



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting held in the
HITRANS Office, Inverness
Airport, on Friday 5 May 2006
at 9.45am.

PRESENT
Mr Charlie King (Chairman) – Highland Council
Mr Robert Sclater (Vice-Chairman) – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Duncan MacIntyre – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mrs Roma Hossack – Moray Council
Mr Donald MacNeil
Ms Louise Smith
Mr Wilson Metcalf

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE
Mr Dave Duthie – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Murdo Gray – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Sam MacNaughton – Highland Council
Mr George Borthwick – Moray Council
Mr Jeremy Baster – Orkney Islands Council
Mr David Summers – HIPTF
Mr Frank Roach – Highland Rail Partnership
Mr Derek Mackay – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Mike Mitchell – Highland Council
Mr Howard Brindley – HITRANS

APOLOGIES
Mr Iain Kernohan – Scottish Executive
Mr Ranald Robertson – HITRANS

Welcome
The chairman welcomed Ms Louise Smith, Mr Wilson Metcalfe and Mr Donald MacNeil to their first meeting of HITRANS following their appointment as members by the Transport Minister.

MINUTES

Highlands and
Islands Transport
Partnership

1 The Minute of Meeting of 31 March 2006 was **approved**.

Arising from consideration of this item it was agreed that:

- (1) Mr Howard Brindley would raise the issue of the Elgin By-Pass during consideration of the A96 Corridor Study; and**
- (2) The Chairman would write to Tribal HCH thanking them for their work on the A82 Route Action Plan Study.**

FINANCE

HITRANS Budget
Outturn 2005/06

2 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the revenue outturn for 2005/06 for the former Voluntary Partnership. The Report stated that surplus of income over expenditure of £12,583.88 would be carried forward into the Partnerships Revenue Budget for 2006/07 with the proviso that the surplus be ringfenced for joint research between HITRANS and the Shetland Transport Partnership.

It was agreed to note the Report.

- Revenue Budget 2006/07 3 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to the HITRANS Revenue Budget for 2006/07. Member authorities had contributed £200k match funding to allow the full draw down of core running costs from the Scottish Executive as per the funding formula previously used by the Voluntary Partnership. The Report further stated that a Revised Funding formula 2007/08 would be reported to a future meeting.
- It was agreed:**
- (1) to adopt the Revenue Budget 2006/07 as detailed in the Report; and**
 - (2) that a Report would be submitted to a future meeting detailing proposals for a revised funding formula.**
- Capital Budget 2006/07 4 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to the distribution of Capital Funding allocated to HITRANS for 2006/07. The inclusion of Argyll Air Services and Canna Ferry Terminal in the Capital Programme would enable the release of ERDF funding which would see delivery of upgrades to South Lochs and Melvich to Strathy roads. The Report highlighted proposed variations to the programme to take account of a reduction in the level of funding required for Canna Ferry Terminal, higher tender returns for the Argyll Airport Terminal Buildings and the reallocation of funding to the Public Transport Network Development Programme.
- It was agreed that:**
- (1) a further £100k be allocated to Argyll Air Services to meet the extra Terminal Building costs;**
 - (2) £50k be allocated to upgrade passenger facilities at North Ronaldsay Airport;**
 - (3) £30k be allocated to the development and implementation of a multi-modal through ticketing scheme;**
 - (4) an additional £16k be allocated to fund the Orkney Islands Real Time Information Project; and**
 - (5) the remaining sum of £44k be re-allocated by the Board.**
- Members and Permanent Advisors Expenses 5 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing proposals for the reimbursement of reasonable subsistence and travel expenses for Members and Permanent Advisors. Councillor Members and Advisors would claim expenses in the normal way from their authority and each authority would then invoice the Partnership on a monthly or quarterly basis. Other Members, non-Council advisors and observer claims would be made using Highland Councils rates. All claims should be accompanied by relevant receipts and would require authorisation by the Co-ordinator.
- It was agreed to note the Report.**
- TRANSPORT STRATEGY**
- Scotland's National Transport Partnership – A Consultation 6 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that the Scottish Executive had published a consultation document on the National Transport Strategy. The Strategy would set the framework for the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy and provide the context for the Executive's Strategic Projects Review. The Report stated that the consultation contained 65 questions, many of which touched on issues crucial to the well-being of the HITRANS area.
- It was agreed that, the permanent Advisors in conjunction with Steer Davies Gleeve would draft a response for consideration at a special meeting to be held on 2 June 2006.**

Regional Transport Strategy Progress 7 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report updating Members on progress with the development of a Regional Transport Strategy. The outcomes of the series of stakeholder workshops and consultations which had taken place in the HITRANS area had been included in Steer Davies Gleave's working report. The Report stated that, during May and June 2006, the Regional Transport Hierarchy would be developed with the assistance of the Permanent Advisors and the option packages would be appraised and prioritised.

It was agreed to consider the Regional Transport Strategy at the special meeting being held on 2 June 2006.

