

Report to Partnership Advisors 10 April 2015

Research and Development

Public Transport Information Officer / Bus Investment Fund – HI-TRAVEL & other HITRANS supported Projects

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the implementation of those Bus Investment Fund projects that were awarded funding by the Scottish Government in 2014 and which HITRANS are either lead partner or have financially supported, including the shared services HI-TRAVEL project.

HITRANS HI-Travel Project 2014/15 – 2015/16

Transport Scotland awarded the HITRANS HI-travel project £300,000 from the Scottish Government Bus Investment Fund. The project which was developed in partnership with Local Authority colleagues, involves the employment of a Public Transport Officer on a shared services basis with the responsibility for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area and in so doing improve the quantity and quality of public transport information available to the public.

A new Officer was appointed to the post on January 26th 2015 and has since been involved with implementing the HI-travel project.

In addition to undertaking necessary ICT and database training the Officer has met each of the Local Authority public transport teams help to establish the baseline information available as well as priorities for investment and support.

HI-travel Implementation Progress

Since the project began investment in the following areas has been committed.

- 250 High Quality Information poles / displays / timetable cases. Priority locations / routes identified to date are Kirkwall, Stornoway, Oban, Fort William and the Service No 35 between Buckie and Portgordon.
- Poster display cases for shelters where we hope to engage with other organisations such as Outer Hebrides Tourism to install local tourist information as well as public transport information in time.
- A new contract for the supply of 5 solar e-paper displays at 5 interchanges in Skye and Lochalsh
- 4 additional Solar Chronos units at busy stops within the Cairngorm National Park area.
- Supply of real-time displays at locations in Orkney (including the Airport), Stornoway, Thurso and Elgin Bus Station.
- Maintenance and support for the JourneyGenie website.
- 5 new bus shelters for key interchanges
- Real-time display and Wifi hotspot in Portree Square

Below is short update on the progress of the other Bus Investment Fund projects for which HITRANS has provided financial support.

Moray

Moray’s Bus Investment Fund, the “Urban Freedom Health Cycle” involves the boosting of two local bus services, increasing the frequency of the Elgin – Forres via Findhorn service to hourly Monday to Saturday and the introduction of a new hourly Sunday service between Elgin, Hopeman and Burghead. Registrations are in place to see these two elements introduced week commencing April 20th 2015. An important aspect of the Forres service is the routing of the service into the Health Centre in the town, a recently opened out of town facility for which access can be difficult for those without transport. Integral to the bid is the fitting of external and internal cycle racks to the vehicles, offering a sustainable transport option for families who reside or visit the area and finalising this aspect is being pursued with the bus operator. Real time displays and new bus shelters will be ordered in the forthcoming financial year for Kinloss and Findhorn.

Tasga Uibhist Community Transport

Tasga Uibhist have already purchased one of the two vehicles included in the project. This is an 8 seater, wheelchair accessible vehicle which is being used to transport pre-school children. One child is a wheelchair user.

The second vehicle for use on the Dial a Bus service has been pre-ordered and will also be wheelchair accessible. This vehicle is due to be in use by the end of May.

Three members of staff have successfully completed the MiDAS Driver Assessor Trainers (DATs) Course which will provide the opportunity to offer this service to other organisation within Uist and also Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar which have shown an interest in using this (fee paying) service.

In addition, funding has been used towards new publicity for our shopping and Dial a Bus services, along with our logo on our new vehicles. The shopping service which Tasga provide service has been increased with new service users and also a new route and the Dial a Bus service is continuing to grow to a point where it requires nearly a full time post to keep it running with all the demand for the service.

Argyll & Bute: Oban to Fort William Sunday Service

Argyll and Bute Council submitted an application for funding to support a Sunday service on the route between Oban and Fort William. The provision of the service is an important and necessary addition to the public transport network of the area. Argyll and Bute Council have recently tendered a contract for the provision of this new service and hope to make an award imminently.

Recommendation

1. Note the report
2. Consider any specific opportunities that may be implemented as part of year 2 of the HI-travel project.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports several strategic objectives of the RTS.
Policy	√	This work supports the development of Policies H29, H30 and H33 as set out in the RTS Delivery Plan

Financial	-	Funding to support the HITRANS HI-travel project and match funding in support of member Local Authority applications is identified in the 2014/15 Research and Development and Delivery budget and was approved at the Partnership Meeting on 24.09.14.
Equality	√	Improvement of public transport services helps reduce social exclusion by improving access to employment and services

Report by:
Designation:
Date:

Julie Cromarty / Neil MacRae
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31st March 2015