

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting of 30 November 2007

RESEARCH AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES PROGRAMME 2007/08

1. The research programme was reported to the Partnership meeting on 13 April 2007.
2. As indicated at that Meeting the Scottish Executive has provided grant in aid of £330,000 in 2007/8 for work towards implementing the Regional Transport Strategy. As a result a research programme was agreed incorporating a number of feasibility studies relating to the development of the Strategy which were previously undertaken under a separate budget heading.
3. The report provides an update of the work to date with a number of recommended changes incorporated to ensure optimum delivery of the Strategy.

STUDY	2007/08
<p>A9 Economic Appraisal</p> <p>A considerable body of evidence has been gathered to support the case for improvements to the A9. A missing piece of the evidence base is an economic impact analysis. Scott Wilson/dhc was commissioned to undertake a Strategic Impact assessment study in January 2007 which was completed in October 2007. Total cost to date is £73,000 shared equally by HITRANS and HIE. This study as reported separately to the Partnership has identified significant economic benefit from dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness. This project will be considered by Transport Scotland as part of the Strategic Transport Projects Review which is due for completion in August 2008. This review is based on STAG and there is merit in undertaking further economic assessment work from a Traffic Impact perspective (TEE) to support the already strong case for implementing this project. Scott Wilson have estimated the cost of this additional work as £45,000 (50% funded by HIE) based on it being an extension of the current commission. This work will be complete in the 2007/08 Financial Year</p>	<p>£16,500 to date, Additional £22,500 to complete TEE appraisal</p>
<p>Active Travel Audit</p> <p>The Regional Transport Strategy contains a proposal to undertake active travel infrastructure audits in the regional centres in order to identify a long term action programme. The short term delivery plan includes an active travel package bid of £3 million. Halcrow were commissioned to establish a methodology for the study which was completed in August. In order to test the methodology for auditing the 12 regional centres and</p>	<p>£15,000 (methodology) £22,000 (trial audit of Dingwall) Further</p>

<p>Inverness the consultant has been instructed to trial the implementation in Dingwall. This work will be completed in November and tenders then invited to undertake the audits later in this financial year and through 2008/09 subject to confirmation of ongoing budget availability.</p>	<p>commitment will be required in 08/09 to complete the audits</p>
<p>Road Based Public Transport A baseline study on Bus Transport and Community and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) was included in the Report to the Partnership in April. Since this time the Scottish Executive have indicated their intention to pass management of the enhanced DRT grant scheme to the RTPs, including significant elements to support bus and community transport. The RTS short term delivery plan has a bid of £15 million for non rail passenger transport improvements. In order to deliver maximum effectiveness in the provision of road based public transport a single study has been commissioned which will provide baseline information about the current commercial and supported bus service network, the DRT systems in place and Community Transport schemes. The output from the study will provide an accessibility GIS based information system which will provide information to the Partnership and Councils on the level of current service and the opportunities for improvement. The study will be completed in December 2007 and will provide information which will support the DRT Steering Group's consideration of applications for funding from 2008/09.</p>	<p>£50,000</p>
<p>Ferry Strategy The RTS proposes to develop a long term strategy for ports ferries and waterways. The National Transport Strategy proposes to undertake a review of ferry services with a view to developing a long term strategy for lifeline services to 2025. The Chairs of the RTPs support the establishment of a close working relationship between the Partnerships and the Executive in taking forward this work. The Executive will take the lead on this and we may not need to commit funds during this year's programme. The Minister has written to the Chair supportive of holding a ferries summit, and it is anticipated that this, when held, will identify how best to implement a research programme aimed at supporting an overall review of ferry services.</p>	
<p>A96 Demand Management The RTS identifies demand management at Elgin, Nairn and Keith in the short term delivery plan. This involves soft measures to tackle congestion by travel planning in schools and workplaces, flexible working, car sharing, and improving the public transport and active travel offer. The delivery plan has a bid for £3 million of investment in these three communities between 2008 and 2011. This feasibility study will identify the priorities for this investment but the study will now be undertaken in 2008/09 to allow it to take on board the work currently being undertaken by Moray Council on parking in Elgin and the output from the Bus Park and Ride study now being undertaken. As preliminary work for this study active travel audits will be undertaken this year in Nairn and Keith using the methodology agreed for Active Travel Audits. This work will be commissioned through Partnership working with the Highland and Moray Councils.</p>	<p>£40,000</p>
<p>Locally Significant Roads The RTS proposes a programme of enhancements for the network of</p>	<p>£50,000</p>