Regional Transport Strategy – Work Programme 2006/07 8 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the work programme for development of the Regional Transport Strategy. Following the agreement of the objectives, Steer Davies Gleave would appraise the options and prioritise projects. Steer Davies Gleave would also refine the options and project prioritisation, complete the SEA Environmental Report and assist with the securing of Stakeholder buy-in. The Report stated that a Stakeholders Conference would be held in September with a view to agreeing the first draft Strategy in November with public consultation taking place in November and December 2006.

It was agreed to approve the work programme detailed in the Report.

GOVERNANCE

Governance of the Partnership 9 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the standing orders and governance documents which had been prepared by CDU Ltd on behalf of the Partnership. The Report stated that the documents had been considered by the Permanent Advisors and were recommended for approval. Mr Donald Manford proposed that provision be included in the Standing Orders for the Chairmanship and Vice-Chairmanship to be rotated through the member authorities but failed to find support.

It was agreed to approve the:

- ? **Standing Orders**
- ? **Scheme of Delegation**
- ? **Freedom of Information Scheme**
- ? **Data Protection Scheme**
- ? **Public Interest Disclosure Scheme**
- ? **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- ? **Environmental Information Regulations Policy**
- ? **Complaints Policy**
- ? **Code of Conduct**

as circulated.

AVIATION

Mott Macdonald Strategy Assistance 10 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that Laurie Price and Allan Cook of Mott Macdonald's Aviation Group had previously given advice and assistance with the development of the Highlands and Islands Air Network and air links to London. The Report stated that, as the Regional Transport Strategy would include objectives and strategic interventions for the development of the areas air transport it would be beneficial to retain the services of Mott Macdonald to assist with this.

It was agreed that a commission be agreed with Mott Macdonald's Aviation Group, subject to a maximum fee and expenses limit of £5k for attendance at meetings and assistance to Steer Davies Gleave in appraising strategic aviation interventions.

STRATEGIC SEA CROSSINGS

Origin and Destination Study of Passenger and Freight 2006 11 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to the proposals for a study into the origin and destination of passengers and freight on Strategic Sea Crossings. The Report stated that the study would be undertaken jointly with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, the Shetland Transport Partnership and the Scottish Executive.

It was agreed to forward the study brief to the following consultants and request proposals for a study into the origin and destination of passengers and freight;

- ? **Reference Economic Consultants**
- ? **Transport and Travel Research**
- ? **JMP Consulting**
- ? **DHC**
- ? **WSP Development**

Islay Ferry Study 12 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to the research commissioned by HIE to evaluate the economic impact of increased summer sailings to Islay. The Study had found that passenger volumes had increased by 19% bringing an additional £1.4 million of expenditure to Islay and Jura. The recommendations within the study were detailed.

It was agreed that HITRANS and HIE would make joint representations to the Scottish Executive in relation to further improvements to the Islay Ferry Service and requesting that the Executive investigate the prospect of setting up permanent Business Panels in key island communities in order to provide ongoing monitoring of transport.

Island Fuel Derogation 13 Mr Dave Duthie updated members on representations made by Argyll and Bute in relation to fuel derogations for island communities. Argyll and Bute had prepared a study identifying the economic and social benefits of such a derogation and had submitted the document to the Scottish Executive. Mr Duthie indicated that a Report on progress would be submitted to a future meeting.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Western Isles Ferry Fares Study 14 Mr Murdo Gray updated Members on progress with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Alternative Ferry Fare Mechanism Study. Mr Gray highlighted the options and outcomes in the Study and indicated that the Scottish Executive was currently examining the state aids issues in relation to the Commercial Ferry Fares Scheme Pilot.

It was agreed:

- (1) that the Chairman would make representations to the Scottish Executive in support of the Commercial Ferry Fares Pilot Study; and**
- (2) that the Alternative Ferry Fare Mechanism's Study would be considered at the meeting being held in the Western Isles in September 2006.**

RAIL

Invernet 2 – Stag Study 15 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to proposals by the Highland Rail Partnership to promote commuter service improvements on the Elgin to Inverness Rail Service in order to develop it as an extension to the successful commuter services north of Inverness. It was proposed to provide 5 – 6 additional services per day in each direction. The Report stated that a Stag appraisal of the proposal had been funded by HITRANS, HIE and Highland Rail Partnership and the conclusions in the appraisal were detailed.

It was agreed that:

- (1) in light of the strong case for the opening of a new station at Dalcross that it be included as a strategic investment in the Capital Programme for 2007/08 subject to a satisfactory site engineering appraisal to be funded by the Highland Rail Partnership; and**
- (2) a meeting to be arranged with Transport Scotland in order to agree commitments to additional services on the Inverness – Elgin rail corridor.**

Highland Rail Growth Study 16 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the outcomes of a study into the Highland Rail Network which identified opportunities for improving infrastructure and connections to the south, together with estimates of future demand for rail travel.

