

Minute of Meeting held in Golf View Hotel, Nairn, on 3 September 2010 at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Mr Duncan Macintyre (Chairman) - Argyll & Bute Council
 Mr John Laing (Vice Chairman) - The Highland Council
 Mr Jim Foubister – Orkney Islands Council
 Mr Donald Manford – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr George MacIntyre – Moray Council
 Mr Okain McLennan
 Mr Wilson Metcalfe
 Professor David Gray

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Dave Duthie – HITRANS
 Mr Ranald Robertson - HITRANS
 Mr Frank Roach – HITRANS
 Mr Sam MacNaughton – The Highland Council
 Mr Murdo Gray – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr Gordon Holland – Moray Council
 Mr Tony Jarvis – Highlands & Islands Enterprise
 Mr Robert Pollock – Argyll & Bute Council
 Mr Derek Mackay - Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
 Mr Mike Mitchell – The Highland Council
 Mr David Summers – HITRANS Transport Coordinating Officers Group
 Mr Gareth Williams – Scottish Council Development & Industry
 Mrs Pearl Tate – Audit Scotland
 Mr Allan Wishart - ZetTrans
 Mr Michael Craigie - ZetTrans

MINUTE

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| Minute of Meeting of 3 June 2010 | 1 | The Minute of Meeting of 3 June 2010 was approved with the textual amendments detailed at the Meeting. |
| Matters Arising | 2 | The Partnership Director confirmed that he had not yet had a response from SCOTS in relation to a Scotland wide policy for the maintenance of cycleways. The Partnership Director indicated that further work was ongoing through Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to take forward investigation into the needs of the off shore wind sector during the Maintenance and Operation phases of production, and that the findings of the Renewable Energy Transport Infrastructure Study would be of value in informing HITRANS input. |

It was agreed to note the updates.

FINANCE

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| Revenue Budget Monitoring Report | 3 | The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing the Revenue Monitoring position for the period to 31 July 2010. The Report indicated that income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget outturn target and officers were not aware of any anomalies that would distort the overall financial position. |
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It was agreed to note the Revenue Monitoring Report for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 July 2010.

ISA260 - Report to those charged with governance on the 2009/10 audit

- 4 The Chairman welcomed Mrs Pearl Tait, Audit Scotland, to the Meeting. Mrs Tait submitted an Audit Report in relation to the governance of HITRANS 2009/10. The Report stated that the Partnerships financial transactions were processed through the Highlands Council financial systems and Audit Scotland's review of these systems was conducted as part of that council's audit, supplemented by specific audit work on the Partnerships financial statements. No material weaknesses in the accounting and internal control systems were identified and Mrs Tait confirmed that the Auditors Report had been issued without any qualifications.

It was agreed to note:

- (1) Audit Scotland's Report on those charged with governance of HITRANS 2009/10; and**
- (2) that a Report detailing the Action Plan for implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy would be submitted to the December 2010 Meeting.**

Inverness City and Airport Bus Route Development Scheme

- 5 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report detailing progress with the Inverness City and Airport Bus Route Development Scheme. The Report stated that the Scheme had been developed by HITRANS in partnership with Rapson's Coaches who operated the services involved and the main objective was to implement a series of bus initiatives to significantly improve the quality and accessibility of bus provision to Inverness Airport to encourage modal shift and increase patronage. The Report stated that HITRANS would continue to work with the operator to investigate further service improvements and opportunities to grow traffic on the route.

It was agreed to

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) that the Partnership Manager would request that the operator manage the allocation of JET branded buses to ensure that these are used on Airport Link Services.**

DORLAG STAG 2 Grant Request

- 6 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to a request for the provision of grant funding to the cost of a STAG 2 study appraisal from the Dornoch Rail Link Action Group. The Report stated that there was no provision within the revenue programme or the Business Plan for such a study and HITRANS did not make provision for funding to which external organisations could submit bids for support.