<p>local roads identified on the strategy map which will lead to more reliable and better quality travel between communities and their local centres, and a more sustainable programme of maintenance in the long run. The delivery plan has a £25 million bid for this work including ERDF funding. It is important that the three year work programme is agreed by this autumn and that early design and preparation work is undertaken. The first task is to have a sub strategy for this investment which identifies where it will be located and what the economic and social benefits will be to support ERDF grant. The appointed consultant is working closely with the permanent advisers in drawing up this investment strategy through a series of mini STAGs. The Study was completed in November and is reported separately to the Partnership at this meeting.</p>	
<p>Congestion and Urban Issues in the Inner Moray Firth Area One of the horizontal theme policies in the RTS concerns reducing congestion and easing the flow of traffic in urban areas. The short term delivery plan has £6 million for this activity in the Inner Moray Firth area to complement the A96 demand management. This is to assist with park and ride, bus priority, and travel change projects. To support actions by the Highland and Moray Councils in developing proposals to overcome congestion issues in Inverness and Elgin, HITRANS has taken the lead in initiating a study to assess potential sites for Park and Ride facilities in terms of their potential effectiveness and practicality.</p>	£30,000
<p>Inverness Aberdeen Transport Corridor Study The partnership has, with NESTRANS and Transport Scotland, supported the above study which established the constraints on this strategic link and the potential interventions that would improve connectivity along its length. A proportion of the cost was incurred in 2007/08.</p>	£6,000
<p>A96 Economic Appraisal of Bypass Options The Route Action Plan for the strategic corridor between Inverness and Aberdeen identified a number of potential interventions that would improve connectivity between the cities and communities along the route. HITRANS has previously supported economic appraisals to establish the economic benefit of transport investment on the A82, the A9, and strategic rail interventions. In this critical period during the Strategic Transport Projects Review robust information on the impact of bypasses of Nairn, Elgin and Keith will be of value. A brief has been issued for the study.</p>	£30,000
<p>Origin and Destination of Passengers and Freight on Strategic Sea Crossings This study was undertaken by Reference Economic Consultants in 2006/07, the final payment being made to the consultant in May 2007.</p>	£8,000
<p>Caledonian Canal Freight Study One of the recommendations of the Marine Bulk Freight Study was that a joint study should be undertaken with British Waterways Board to identify the potential for freight on the Caledonian Canal. The Partnership on 5 October approved taking this study forward jointly by HITRANS, HIE, and BWB.</p>	£5,000
<p>Economic Impact of Transport Investment The Strategy identified the North Highland and Orkney Connectivity as a</p>	£20,000

<p>focus for spending on the transport network in the short term (2008/9-2010/11). The Strategy also recognised the need through the Ports, Ferries and Waterways horizontal theme to understand origin and destination patterns for passengers and freight (H34a) and to enhance ferry services and develop fit for purpose timetables (H34c). This study was designed to generate information to inform the design of future transport connections in the Orkney internal network, to support the economic case for transport investment in the network, and to establish a methodology that could be employed in other similar island/remote communities in keeping with the STAG methodology. The study, which is being jointly funded by HIE, has been undertaken by Reference Economic Consultants, and a draft report has been submitted.</p>	
<p>Skye Airport Preliminary Study The Strategy identifies in its related action programme of strategic interventions that research and scheme preparation should be progressed in 2008/12 on promoting air services from Skye to the Central Belt (Map ID S11a). As a preliminary action in this regard feasibility work has been jointly commissioned by HITRANS and Highland Council on options for improving the airport at Broadford to facilitate discussions with the CAA.</p>	<p>£10,000</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>£325,000</p>

4. The Partnership is asked to agree the revised research programme as detailed above.

Report by: Dave Duthie
Designation: HITRANS Director
Date: 5 November 2007
Background papers: RTS