monitoring and across the wider monitoring period of the RTS.

## Monitoring Commentary

Through the 2014/15 update to the Regional Transport Strategy Monitoring Spreadsheet it has been apparent that there is a good availability of new data which has been released during the course of the preceding year since the last update. This includes availability of:

- The annual Office for National Statistics (ONS) Business Demography.
- Updated ONS Annual Population Survey.
- Updated data from Information Services Division (ISD) of NHS National Services Scotland on obesity levels in P1 children.
- The only notable gaps exist in relation to:
- Availability of Did Not Attend (DNA) data from ISD, which has not as yet been released.
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, including in relation of accessibility deprivation.

Details on SIMD, including the 2016 release are available at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>, and there is a provisional release date of May 2016.

The data that has been available in 2015 have allowed a comprehensive assessment of the indicators within this update.

That said, there are still a small number of indicators which are not available at this time, or which have become obsolete, or for which no monitoring regime has commenced. These aspects will be particularly worth considering as part of the RTS refresh exercise.

## **Intermediate Outputs**

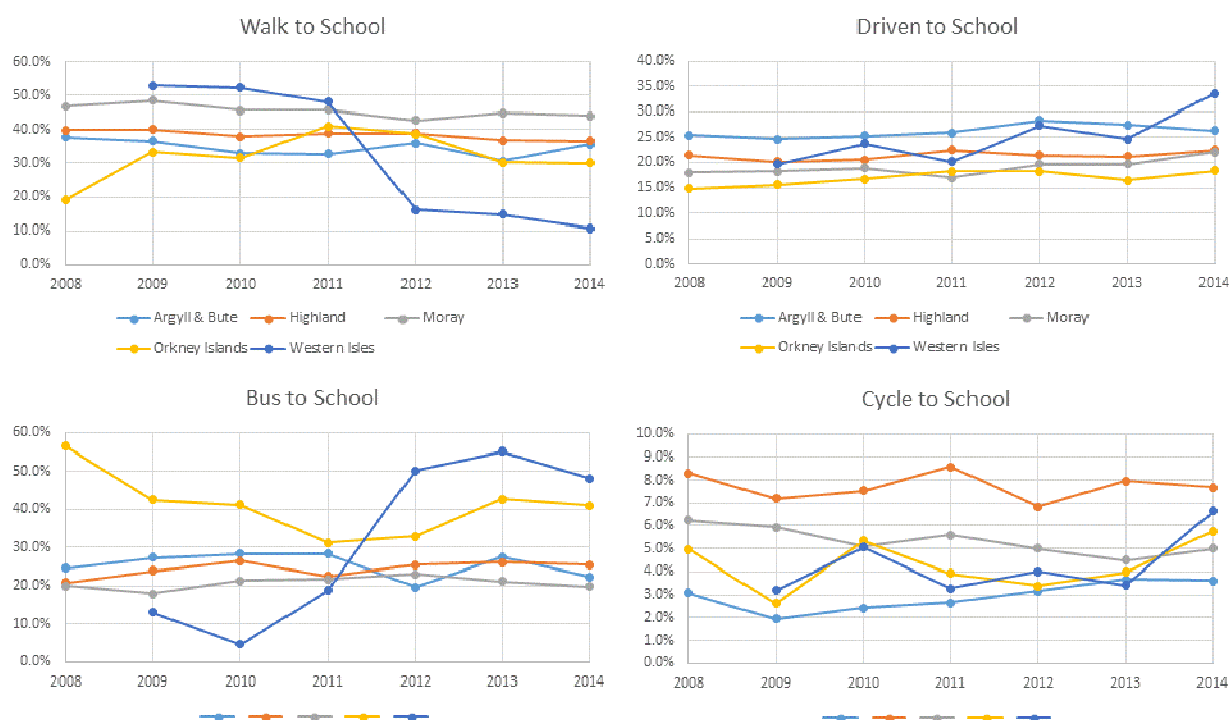
IO03 number of passengers using community transport services. There continues to be no routine or consistent collection of metrics on the usage, coverage or performance of community transport services in Scotland. This ought to be reviewed, and consideration given to as to whether HITRANS could play a role in the collation of some metrics in respect to community transport, perhaps with the third sector and local authorities.

