

Minute of Meeting held in the
Council Chamber, Elgin on
Friday 5 September 2008 at
9.30am.

PRESENT

Mr Duncan Macintyre (Chairman) – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr John Laing (Vice-Chairman) – Highland Council
Mr Andrew Drever – Orkney Islands Council
Mr George McIntyre – Moray Council
Mr Donald John MacSween – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Wilson Metcalfe

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS
Mr Ranald Robertson - HITRANS
Mrs Katy Cunningham - HITRANS
Mrs Christine Kendall - HITRANS
Mr Mike Mitchell – Highland Council
Mr Sam MacNaughton – Highland Council
Ms Naomi Coleman – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Donald Macrae – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Gordon Holland – Moray Council
Mr Frank Roach – HITRANS
Mr David Summers – Highlands and Islands Public Transport Forum
Mr Blair Fletcher – Argyll and Bute Council
Mr Douglas Forson – Scottish Government
Mr Ian Duff - SCDI
Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Allan Wishart – ZetTrans
Mr Michael Craigie - ZetTrans

APOLOGIES

Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Louise Smith

Mr George Macintyre, Convener, Moray Council welcomed the representatives from HITRANS to Moray Council.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Katy Cunningham, Mrs Christine Kendall, Mr Andrew Drever, Mr Allan Wishart and Mr Michael Craigie to the Meeting.

MINUTES

HITRANS

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The Minute of Meeting of 6 June 2008 was **approved** subject to the inclusion of Mr Ian Duff in the list of those present and the typographical corrections highlighted at the Meeting.

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| Matters Arising | 2 | <p>Members noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ HITRANS would be represented by Mr David Duthie and Mr Donald Manford at the European Commission's Week of Regions Event. ▪ Discussions in relation to the Aberdeen Airport bus access link had taken place between representatives from Moray Council, HITRANS, Nestrans and Stagecoach. Mr Gordon Holland would keep Members updated on progress. ▪ In relation to the circulation of Minutes it was agreed that a draft Minute would be passed to those Members and Permanent Advisors who had been present at the Meeting for their comments, following which the Minutes would be circulated to all members and constituent authorities. |
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FINANCE

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| Final Outturn Revenue Budget 07/08 | 3 | <p>The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report setting out the Final Outturn Revenue Monitoring position for the year to 31 March 2008. The Report stated the Partnership had returned small overspend of £17,555 for the year ended 31 March 2008 out of an overall budget of £924,000. The Report detailed the variances within budgets and highlighted that Audit Scotland had cleared the HITRANS accounts with no qualifications.</p> |
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It was agreed to note HITRANS final outturn Revenue Monitoring position for year ended 31 March 2008.

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| Revenue Budget Monitoring – 1 April 2008-31 July 2008 | 4 | <p>The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the Revenue Monitoring position for the period to 31 July 2008. The Report stated that the projected year end position was broadly in line with the budget outturn target and transactions for the period to 31 July 2008 were in line with management expectations. The Report further stated that, in order to ensure that the 2007/08 overspend of £17,555 was recovered from the 2008/09 budget, it was proposed to reduce the Research and Strategy Development Budget by a corresponding amount.</p> |
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It was agreed to approve the reduction in the Research and Strategy Development Budget of £17,555 and to note the Revenue Budget Monitoring Schedule to 31 July 2008.

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| Final Capital Outturn Programme Report | 5 | <p>The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the final outturn Capital Programme position for the year to 31 March 2008. The Report stated that the total expenditure exceeded grant receivable by £46,810 and, to balance the Capital Programme, revenue funds were transferred to cover the shortfall. The final position of the 2007/08 Capital Programme indicated that there was sufficient income to cover total expenditure.</p> |
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It was agreed to note the Report.

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| Travel Plans Programme 2008/09 | 6 | <p>The Partnership Manager submitted a Report updating Members on progress made in delivering the Travel Plans Programme. The Report stated that the main objective of the Programme was to increase the number of staff, visitors and suppliers in Local Authorities and Health Boards using more sustainable modes of transport. The Report further stated that the Scottish Government have confirmed that ZetTrans would receive funding for Travel Plan work directly rather than being channelled through HITRANS and the Partnership Manager confirmed this would not impact adversely on the HITRANS Travel Plan Programme.</p> |
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It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the change of grant conditions to allow funding to go directly from Scottish Government to ZetTrans; and**
- (2) **to note progress with delivery of the Travel Plans Budget.**

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Glasgow-Oban Rail Link 7 Mr Frank Roach submitted a Report detailing the findings from the Economic Efficiency Study in relation to the Glasgow-Oban Rail link. The Report stated that the Study had been commissioned in order to assess the case for a five trains per day rail service between Glasgow and Oban. The Study had highlighted that, although the proposals would require additional subsidy support, the benefit to cost ratio derived in the economic appraisal implied that the proposals represented excellent value for money. The Report further highlighted that the proposals were likely to improve employment prospects in the region and would allow tourists without a car easier access to the area.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the positive output from the Glasgow-Oban Rail Link Economic Efficiency Study and the significant economic benefits that would result from improving frequency on the Oban rail line;**
- (2) **that Mr Frank Roach would pass a copy of the finalised Report to Tony Jarvis in order to allow liaison with the local HIE office; and**
- (3) **that Mr Frank Roach would pass copies of the finalised Report to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.**