It was agreed to recommend:

- (1) that the Partnership Director be authorised to inform the Dornoch Rail Link Action Group that the request for funding by grant for completion of a STAG 2 study for the Dornoch Rail Link had been declined; and**
- (2) the Partnership Director, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair, would be authorised to consider requests for funding and either respond in the negative where the proposals did not fit with development or delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy or agree to a Report being placed before the Board for its consideration at a subsequent meeting, should further bids for funding by external organisations be received.**

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Lochaber Real Time Information Project

- 7 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to proposals to introduce real time information on buses operating on the Fort Link Network in Lochaber. The Report stated that HITRANS had secured funding through the Atlantic Area Interreg IVB Start Project and the introduction of real time information in Lochaber would fit with the primary aims of the Project. The Report highlighted the project costs and timescales for delivery.

It was agreed to approve the allocation of £15,115 from HITRANS research and development budget, ERDF START funding, to deliver the Lochaber Real Time Information Project.

Far North Lines –
Review of Level
Crossings

- 8 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report highlighting opportunities for achieving journey time reductions on Far North and Kyle routes through level crossing upgrades. The Report stated that Scott Wilson Consultants, had been commissioned to carry out a technical study to identify potential journey time savings that could be achieved through level crossing upgrades allowing trains to pass more quickly.

It was agreed:

- (1) that HITRANS would use the findings of the review of level crossing speeds study to press for the phased implementation of upgrades;**
- (2) to note the work being undertaken by Transport Scotland in relation to Safety at level crossings; and**
- (3) Mr Frank Roach would arrange for the inclusion of a prioritisation table as an Appendix to the Study.**

East Coast Rail
Services

- 9 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to East Coast Rail Services. The Report stated that the Foster Report on Inter City Express, published in July 2010, had prompted speculation about the continuation of through London Services from Inverness and Aberdeen. The options within the Foster Report were detailed.

It was agreed to:

- (1) authorise the Partnership Director to appoint consultants to undertake a study into the economic value of the Regions direct transport links with the London hub, both by rail and air; and**
- (2) make provision of £25,000 within the Research and Development Programme to fund the Study.**

Research and
Development
Review

- 10 The Partnership Director submitted a Report providing an update on the Research and Strategy Development Programme. The Report indicated that work was progressing well on much of the content of the Programme. An opportunity had been taken to review progress, priorities and the level of available funding for work that could be undertaken with the particular intention to focus expenditure on actions that would support Government and local authorities in delivering sustainable economic growth by supporting delivery of transport improvements across the HIRTRANS area.

It was agreed to:

- (1) note progress with research/strategy development programme in 2010/11;**
- (2) approve the amendments to the research/strategy development programme 2010/11 as detailed in the appendix to the Report; and**
- (3) Support the bid by the Highland Council for European funding to progress the development of Active Travel projects in their Key Settlements.**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

Argyll and Bute Real
Time Information
Project

- 11 The Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the real time passenger information project in Argyll and Bute which would be funded through HIRTRANS involvement in the Interreg IVB Start Project. The Report stated that the real time system now included a core 24 buses which represented a solid platform from which to extend coverage across the area. The Report highlighted benefits which could be achieved from the roll out of further real time information and coverage of bus route in Argyll and Bute and details of project funding and implementation timescales were detailed.

It was agreed:

- (1) to approve a START Budget adjustment to increase the budget allocation for the Argyll Real Time Information Project from £50,000 to £55,913.81 to deliver the project full; and**
- (2) approve the project implementation plan as detailed in the Report.**

CONSULTATION

Scottish Ferries
Review Consultation
Response

- 12 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the Scottish Government's consultation as part of its Scottish Ferry Review. The Report highlighted a draft response to the consultation on behalf of HITRANS as produced as an output from a Ferries Workshop held on Thursday 2 September and attended by Board Members and Officers, Advisors, Scottish Government officers, Operators' representatives and a representative from the CPMR.

It was agreed:

- (1) to approve the content of the draft HITRANS response to the Scottish Ferries Review consultation as detailed in the Report and the answers to the consultation questions as tabled including particular reference of the need for a longer consultation period for communities and stakeholders to consider the content of the draft Ferries Plan when it was produced; and
- (2) the Chair and Vice Chair be authorised, in consultation with the Partnership Director, and taking account of the Boards view, to finalise the HITRANS response to the Scottish Government Ferries Review Consultation following the Joint Ferry Usage Group of 13 September 2010.

