

Report to Partnership Meeting 15 April 2016

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Regional Transport Strategy Update.

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on Regional Transport Strategy Refresh and introduce the Main Issues Report which is out for public consultation until 23rd May 2016.

Background

HITRANS was established as one of the seven Scottish Regional Transport Partnerships in December 2005. The Transport Scotland Act 2005 requires these Partnerships to prepare Transport Strategies for their regions which will enhance economic wellbeing; promote safety, social inclusion and equal opportunity; plan for a sustainable transport system; and integrate across boundaries with other Partnerships. These Strategies must take account of future needs and set priorities for transport development and improvement.

The Regional Transport Strategy should provide a framework for the transport activities of constituent Councils, Health board and other key agencies.

HITRANS have now commenced an update of the original 2008 Regional Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan. This update should be objective led and apply the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance.

Introduction

HITRANS appointed consultants Elyand Skyn to support officers with the preparation of the Strategy in November 2015. Following a presentation and workshop on the Regional Transport Strategy at the last Partnership meeting on 5th February 2015, a Main Issues Report has been developed for public consultation to help inform and shape the updated Strategy.

This report introduces the Executive Summary of the Main Issues Report which is attached as an Appendix. A copy of the full Main Issues Report and feedback form is also available on the HITRANS website via the following link.

http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Corporate_Documents/Strategy

The deadline for responses to the Main Issues Report has been set as 23rd May 2016 unless otherwise agreed with HITRANS Officers.

Next Steps

Following the public consultation on the Main Issues Report, a draft Regional Transport Strategy will be developed in advance of the next HITRANS Partnership meeting on 28th June 2016. The draft RTS and associated documents will then be published for an 8 week statutory consultation period after which final versions of the full documents incorporating

any subsequent revisions will be developed for submission to the Transport Minister for approval.

Budget

A budget of £20,000 including has been set for the work undertaken on the refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy in 2015/2016.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report and submit any comments on the Main Issues Report by 23rd May 2016.

Risk	impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	
Policy	√	
Financial	-	An allocation of £20,000 for updating the Regional Transport Strategy has been identified in the 2015/16 Business Plan. An additional £5000 has been identified to undertake work on a low Carbon Action Plan for the region.
Equality	√	

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Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 1st April 2016

Appendix: HITRANS REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY RE-FRESH Main Issues Report – Executive Summary

HITRANS' 2008 Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is being refreshed to incorporate significant developments in policy and to best align the RTS with current strategic direction both locally and nationally. The RTS has a statutory basis as set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005. This Main Issues Report provides the background to the RTS refresh including setting out some of the key changes that have occurred since 2008, and the wider context in which the refreshed RTS sits.

Policy changes in the last eight years cover a range of national policies. At a local level a new emphasis on Community Planning has been embedded bringing together a multitude of statutory partners, of which HITRANS is one in each of Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray, Orkney and Western Isles areas.

Between 2008 and 2014/15 the RTS monitoring has found mixed results against the indicators for the original RTS main objectives of economy, accessibility, safety and security, environmental impacts and health.



- Regional GVA is at its highest level in the most up-to-date 2013 data than throughout the RTS monitoring period, with an 18.5 per cent increase on the 2006 baseline.

- Mode split on the journey to school and to a lesser extent on the journey to work has shown some decline in use of active travel and public transport modes of travel.

- There has been a 15 per cent decrease in the number of 'Killed or Seriously Injured' (KSIs) on the region's roads in 2014 compared to the number in 2013, and at 182 KSIs in 2014, this is the lowest recorded throughout the period of the RTS, falling from a base of in excess of 400 in 2006.

- Only 14 per cent of people in the region state that public transport in their area is fairly or very inconvenient in 2014, which is down from a peak of 23.4 per cent in 2006.

In terms of the current state of regional connectivity:

- Fewer people are taking public transport and more are choosing to take the car.
- Rail passengers have increase from 3.0 to 3.6 million between 2007/08 and 2013/15.

- There have been reductions in bus service kilometres in the region, falling 16% in the five years to 2014/15, greater than the 12% reducing in Scotland as a whole.
- Availability of Community Transport across the region remains mixed.
- There has been growth in ferry carryings, a Road Equivalent Tariff charging scheme began on some routes from 2008.
- Air passenger numbers have fallen between 2008 and 2014, but are showing signs of increases, with 3.2 per cent growth in 2015 on the prior year.

