



Minute of Meeting held via
Microsoft Teams on Friday 17
September 2021 at 9.30am.

PRESENT	Cllr Allan Henderson, The Highland Council Member (Chair) Mr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Member Mr Graham Sinclair, Orkney Islands Council Member Cllr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member Mr Graham Leadbitter, Moray Council Substitute Member Mr Robert Andrew, Non Councillor Member Prof David Gray, Non Councillor Board Member Mrs Naomi Bremner, Non Councillor Board Member
IN ATTENDANCE	Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer Mrs Nicole Wallace, The Highland Council Mr Malcolm Macleod, The Highland Council Mrs Tracey Urray, The Highland Council Mr Angus Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mr David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilaeen Siar Ms Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Mrs Laura Cromarty, Orkney Islands Council Mrs Nicola Moss, Moray Council Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council Mr Grant Campbell, SCDI Ms Jayne Golding, HITRANS Ms Gemma Robinson, HITRANS Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
APOLOGIES	Cllr John Cowe, Moray Council Member (Vice Chair) Mr Robert Andrew (from 11.00am) Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager Mr Jim Buck, Orkney Islands Council
Declaration of Interest	Mr Robert Andrew indicated that he had retired as Stagecoach Scotland Regional Director in June 2020 and was employed on a part-time basis as a Director of Scottish Citylink.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021	1	The Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021 was approved .
Matters Arising	2	Mr Ranald Robertson provided the following updates: Item 10 – The Chairman and Partnership Director would meet Mr Graeme Dey, Minister for Transport next week and would include rural bus and community transport challenges in the discussion. Item 13 – A soft launch of the Scottish Islands Passport app had taken place. The app is available to download from the Apple Appstore and Google Play for Android.

Item 14 – The Case for Change Fastline Faslane Report had been shared with Transport Scotland.

Item 15 – Funding was in place for the feasibility study into the re-opening of Evanton Station and a Report would be submitted to the Partnership as the work progresses.

FINANCE

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 3 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, submitted the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The summary statement was attached as an Appendix to the Report and detailed the financial position for the year ended 31 March 2021 which showed an overspend of £3,058. The Report indicated that the overspend had been deducted from the General Fund Reserve and would leave a balance of £4,014 to be carried forward to 2021/22 financial year.

It was agreed to approve the Report and attached schedule showing the final outturn revenue monitoring position for the year ended 31 March 2021.

HITRANS Annual Audit Report 4 Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer provided a verbal update in relation to the Annual Audit Report. Due to the impact of COVID-19 the deadline for publishing the audited accounts was 31 November. The draft audited accounts would be considered at the HITRANS meeting on 12 November 2021.

It was agreed to note the update.

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021 5 With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Mike Mitchell, Partnership Treasurer, submitted the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021. The Report stated that the annual budget was approved at the Board Meeting held on 5 February 2021 and had subsequently been amended for the inclusion of the General Reserve Fund balance carried forward of £4,014. The summary statement was attached as an Appendix to the Report and detailed the financial position to 31 August 2021 which showed that in total income and expenditure was broadly in line with the budget out-turn target.

It was agreed to approve the Report and attached schedule showing the revenue monitoring position for the period to 31 August 2021.

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2021/22 6 With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Randal Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing an update on progress on delivering the Research and Strategy Development programme and sought approval of amendments to the programme to reflect commitments made and changing priorities identified since approval of the 2021/22 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 23 April 2021.

It was agreed to note the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2021/22 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

Regional Transport Strategy Update 7 With reference to item 17 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 February 2021, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report in relation to the update of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The Report indicated that Officers would engage with Transport Scotland and each Local Authority partner to help finalise the scope of the RTS update. Where it was deemed necessary, Officers may engage some external support to help in the preparation of specific elements of the updated Strategy and Delivery Plan including the collation of baseline information, undertaking of Impact assessments and arranging of workshops. Where appropriate additional meetings would be arranged to ensure the

input of Members, advisors and other key stakeholder was captured at each stage of the update.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report; and**
- (2) that Board Members and Partnership Advisors would submit comments on the Regional Transport Strategy Update to Neil Macrae; and**
- (3) to approve the initial allocation of £20,000 to support the Regional Transport Strategy Update.**