Northern Isles Ferry
Services
Consultation
Response

- 13 The Partnership Director submitted a Report in relation to the Scottish Government consultation on Northern Isles Ferry Services. The Report highlighted a draft response to the consultation on behalf of HITRANS. Members were informed of the apparent anomaly between the timing of the proposed contract period and that of the Scottish Ferries Review which could effectively exclude the Northern Isles services from any benefit arising from the Review.

It was agreed:

- (1) Members would submit their comments in relation to the fourteen questions in the Consultation Document through the Partnership Director to the Chair and Vice-Chair;
- (2) to authorise the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, in consultation with the Partnership Director, having taken account of the Board's views, to finalise the HITRANS response to the Northern Isles Ferry Consultation;
- (3) to approve any other action HITRANS may wish to take in partnership with ZetTrans and the effected local authorities to engage with Scottish Government on the further development of the tender specification;
- (4) to recommend to the Scottish Government that the existing contract be re-negotiated to extend the current service arrangements until such times as the Scottish Ferries Review was completed and its findings could be reflected in the Tender Specification; and
- (5) that HITRANS would engage in any Northern Isles Ferry Services workshop should this be the wish of local authorities and other Regional Transport Partnerships.

PARTNERSHIP

RTP Chairs Meeting
Update

- 14 The Partnership Director updated Members on the outcome and main items considered to the recent meeting of the Chairs of the Regional Transport Partnership. Particular discussion that surrounded access to health care, the National Transport Strategy Refresh and Inter City Rail issues.

It was agreed to note the Report

Programme of Meetings 2011

- 15 The Partnership Director submitted a Report detailing proposed dates for HITRANS Board Meeting during 2011. It was indicated that the April meeting date and potential Agenda content would be considered in the light of any period of purdah in relation to the Scottish Parliamentary Elections.

It was agreed to approve the programme of meetings for the Partnership in 2011 as follows:

- (1) 3 – 4 February 2011, Inverness
- (2) 7 – 8 April 2011, Elgin
- (3) 2 – 3 June 2011, Inverness
- (4) 8 – 9 September 2011, Stornoway
- (5) 1 – 2 December 2011, Inverness

STAFF

Mr Dave Duthie, Mr Ranald Robertson and Mr Frank Roach declared an interest and took no part in the following item.

STAFF Early Retirement/
Voluntary Severance
Conditions

- 16 The Partnership Treasurer submitted a Report detailing proposed amendments to HITRANS policy in relation to compensation payments payable to employees who were made redundant or who retired in the interest of the efficiency of the service. The Report confirmed that the revised policy would follow the revisions recently agreed by The Highland Council.

It was agreed to approve the proposed policy on early retirement/voluntary redundancy scheme for HITRANS as detailed in the Report.

A9 Berriedale Braes
and Kessock Bridge

- 17 Mr Sam MacNaughton submitted a Report detailing progress with Transport Scotland Schemes on the A9 North of Inverness. Discussion in relation to the A9 Berriedale Braes Scheme and the A9 Kessock Bridge refurbishment had taken place at the informal meeting of Board Members in Kirkwall on 3 June 2010. In respect of the A9 Berriedale Braes, a presentation was made at the June informal Meeting of the Board detailing proposals for improving the northern hairpin. In order to support a kick start of the scheme, Highland Council had written to Transport Scotland offering £40k, including £20k of HITRANS funding, to carry out a feasibility soil assessment on the proposed route. While the offer had initially been declined, the matter was raised at a meeting with Mr Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister of Transport who following the Board's discussions which confirmed widespread support for such action, agreed that Transport Scotland should proceed to undertake the feasibility work.

Transport Scotland had confirmed proposals to carry out substantial works to the Kessock Bridge deck. The works would involve potentially closing down each of the carriageways in turn during the summer season for a period of 6 months. Mitigation measures to be put in place during the contract were still under development and Islands Councils had expressed concern at the effect this would have on ferry travellers, particularly those travelling North and West to catch ferries.

It was agreed to:

- (1) **note the Report; and**
- (2) **approve the role Mr John Laing, Vice-Chair, HITRANS would play in co-ordinating interaction with Transport Scotland as they took on the A9 Kessock Bridge Refurbishment Project forward.**