Piers and Harbours Grant Management 8 The Partnership Director submitted a Report indicating that the Piers and Harbours Grant previously administered by the Scottish Government had been disbanded and the associated funds were now to be provided separately to Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited and the five Local Authorities previously covered by the Scheme. The Report stated that the new grant distribution system would incorporate Pier and Harbour Grants into the block grant provided to Local Authorities and this element of grant would not be separately identified. In order to provide for appropriate management of financial risk incumbent on the five local authorities in meeting their duties and responsibilities in relation to running the Piers, Harbours and Slipways the Report proposed that consideration be given to HITRANS managing and distributing the funding provided by Government for capital investment in piers, slips and harbours.

It was agreed that the Partnership Director, in consultation with the Permanent Advisors, would prepare a discussion paper for Local Authorities to consider the possibility of HITRANS managing and distributing the funding provided by the Scottish Government to support capital investment on council piers, harbours and slips. The Report would also be passed to ZetTrans for their comments.

Ferry Terminal Modal Integration Connection Study 9 Mr Ranald Robertson submitted a Report indicating that the Regional Transport Strategy had identified the need for better integration of ferry services with bus and rail services at or near ferry terminals. The Report stated that the Partnership Delivery Plan had identified as a research project the need to evaluate the quality of integration between modes at ferry terminals across the region and it was intended that this Study would serve a similar function to the Study undertaken on behalf of Highland Rail Partnership on 2007/08 whose outputs had already seen improved presentation of connection opportunities at railway stations through small timetable changes by bus operators.

It was agreed that:

- (1) **the commencement of the Ferry Terminal Modal Integration Connection Study be noted; and**
- (2) **the Partnership Manager would report back following completion of the Study.**

Public Transport
Tourism
Development

10 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report indicating that the Regional Transport Strategy had identified the need to increase the sustainability of transport provision with a particular emphasis on how this could support the tourism industry. The Report further stated that research undertaken by Steer Davis Gleave for the Scottish Government had identified a number of factors which undermined public transport access to cultural and tourist facilities and these factors were recognisable as being barriers to access facilities across the Highlands and Islands. Representatives from HITRANS had met with VisitScotland to discuss actions which could be taken together to relieve some of these problems and increase public transport uptake by tourists. It was clear there were opportunities for public transport to better serve key facilities and attractions from hub tourism centres across the region.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) to approve further development of the proposals for public transport tourism development and note that this may incur a funding commitment at a later date, possibly as part of a European Funding Bid, which would be subject to separate approval from the Board.**

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Transport Strategy
Post Approval
Development

11 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing actions that were required to facilitate the delivery and monitoring of implementation of the Transport Strategy. The Report indicated that the Partnership should monitor the success in achieving the objectives identified in the Regional Transport Strategy and a key element in establishing and monitoring an Evaluation Plan would be to ensure that related Scottish Government objectives and Local Authority Single Outcome targets were reflected in the monitoring criteria. A great deal of work had already been undertaken on the framework of the monitoring and evaluation plan by Steer Davis Gleave (SDG) and the Report suggested that SDG be asked to continue the commission with HITRANS on the Regional Transport Strategy in order to take account of the Single Outcome Agreements.

The Report further stated that, as part of the process for ensuring appropriate consideration was given to the environmental impacts on benefits of change which could result through implementation of the Strategy, a Strategic Environmental Assessment had been undertaken and a final costed option statement would now be produced reflecting the approval of the Regional Transport Strategy. It was proposed that Steer Davis Gleave and their sub-consultant, Natural Capital, would complete this element within the Strategy Development Commission.

It was agreed to approve the additional tasks identified in the Report at an estimated cost of £15,000 to be funded through the Research and Development Programme for 2008/09.

Highlands and
Islands Fuel Study

12 It was agreed to withdraw this item.

CONSULTATION

Aviation Consultation Group 13 Mr Wilson Metcalfe gave a verbal update on progress with the Aviation Consultation Group. The Group had met on 28 August 2008 and Mr Laurie Price (Mott Macdonald) had given a comprehensive update on issues facing the aviation industry with particular emphasis on the high cost of fuel and the impact of the economic downturn. The Group had expressed concern at the continuing use of the South Terminal at Gatwick for Flybe Flights to Inverness which made interlining more difficult as scheduled flights arrived at the North Terminal.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report;
- (2) make representations to Gatwick Airport Management requesting a more customer oriented service for connections to Inverness;
- (3) make representation to the CAA Safety Regulation Group seeking exemptions from legislation covering major airports which would not be appropriate for the smaller airports in the Highlands and Islands; and
- (4) seek a Meeting with Loganair to discuss their arrangements post October 2008.