Sound of Barra /
Harris Socio-
Economic Case for
Change

8 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on a commission considering the socioeconomic case for improving ferry services across the Sounds of Barra and Harris. The Report indicated that Transport Scotland had stated that any changes to the current timetables which were not cost-neutral would require in the first instance a strong business case to support any increase in the frequency of services and/or the operating day that would come at additional cost to the contract. HITRANS, in partnership with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, had commissioned work to identify the socio-economic case for supporting the requests for improved connectivity across the Sounds of Barra and Harris.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Fair Fares Appraisal

9 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report to consider a proposal for HITRANS to undertake a Fair Fares Appraisal. The Report stated that the Scottish Governments Programme for Government outlined a commitment to commission a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to transport fares. In support of this commitment the Board was invited to consider a proposal for HITRANS to undertake early work to consider a number of issues and supporting information relating to fair fares in the context of the Highlands and Islands.

It was agreed to:

- (1) consider the scope of the proposed appraisal; and**
- (2) approve the recommended budget to undertake the work and authorise Officers to prepare a detailed specification and procure the services of a transport consultant with suitable experience to undertake the appraisal**

ScotRail Timetable
Consultation

10 Mr Ranald Robertson presented a Report a Report providing an update on proposed May 2022 ScotRail timetable changes. The Report stated that ScotRail had carried out extensive analysis of its routes in the post Covid world. The Report detailed that at the start of lockdown an emergency timetable was introduced to enable key workers to travel at the same time as government messaging was not to travel. Services were halved and evening services curtailed. The Report indicated that as lockdown restrictions were lifted services were reintroduced with a marked return of leisure, discretionary travel compared to business and commuting use.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report;**
- (2) that members be invited to identify other areas for inclusion in the formal response which is due in on 1 October; and**

(3) that the draft response would be circulated to Board Members and Partnership Advisors for final comments prior to submission.

MaaS Project 11 Mr Randal Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report providing an update on the HITRANS (Mobility as a service) MaaS Project. The Report stated that following securing of MaaS Investment Fund support in December 2019 the HITRANS MaaS project was now underway. The Report indicated that the HITRANS MaaS Solution was called GO-HI and was launched at MVP (Minimum Viable Product) stage on 21 June 2021.

The Report detailed that GO-HI was a Regional, multi-modal journey planning system using real-time data that offers account-based payment available to all users for all participating mobility options. The Report indicated that the funding obtained was intended for an initial 6-month live pilot project but through internal virement of budget and additional funding from the Stronger Combined North Sea Region Project it had been possible to launch the platform for a 24-month period by which time it was hoped that the platform would become sustainable based on use.

It was agreed to note the Report.

FWOAR 12 Mr Randal Robertson presented a Report a Report providing an update on the Study to investigate opportunities for additional services around Fort William. The Report indicated that Systra were engaged to carry out some What If? timetabling work, based on an additional Class 156 being available, and two theoretical new stations at Torlundy Nevis Range and Carrs Corner Lochy Bridge. The Systra Study proposed a number of options for new local services to/from Fort William and officers will engage with Network Rail, ScotRail and Transport Scotland.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Demand Responsive Transport Ap 13 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on work by HITRANS to commission and deploy a demand responsive transport app that would help support the operation, booking and marketing of non-scheduled transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Report stated that the contract was being advertised on Public Contract Scotland and it was hoped that a contract award could be made by early November 2021.

It was agreed to:

(1) note the Report; and

(2) consider local non-scheduled bus services that would benefit from the introduction of the Demand Responsive Transport smartphone app in the HITRANS area.

