

Item:

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## Report to Partnership Meeting 21 April 2023

### PARTNERSHIP

#### Regional Transport Strategy Update

#### Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an update on the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy.

#### Introduction

HITRANS has a statutory duty under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to produce a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). Working with local authority partners, HITRANS is seeking to produce a new RTS for the development of transport in the region over the next circa 20 years with the aim of delivering a transport system that ***reduces inequalities, takes climate action, helps deliver inclusive economic growth, and improves the health and wellbeing of people in the region.***

Following a report to the Partnership meeting in November 2022 introducing the final draft Case for Change document ahead of public consultation. The consultation on the Case for Change and parallel Impact Assessments including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment Report (EqIA) and an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA) closes on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

#### Overview of Case for Change Report and Consultation

The development of the RTS involves three broad stages:

- **Stage 1: The Case for Change** - this stage sets out the transport problems in the HITRANS region and establishes a set of Strategy Objectives focused on addressing these problems.
- **Stage 2: Options Appraisal** - this stage involves developing and appraising a set of options which help to resolve the problems identified and deliver the Strategy Objectives.
- **Stage 3: RTS Document** - this stage collates the outputs from the above activities into an RTS document.

The RTS development process must broadly follow STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) and Stage one of the three-stage process is to establish a Case for Change, which identifies the transport problems encountered in such a large and rural area and establishes a set of Strategy Objectives to address these. These draft Strategy Objectives were approved at the Partnership Meeting in November 2023.

Stage 1 is now complete and HITRANS is seeking views and feedback on the Draft Case for Change Report prior to progressing to Stage 2.

The Case for Change Report and accompanying background documents are available online at: <https://hitrans-case-for-change-consultation-stantec.hub.arcgis.com/>

The full Case for Change can be viewed by clicking on the link below:

- [HITRANS RTS: Case for Change](#)

The preparation of the Case for Change has also been informed by a parallel impact assessment process incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities Impact Assessment Report (EqIA) and an Island Communities Impact Assessment (ICIA), each of which has identified environmental, equalities and island specific considerations which need to be addressed in the new RTS. These assessments can be found by following the links below:

- [HITRANS RTS - Case for Change: SEA](#)
- [HITRANS RTS - Case for Change: EqIA](#)
- [HITRANS RTS - Case for Change: ICIA](#)

Feedback on the Case for Change and parallel Impact Assessments is being invited through a public consultation which runs until 1700 on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Responses can be submitted via the survey [hitrans-case-for-change-consultation-stantec.hub.arcgis.com/pages/survey](https://hitrans-case-for-change-consultation-stantec.hub.arcgis.com/pages/survey) on the online portal. The information gathered through the survey will be used to inform the subsequent stages of the RTS development process.

The next stage will be an options generation, development and appraisal, which involves developing and appraising a set of options that could resolve the transport and associated problems identified and deliver the Strategy Objectives. The outputs from this process will then be developed into a draft final Regional Transport Strategy for consultation.

It is proposed to host a dedicated workshop session with Members and Advisors on in June 2023. Details of this session will be circulated in due course.

Milestone	Date
'Case for Change' consultation	Closes 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
Completion of Preliminary Options Appraisal	w/b 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Draft RTS and associated SEA, EqIA and ICIA	w/b 28 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
Finalise Draft RTS reporting package	w/b 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Draft RTS Statutory Consultation	w/b 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2023 for 12 working weeks
Final RTS	w/b 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Post-consultation SEA Technical Note and Equalities Note	w/b 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Submission of RTS to Scottish Ministers	w/b 12 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Post-adoption SEA Statement	w/b 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2024

RTS Delivery  
Impact - Positive

Comment – The work to refresh the Regional Transport Strategy seeks to update the Delivery Plan

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment – This work helps set new policies and objectives for HITRANS that are relevant to the framework within which the Partnership now sits.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Budget line and value – Funding for developing the Regional Transport Strategy Update has been identified in the HITRANS Business Plan 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Updating the Regional Transport Strategy offers an opportunity to address both transport and wider inequalities across the region

**Recommendation**

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report
2. Approve an online consultation on the draft Case for Change and associated impact assessment reports

**Report by:** Neil MacRae

**Designation:** Partnership Manager

**Date:** 21 April 2023