The Community Planning approach is a key opportunity for the region, for businesses and communities. The five Community Planning Partnerships across the HITRANS area have similar priorities in terms of the economic and labour market, communities, individuals' independence and participation, safety and good health, and tackling inequalities. The directions from the Community Planning Partnerships have been used to inform this Main Issues Report.

Six main issues for HITRANS have been identified; these are the economy, connecting communities, lifeline transport, reliability and resilience, roles, relationships and responsibilities, and carbon reduction.

In terms of the economy the challenge for the HITRANS economy remains one of relatively low productivity; implying a need to both attract more higher value added activities to the area and to improve the productivity of existing businesses. There is a need to reduce the journey time-and improve the journey experience-for trips to the main economic centres in Scotland-principally Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Freight and movement of goods requires particular attention. There are high value exports from the region, particularly the food and drink sector. Inverness airport and rail stations are key hubs for business and both facilities require to continue to develop.

It is important to put communities and individuals at the centre of efforts; in keeping with the reducing inequality pillar from Scotland's Economic Strategy and the Community Empowerment (2015) Act. The region has an ageing population; 20-24 per cent of the population in the five local authority areas are aged 65+, compared to 18 per cent in Scotland as a whole. People in the region can be access deprived and this can adversely affect the ability to participate in everyday life. The upshot of this access deprivation can be social isolation and loneliness and then the impact that this has on health and wellbeing. Eighteen-24 per cent of households across the region do not have access to a car; a little more than 43,000 households.

There are issues of declining budgets for bus services in the region, with a high prevalence of subsidised services. There is progress towards a Quality Bus Partnership scheme for Inverness. There is a high uptake of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (free bus pass) in Scotland. Those living in areas of the region without public transport, notably those in remote and island communities, and those unable to access conventional bus services, are not able to benefit from the unlimited free travel afforded to those in areas with good and / or accessible bus provision.

While it is important to have good (transport) access, good broadband and telecommunications are also required to reduce the need to travel, so support home working opportunities for example. There are many 'holes' around the region that do not have such connections.

The region relies on many 'lifeline' transport connections; it is vital that these are strong, resilient and reliable. In some cases, the lifeline network is fragile and requires attention. There is a backlog of maintenance on much of the lifeline network as well as requirements for investment to address deficiencies such as remaining stretches of single travel roads and major schemes that were also highlighted in the original RTS, such as the Orkney internal ferry network.

Journey reliability and consistency is more of an issue that it was in the original RTS. In recent years there has been an increase in weather-related road closures, disruptions to rail services, weather-related ferry cancellations and flight delays and cancellations. Disruptions cause significant negative economic impacts on business confidence and the perceptions of potential visitors and inward investors. Resilience and reliability are undoubtedly reduced by the age of the transport assets; and many of which are particularly old across the region. There has been some investment in new assets, notably new CalMac ferries and Twin Otter aircraft for example.

The Scottish Government are responsible for the provision of some services in the area, local authorities for others. The Ferries Plan summarised the lack of consistency particularly with regard to the split of responsibilities for the provision of ferry services. The refreshed National Transport Strategy marks the start of a process of joint working with RTPs, Local Authorities and others to clarify roles and expectations across transport modes, locations and organisational hierarchy.

The 2008 Regional Transport Strategy for the HITRANS region did not explicitly address low carbon transport. Nevertheless, a number of initiatives have been implemented at the regional and local level to reduce emissions and to tackle climate change.

Opportunities to reduce the carbon impact of transport in region exist across all means of travel and taking an integrated approach to reducing emissions across all transport modes will require close working with a range of different partners. Much of this will come down to working with organisations to develop compelling business cases for investment and communicating the benefits of low emission transport to individuals, communities and the region as a whole.

Work to date on this Main Issues Report has included a review of the validity, relevance and detail of the original RTS vision and objectives. The refresh process provides the opportunity to refine, develop



and re-focus the objectives reflecting the context in the region, the 2015 NTS and the work of the five Community Planning Partnerships. Draft new objectives for HITRANS are shown.

This Main Issue Report has been prepared to provide the background to the RTS refresh; and is being published for consultation. Input and feedback received in respect to the Main Issues Report will be used to steer the RTS and best align HITRANS' work with the issues and therefore transport needs across the region.