

Report to Partnership Meeting – 3rd April 2009

RESEARCH

Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth (Park and Ride)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

An introduction to the background to HITRANS commission of Halcrow to study Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth which focused on the feasibility of developing park and ride opportunities to relieve congestion on key arteries into Elgin and Inverness.

BACKGROUND

HITRANS commissioned Halcrow to consider the potential for Park and Ride to meet the transport needs of Elgin and Inverness. This included consideration of existing needs and congestion issues affecting key arteries into each city and the study also considered the demand potential in the context of future growth in and around both cities as well as current and future transport policy.

STUDY FINDINGS

The full report follows this covering paper as Appendix A and a detailed summary of the study findings and conclusions is included at the end of the main report. For Members benefit though the findings are condensed in summary below.

For both cities Halcrow looked at potential demand analysing trips from origin and destination survey data, identifying the number of trips that could potentially be attracted to Park & Ride, based on their journey pattern. Further consideration was given to the likelihood of transferring given traffic conditions and transport policy, particularly parking policy.

Based on existing traffic conditions and population Halcrow believe Park and Ride is unlikely to be successful in Elgin at the present time. Given future growth projections for Elgin with its hinterland the consultants believe in time Park and Ride could potentially become viable in the future but at the lower end of scale. Feasibility would critically depend on willingness to impose restraint measures in the city centre, particularly removing free long term parking, and secondly supported by bus priority at any critically congested locations on the P&R bus route. The study concluded that the conditions do not exist currently to pursue this option further but HITRANS and Moray Council should continue to monitor this in the future should these conditions change.

Halcrow considered the opportunity for Park and Ride sites to be introduced on the four key arteries into Inverness from North, South, East and West. The study found that Inverness has a high volume of trips on the potential Park and Ride corridors from the North and East.

The pattern of travel from the south and west into Inverness was not felt to show any substantial demand for Park & Ride services for commuters to the city. However both of these sites were

identified as a potential opportunity for the tourist market although this need is less acute than would be the case for high volumes of daily commuters.

Inverness has a high volume of trips on the potential P&R corridors from the North and East. This led Halcrow to conclude that there is a case for a Park & Ride site on the east of the city to provide for trips to the city centre; the demand from the north is smaller for city centre trips, but enough to make some service worthwhile especially if the facility could be provided through a low cost option.

SITE SELECTION AND INDICATIVE COSTS

HITRANS identified 6 corridors for potential P&R sites around Inverness. Two of these were ruled out at an early stage due to likely demand and location. At each location a number of sites were considered to determine the likely best option for each corridor. The initial desk study and site walkover enabled the study team to quickly identify the potential sites, and a study of the planning issue was undertaken to help determine the viability of the sites. Following consultation with Highland Council, Transport Scotland and HITRANS to further inform the identification process, the preferred options at each site were taken forward for outline design and costs prepared. A further site to the north was put forward by the client working group, this option is located by the service station at Tore. Thus two sites to the north, one to the east and one to the west had site layout and costs prepared.

The three sites at North Kessock (north) 402 spaces, Torvean (west) 241 spaces and Smithton (east) 401 spaces, have been assessed to potentially provide a good quality car park comprising:

- surfaced parking area and designated paved pedestrian routes;
- waiting area with heated/lit waiting room;
- moderate level of landscaping;
- street lighting and CCTV;
- 2.4m high fence and lockable entrance gate;
- adjacent space for future expansion of the site.

The site at Tore (north) 100 spaces, has been assessed on the basis of provision of a trial lower cost option and the design features reflect this:

- gravel type surfacing;
- some landscaping;
- fencing;
- no security or waiting facilities on site.

It is anticipated that users of any such trial site would be encouraged to use facilities at the local service station where there is a tea room / truck stop. The presence of this also gives informal security to the site.

The P&R routes have been looked at for the opportunity to improve bus journey times, by implementing bus priority measures at locations where congestion and delay occur at peak times in and around Inverness. Conditions on the routes have been considered and bus priority measures address congestion where possible, taking into account existing and potential road widths and junction layout. Outline indicative costs have been included with recommendations.

A summary of the size of car park proposed, and associated cost of provision is listed in the table below.

	Site construction cost	bus priority measures cost	initial demand potential
1B A9 North Kessock 402 spaces	£2,332,000	£1,263,000	74 vehicles per day
1D A9 Tore 100 spaces	£222,845	£1,263,000	60 vehicles per day
3B A96 Smithton 401 spaces	£2,061,000	£949,300	212 vehicles per day
4B A82 Torvean 241 spaces	£1,374,000	£8,000	10 vehicles per day <i>commuter trips only; tourist trips unquantified</i>

THE WAY FORWARD

The Strategic Transport Project Review identifies the development of strategic Park and Ride for Inverness as nationally significant and worthy of progress within the timescale of the Review. The Government has indicated its wish that it should work in Partnership to deliver interventions where this is possible and adds value. Strategic Park and Ride provides the opportunity for co-operation of this type as to deliver effective schemes, commitments from Transport Scotland, the Council, the Bus Operator, and HITRANS will be necessary to realise the aims. Early working up of a scheme for the A96 Smithton site provides an excellent opportunity to deliver real improvements in a relatively short timescale and should be progressed as a matter of priority by all parties. This scheme links very closely with the work being progressed on the eastern leg of

the Trunk Link Road and Stagecoach's desire to relocate its operation to a more suitable site. An early meeting of all parties will be called by HITRANS to identify how best to take forward this scheme through the detailed planning and implementation phase.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Members are asked to note the final report which forms Appendix A of this covering paper.

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Date: 24th March 2009
Background Papers: Appendix A – HITRANS Inner Moray Firth Park and Ride Study