Active Travel Update 14 With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer, submitted a Report providing an update on Active Travel projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. The Report stated that HITRANS received an additional £332,220 to the Regional Active Travel Fund from Transport Scotland in March 2021, which enabled the delivery of the following four projects:

- Folding Bike Hire Kiosks
- Wick Whitechapel Road access improvements
- Fort William – Glenfinnan feasibility study
- Active Travel Link; Inverness Airport – Dalcross Station

The Report indicated that HITRANS had been awarded £381,000 for projects in 2021-22 financial year and the following projects were being taken forward:

- Transport Integration
- Active Travel Masterplan Interventions
- Active Travel Project Design

The Report stated that Sustrans Partnership Funding projects would be delivered under three headings this financial year:

- Inner Moray Firth Active Travel Masterplans
- Rural Spaces
- 20-Minute Rural Neighbourhoods

It was agreed to note the Report and consider opportunities for advancing projects within the Active Travel funding streams which would support HITRANS wider policy objectives and priorities.

Going with the Flow	15	Mr Ranald Robertson presented a Report a Report on the Altnabreac Timber by Rail Demonstrator Project which sought to investigate the potential to divert timber off local roads and on to rail. The Report provided details of the project partners, potential funding sources and timescales.
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It was agreed to note the Report.

Hydrobus	16	Mr Ranald Robertson presented a Report a Report providing an update on the hydrogen bus trial in Inverness which will operate in October/November 2021 to coincide with COP26. HITRANS had funded the provision of a mobile hydrogen refueller to support the trial.
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It was agreed to note the Report.

20 Minute neighbourhoods	17	Mr Ranald Robertson presented a Report in respect of the commitment withing the 2020 Programme for Government for the Scottish Government to work with local government and other partners to take forward ambitions for 20-Minute neighbourhoods. The research network ClimateXChange had published a Report which made several recommendations across policy, national and local delivery and research in order to realise the ambitions of 20-minute neighbourhoods in Scotland.
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It was agreed to note the Report.

Bus Partnership Fund	18	With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 23 April 2021, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on progress with delivering the successful applications made by Highland Council to the Scottish Government’s Bus Partnership Fund. The Report provided a summary of the projects and indicated that HITRANS were working with partners to develop an application for the Oban and Lorne area.
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It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the recruitment of a Bus Partnership Fund Project Manager based on the Job Description / Person Specification included as an appendix to the Report.**

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

- EU Funding Consolidated Update 19 Ms Jayne Golding, Projects and Policy Manager submitted a Report providing an update on HITRANS involvement in European funded projects. This included programmes Interreg North Sea Region, Interreg VA Cross Border, Interreg North West Europe and European Commission Connect 2020. Feedback was welcome on additional information that might be helpful to include in the projects log.

It was agreed to note the Report.

- FASTER Project Update 20 Ms Gemma Robinson, FASTER Project Officer submitted a Report providing an update on the development of the FASTER (Facilitating a Sustainable Transition to Electric Vehicle's in the Region) project funded through the INTERREG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It was intended to install 24 rapid charge points across the HITRANS area.

It was agreed to note the Report.

CONSULTATION

- Transport (Scotland) Act – Bus Services Consultation 21 Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager submitted a Report inviting Members to consider HITRANS response to the consultation on Implementing the new Bus Provisions in Part 3 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

It was agreed to:

- (1) To note the Report;**
- (2) To authorise the Chair and Partnership Director to prepare and submit a finalised response to Implementing the new Bus Provisions in Part 3 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 consultation on behalf of HITRANS; and**
- (3) that the draft response would be circulated to Board Members and Partnership Advisors for final comments prior to submission.**

PARTNERSHIP

- Programme of Meetings 2022 22 Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report advising Members on the proposed dates for Partnership Board and Permanent Advisors meetings in 2022. The Report stated that after establishing that the approach was more effective than a hybrid of in person and video conferencing all future Partnership Advisor meetings are proposed to meet on a virtual basis.

It was agreed that HITRANS Partnership and Advisors meet in 2022 on the following dates and locations:

DATE	PARTNERSHIP MEETING	ADVISORS MEETING	LOCATION
20 January 2022		Morning	Virtual
4 February 2022	Partnership Board Meeting		Virtual
31 March 2022		Morning	Virtual
22 April 2022	Partnership Board Meeting		Inverness
25 August 2022		Morning	Virtual
15/16 September 2022	Evening Meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning		Eilean Siar
27 October 2022		Morning	Virtual
10/11 November 2022	Evening Meeting followed by full Partnership meeting on Friday Morning		Argyll and Bute