It was agreed to liaise with HIE, Network Rail and Transport Scotland in relation to the publication process for the Highland Rail Growth Study.

Inverness to Edinburgh Rail Service 17 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to proposals to improve journey times between Inverness and Edinburgh. The Report highlighted the works that would be required to reduce the current journey time and provide four additional daily freight paths and an hourly frequency passenger service to Central Scotland. The Report further stated that discussions had taken place with NESTRANS, TACTRANS and SESTRANS Co-ordinators in relation to the proposals.

It was agreed that the Chairman be authorised to develop a joint approach with the Chairman from NESTRANS, TACTRANS and SESTRANS at their joint meeting on 25 May 2006 in relation to the Inverness to Edinburgh rail service and make representations to the Transport Minister.

ROADS

A82 Route Action Plan 18 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that the Transport Minister had asked Transport Scotland to take forward and provide a £16 million improvement package for the A82 as part of the overall improvement package between Tarbert and Fort William which had been recommended by HITRANS Route Action Plan Study. The note highlighted the works which would be undertaken.

It was agreed that the Chairman would make representations to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport requested that a high priority is given to the Loch Lomondside improvements with SPT's Regional Transport Strategy.

A9 Trunk Road (Inverness – Perth) 19 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that the Chairman had written to the Transport Minister supporting the short term proposals for the A9 Trunk Road and seeking a Route Action Plan for the long term improvement of the road. A reply had been received from the Minister confirming that a Route Improvement Strategy Study was under way for the A9 between Perth and Blair Atholl and the Scottish Executive would assess the future needs of the whole A9 to feed into the Strategic Projects Review.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

Scottish Parliaments Freight Inquiry 20 Members were informed that Mr Howard Brindley and Mr Bob Sclater had given evidence on behalf of HITRANS to the Scottish Parliament Local Government and Transport Committee's inquiry into freight transport.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Transport and Works Bill 21 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to proposals by the Scottish Executive to introduce a Transport and Works Bill which would replace the current Private Bill process for approving transport projects. The Report highlighted a proposed response on behalf of HITRANS.

It was agreed that Mr Howard Brindley would respond to the consultation on the Transport and Works Bill as detailed in the Report.

Meeting with Highlands and Islands MSPs – June 2006 22 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report in relation to proposals to meet with Highlands and Islands MSPs in order to discuss strategic transport issues. The Report stated that HITRANS would be hosting a stakeholder conference on the emerging Regional Transport Strategy in September and it would be appropriate to arrange a meeting with MSPs in Edinburgh for week commencing 11 September 2006.

It was agreed that Mr Howard Brindley would make the necessary arrangements to hold a meeting between HITRANS and Highlands and Islands MSPs in Holyrood on week commencing 11 September 2006.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Public Transport 23 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report advising Members of the structure and representation on the Public Transport Committee for Scotland, the Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum, the Public Transport Project Management Group and the Highland Rail Partnership. The Report further indicated that aviation, as a stakeholder to HITRANS, was not well represented by any of the Groups detailed and the Regional Transport Strategy Stakeholder session with aviation representatives could provide an opportunity to gauge interest in establishing an Aviation Stakeholder Group.

It was agreed:

- (1) that HITRANS would fund the meeting and administrative costs of the Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum as detailed in the Report;**
- (2) that HITRANS would engage with aviation representatives with a view to establishing an Aviation Stakeholder Group as detailed in the Report.**

Walking and Cycling 24 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the outcome of an exploratory meeting of cycling and walking stakeholders from across the Highlands and Islands which had been chaired by Cllr Ron Lyon of the Highlands Cycle Forum. A number of issues had been developed for consideration within the Regional Transport Strategy and it had been agreed that the Stakeholder Group would formally constitute itself in order to replace the Highland Cycle Forum with a clear remit to cover both walking and cycling interests at a Regional Strategy level.

It was agreed that HITRANS would provide administrative support for the Walking and Cycling Stakeholder Group by hosting two meetings each year, providing clerical support with Agendas, Minutes etc and providing assistance with a website through Inter-media Services.

COMPETITIONS

Scottish Transport Awards 2006 25 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 31 March 2006 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report detailing the Campbeltown to Glasgow Realtime Information Project which had being submitted by HITRANS in the Technology Category of the Scottish Transport Awards.

It was agreed to note the Report.

STAFFING

Clerical Assistants and Travel Plan Officer 26 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that adverts had been published in relation to the appointment of an Office Assistant and Travel Plan Officer.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Transport Development Officer 27 Mr Howard Brindley submitted a Report indicating that the Transport Development Officer was now a permanent employee of the Partnership. The conditions of service were based on those within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

It was agreed that Comhairle nan Eilean Siar would undertake an independent evaluation of the Transport Development Officer's post to consider whether the current salary grade was appropriate.

NEXT MEETING

Venue 28 **It was agreed that the next meetings of HITRANS would be held on:**

**2 June 2006, HITRANS Office
7 July 2006, HITRANS Office
1 September 2006, Western Isles**