

Item:  
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## **Report to Partnership Meeting 26 April 2024**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Health and Transport Action Plan**

##### **Purpose of Report**

To introduce a proposal to establish a Health and Transport Action Plan for the HITRANS area.

##### **Background**

Opportunities and challenges relating to public health and access to healthcare in the region emerged as key themes in updating our Regional Transport Strategy. The Scottish Government is also in the process of developing a transport to health delivery plan to take forward a range of commitments to improve joined up working on transport to health.

In recent years HITRANS has undertaken work with NHS Highland to consider the transport and access implications of health and social care service redesigns in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross and also in Lochaber. This and other work by HITRANS and partner local authorities impacting local and regional transport links highlights the important role many of these services have in supporting staff, visitor and patient travel within the region.

The impact of changes to the PSO air link between Benbecula and Stornoway is one example of where the interplay between transport provision and access to healthcare is evident. A new contract has just been awarded to Hebridean Airways to provide a return service three days per week. The PSO provides essential connectivity on which patients and visitors from the Uists and Barra depend on to access the Western General in Stornoway, and NHS staff use to deliver clinics on these islands. Following recent meetings between the Chair of the CnES Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (also HITRANS Chair) and Ministers on this issue, the Cabinet Secretary, Neil Gray has written to highlight that the Scottish Government both recognises that more work needs to be done to bring transport planning and health service planning together and to welcome HITRANS proposal to take forward work on a Health Transport Action Plan.

The establishment of a new model for behaviour change that sees direct funding to RTPs with responsibility to resource and develop a programme of interventions in partnership with local stakeholders offers another opportunity for HITRANS to work with NHS boards and other delivery partners on the priority public health challenges within their respective areas. An initial step will be a workshop to facilitate a Health Impact Assessment of the draft RTS with input from both Public Health Scotland and senior public health representatives from each of the four health boards.

##### **Health and Transport Action Plan**

Our neighbouring Regional Transport Partnership and NHS Grampian have established a Health and Transport Access Plan <https://www.nestrans.org.uk/projects/health-and-transport/> for their

area. Appendix A provides a summary of their HTAP structure and priorities. The HTAP sets out long term strategic actions to improve integration between health and transport and we are keen to adopt a similar model for the Highlands and Islands.

HITRANS has initially invited the Chairs of the four NHS boards which operate in the HITRANS area (NHS Grampian, NHS Western Isles, NHS Orkney and NHS Highland and Argyll and Bute) to discuss the potential for a establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan for our area and how we can facilitate closer working across public bodies in relation to health and transport.

Reflecting the outcome of the meeting, HITRANS has subsequently written to the NHS Boards offering to firstly undertake a short scoping commission that will help define the key areas that the HTAP should cover (eg. access to health and social care, public health, staff travel etc), the priorities within these themes and potential benefits that may be realised. The work will also help to consider potential governance structures, resourcing of its implementation and the key stakeholders and representatives from each organisation that should be involved.

HITRANS will also continue to engage with the Scottish Government officials who the cabinet secretary has offered to meet regularly with the RTP Lead Offices group to continue engagement on this work and the Governments wider transport to health delivery plan.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to:

1. Note this report
2. Support the proposed approach for establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan in the HITRANS area as outlined in this report, including the commissioning of an initial scoping report to inform the key stakeholders required, a preferred governance structure and resourcing for the implementation of the Plan and its priority areas of work.

## **RISK REGISTER**

### RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan was one of the key actions in the draft Delivery Plan for the updated Regional Transport Strategy.

### Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports a number of National Transport Strategy priorities in particular *Improving our Health and Wellbeing* and policies within our updated Regional Transport Strategy including “facilitating access to public and personal services such as health, education, retail and banking. Access to healthcare facilities is particularly important in this respect given the pressure on, and challenges in, the delivery of patient transport” and Policy ST1i:

- **Policy ST1i:** The RTS supports the local delivery of public services, including health and education, and other day-to-day retail and personal services (e.g., banking) which minimise the need to travel.

### Financial

Impact –

Comment – up to £10,000 has been identified in the HITRANS Business Plan for 2024/25 to support the initial scoping work required to help establish a Health and Transport Action Plan for the HITRANS area.

### Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – By Establishing a Health and Transport Action Plan, we will help facilitate closer and more cohesive working across public bodies in relation to transport for medical purposes. Access to healthcare is most challenging in the remote, rural and island areas of the HITRANS region. This is exacerbated by the fact that the aging demographics within many of these areas have the highest demand for health and social care.

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