

Report to Partnership Meeting 13 November 2020

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Smarter Choices Smarter Places Projects Update

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on projects in which HITRANS are currently involved under the Smarter Choices Smarter Places Fund.

Background

The Smarter Choices, Smarter Places is a grant programme designed to support travel behaviour change,. The programme is funded from Transport Scotland's sustainable and active travel budget and is managed by Paths for All. Smarter Choices, Smarter Places aims to increase levels of walking and cycling; encourage uptake of sustainable transport, such as buses, trains, or car-share; and reduce single-passenger car journeys undertaken in Scotland.

There are 2 Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Grant programs,. The largest pot is the £5 million Local Authority fund which is now in its 5th year. There is a second Open Fund aimed at community, third and public sector organisations, which offers £2 million in total and is in its second year.

Local Authority Fund

In 2020/21 HITRANS have offered to support delivery of the local authority SCSP programme on behalf of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. HITRANS officers will manage delivery of a £100,000 programme of sustainable travel projects across the Western Isles that has been signed off by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The programme will cover the following areas:

1. Community Transport Support – the match funding for the SCSP allocation has been the Community Transport Fund introduced by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar in 2019.
2. Real Time Passenger Information – this will enable real time bus tracking to be introduced on 50 buses in the Western Isles with information available to passengers online, via app and at fixed displays in Stornoway bus station.
3. Appointment on a short term basis of a Western Isles based public transport assistant to support input of bus registrations into Database for Traveline and Roadside Information and other SCSP activity in the Western Isles.
4. Publish at stop bus information at 100 locations across the Western Isles.
5. Cycling and Walking Promotion of Hebridean Way which is being developed in partnership with Outer Hebrides Tourism.
6. Car share portal operating costs and promotion.

HITRANS officers have had some discussion with Orkney Islands Council and Paths for All to investigate the opportunity for HITRANS to offer similar support to OIC to deliver the local authority SCSP programme.

SCSP Open Fund

HITRANS are being pro-active to take advantage of the opportunity to partner with the SCSP Open Fund to deliver projects across the Region. Our activities are summarised below:

- MaaS in the North SCSP award - HITRANS have secured £20,000 from the SCSP Open Fund towards our work on Mobility as a Service (MaaS). This has provided match funding to draw down EU funds through the Stronger Combined project supporting the appointment of the MaaS Project Officer to lead our MaaS project work.
- Hi-Bike Marketing and Promotion - An application is being made to the Open Fund for marketing and promotion of Hi-Bike, the ebike scheme being introduced to Inverness later in the year. This will enable the scheme to be advertised in the city centre, and for promotions and discounts to be offered to encourage new members to join and to enable people to try out the bikes at a discounted rate. The first 30 minutes of each ride are free (45 minutes for monthly and annual memberships).
- Public Transport Information – HITRANS have secured
- CivTech – HITRANS have secured £49,000 from the SCSP Open Fund towards our involvement in the CivTech 5.0 process. Our challenge ‘how can we use technology to create smart and sustainable travel networks for remote and rural areas’ was launched on 10th July following a successful Expression of Interest in June. We received a total of 16 applications which were reviewed and shortlisted to 6 candidates. These 6 were further sifted down to 3 companies to complete a 2-week exploration stage, ending with a final interview on 25th September to decide which company to take forward for the 12-week Accelerator programme. The Accelerator phase launched on 27th October and will end with a Demo Day in February 2021.

Risk Register

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports both RTS objectives.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work supports the development of our Active and Sustainable Travel policies.

Financial

Impact – Positive

Comment – This work outlines new funding secured to support Partnership work and draw down EU funding.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – HITRANS support for active travel helps eliminate the barriers to travel for all and removes a number of physical accessibility barriers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this update report.

Report by: Vikki Trelfer

Designation: Active Travel Officer

Date: 3rd November 2020