## **Transport Indicators:**

TI01 Average car journey times, TI02 Journey time reliability, TI03 Average public transport journey times and TI04 Competitiveness of non-car/truck modes. As highlighted previously the Transport Direct website closed in September 2014. Transport Direct was launched in 2004 as the first journey planner covering England, Wales and Scotland. More recently transport operators have undertaken to make their timetable data freely available to web developers, and as a result a number of journey planning websites have emerged, offering a similar service to Transport Direct. As a result of widespread availability of other sources of travel information, Transport Direct was closed. Much of the RTS transport indicators relied upon Transport Direct, which has allowed a comparison year-to-year since 2009. Other journey planning tools invariably provide slightly different results, which presents a challenge to the continuous monitoring required here. However, it has been necessary to choose an alternative platform, and having considered the options, in 2014 'google maps' was concluded to be the most appropriate, and this for 2014 has been used to capture drive times (peak and off-peak) and public transport journey times. The benefit of 'google maps' for public transport is that it very clearly displays all options over the course of the day on a chart (as shown below). As a result of this change it is not possible to make direct comparisons between drive times with earlier years, although in 2015 AA data has also been captured in order to make comparisons to earlier years.

Also, googlemaps now presents the range of journey times for any particularly route, and so this provides the opportunity for a further measure of route reliability, which has been utilised in 2015. Since the commencement of the monitoring of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy, as reported in 2014, a new indicator is now being collected that may prove useful for HITRANS to track.

The Sustrans Annual Hands Up Survey collects a comprehensive sample in September each year, with the results published the following May. The data published in May 2015<sup>1</sup> is presented below for each HITRANS local authority area. This generally shows to be in agreement with the other indicators described in earlier sections, but also provides some further, and robust, detail across the local authority areas.



Given the apparent movement in mode share on the journeys to school and to work a further measure from the Scottish Household Survey might be useful for future consideration – of employed adults the percentage that reported that they *could use public transport* – in 2012 30.7% reported this to be the case in the HITRANS area, which had fallen to 24.0% in 2014. Around the region the highest level stating that they could use public transport was in Eilean Siar (36.7%), followed closely by Moray (35.4%) and Argyll & Bute (29.2%); while Highland sits lower (20.6%) and Orkney has the lowest rate (10.3%).

Furthermore, in respect to active travel the focus on Scottish Household Survey and review of the Hands Up Survey Data can hide more localised progress towards for example the 10% vision for everyday cycling by 2020 from the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland achieved through targeted and localised interventions. It is important to highlight very positive cycling figures being achieved in several of the HITRANS main settlements from Census 2011 data released in 2014 – notably the HITRANS area has six settlements in the top 10 settlements with the highest rates of cycling to work; with the top spot sitting with Findhorn at 12% of those in employment cycling to work the week prior to the Census. Census data is only available every 10 years, but provides a robust long term measure, and one that is able to be extrapolated down to local areas; as well as allowing a comparison with areas around the rest of Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/what-we-do/schools-and-universities/hands-scotland>

### Future Considerations

It is worth noting that the HITRANS monitoring over the life of the RTS has focussed on variation year to year and in the case of some indicators considering variation on a (Local Authority) area by area basis. In the future it will be useful to consider performance in the HITRANS area set against the context of performance and trends in the rest of Scotland, which will assist in assessing whether progress (or otherwise) in the region is as a result of particular interventions or rather following wider and probably external trends and patterns. Such an approach would also allow benchmarking with other areas.

The monitoring to date has relied upon a subjective assessment using a traffic light scoring approach as was described in Section 0. Any such approach is subject to differing interpretations of how the assessment should be applied, and so future monitoring approaches should consider establishing a more demonstrable and quantifiable approach; perhaps considering specific targets and progress against those targets.

Reflecting on the nature of particular interventions, which might be at a local level, further consideration could be given to establishing tailored monitoring and evaluation frameworks on a project-by-project basis, which could sit within a wider RTS monitoring structure.