PARTNERSHIPS

Annual Report 14 The Partnership Director submitted the draft HITRANS Annual Report 2007/08. The Report highlighted that HITRANS had concentrated on the review of the Regional Transport Strategy, carrying out research and support interventions that would figure highly in the output of the Government's Strategic Transport Review as currently being undertaken by Transport Scotland and investing in improvements in the Public Transport Network across the Highlands and Islands. Members were afforded the opportunity of commenting on the draft Annual Report.

It was agreed:

- (1) to approve the draft Annual Report 2007/08 with the inclusion of the amendments tabled by Members; and
- (2) that the Partnership Director would submit a Report to the next Meeting reviewing HITRANS major achievements in terms of capital expenditure.

Support to Orkney Islands Council 15 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to a request from Orkney Islands Council for HITRANS to provide short term assistance during the period while the Council's Head of Transportation was taking maternity leave.

It was agreed that HITRANS would provide Orkney Islands Council with the services of the Partnership Co-ordinator and other staff as necessary to provide assistance in delivering its Transportation services during the period of the Head of Transportation's maternity leave, subject to the Partnership Director ensuring that HITRANS continued to meet its own commitments.

RTP Chairs Meeting Update 16 The Partnership Director addressed the Meeting and updated Members on the outcome of the recent Meeting of the Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnerships. It was stated that RTP's had expressed concern that they were no longer part of the formal Strategic Transport Planning Review and National Planning Process. Members were informed that Mr Alasdair Watson (STP) would represent Regional Transport Partnerships on the National Transport Strategy Steering Group and that he would report directly to RTP's.

It was agreed:

- (1) **to note the update on the recent Meeting of the Chair's of Regional Transport Partnerships; and**
- (2) **that the note summarising the discussions held at the RTP's Chairs Meeting be included as an appendix to the Minute.**

Programme of Meetings 2009 17 **It was agreed the programme of Meetings for 2009 would be as follows:**

- **5 & 6 February 2009 – Inverness**
- **2 & 3 April 2009– Inverness**
- **4 & 5 June 2009 – Portree**
- **10 & 11 September 2009 – Stornoway**
- **3 & 4 December 2009 – Inverness**

It was further agreed that the Thursday briefings would concentrate on specific items from the Agenda with these items to be notified in advance.

AOCB 18 Members were informed that Graham Spall, Shetlands Islands Council had retired and it was agreed to pass on the best wishes of HITRANS Members to Mr Spall.

It was noted that Mr Charlie King had agreed to perform the opening of the new airports at Coll and Colonsay.

There was general agreement on the benefits of closer liaison between ZetTrans and HITRANS and officers would explore mechanisms to achieve this including video conference linking and agenda sharing.

Mr Donald John Macsween gave Members an update on the proposals for Lochboisdale – Mallaig ferry services. The proposals from Storas Uibhist were currently with the Minister and a response was awaited.

Members were informed that Mr Blair Fletcher was intending to retire on 7 November 2008 and the Chairman, on behalf of HITRANS, wished Mr Fletcher a long and happy retirement.

The Chairman thanked Mr George Macintyre and Moray Council for their hospitality in hosting the Meeting.

APPENDIX

RTP Chairs Meeting 27 August Verbal Report by Director to Board on the Meeting

The Chair's of six of the Regional Partnerships and the vice Chair of the seventh met to discuss common issues and how best to work together and work with government and stakeholders to promote improved transport across the country.

The following topics of interest to the Board were discussed.

The Strategic Transport Projects Review is an important process for all RTPs as it will inform government spending priorities from 2012. The Chairs were concerned that the agreed arrangements for engagement in the process by stakeholders and in particular RTPs had not been implemented in the critical stage of the options appraisal element of the review, and that as a result the conclusions from the Review may be less well received when they emerge. Transport Scotland had indicated the reason for this change was that they had to meet a very tight timescale and that this aspect had to be dropped to allow the review to proceed as required by Government. The Chairs agreed to raise the matter with the Minister at his forthcoming with them.

The Regional Partnerships have been offered a place on the NTS Stakeholder Group and the Chairs agreed this should be taken by Alistair Watson, the Chair of SPT, on the understanding that he would feed back regularly to the other chairs on issues discussed and would seek their input whenever possible. It was agreed that the RTP representative should not engage in any confidential discussions through this forum the details of which he would not be allowed to share with the other Chairs.

The Chairs are keen to work with Government to develop funding mechanisms that might aid Government in delivering necessary transport interventions across the country, particularly those with an importance at regional and national level. To this end the Chairs agreed to establish a Funding Forum to allow informal discussions on this topic to take place between key stakeholders.

Audit Scotland had invited input from the RTPs into their study into the extension to the First Scotrail Franchise and as a result had contacted the Lead Officers to invite their comments on the Audit Scotland proposed Study Programme for the next 2 years. The Chairs welcomed the opportunity given and were keen to engage in the proposed studies on Concessionary Fares, Physical Planning Services in Local Government, the role of Boards, Road Maintenance follow up, and Delivering an Integrated Transport Programme.

The Chairs considered the current position regarding health related transport and agreed that this is an area in which they would wish to discuss with the Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Minister how best progress can be made towards providing the best overall services to health sector users.