



Minute of Meeting held in Moray Council Offices
on Friday 10 November 2023 at 9.30am

PRESENT Mr Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Member (Chair)
Ms Amber Dunbar, Moray Council Member (Vice-Chair)
Mr Andrew Kain, Argyll and Bute Council Member
Mr David Dawson, Orkney Islands Council Member
Mr Robert Andrew, Non-Councillor Member

APOLOGIES Mr Ken Gowans, The Highland Council Member
Ms Carolyn Moir, Partnership Treasurer

IN ATTENDANCE Cllr Paul Oldham, The Highland Council
Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director
Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager
Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager
Ms Vikki Trelfer, Active Travel Officer
Ms Kelly Wiltshire, Moray Council
Mr James Buck, Orkney Islands Council
Mr Malcolm MacLeod, The Highland Council
Mr Fergus Murray, Argyll & Bute Council
Mr David Macleod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mrs Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Nicholas Sobey, HIE
Mr Grant Campbell, SCDI
Mr Derek Mackay, Partnership Secretary
Mr Chris Finlay, HITRANS
Ms Gemma Robinson, HITRANS
Ms Sarah Compton Bishop, HITRANS
Ms Katy Beasley, HITRANS
Mr Matthew Glennon, HITRANS
Ms Rebecca Purvis, HITRANS
Mr Robert Wilson, HITRANS
Ms Leah Mackay, HITRANS

Declaration of Interest Mr Robert Andrew declared that he had retired as Stagecoach Scotland Regional Director in June 2020 and acted as an advisor to Scottish Citylink.

Mrs Naomi Bremner declared that she had provided consultancy support to Stantec in the preparation of the Preliminary Appraisal Report for the draft Regional Transport Strategy.

MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023 1 Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023 was **approved**.

Matters Arising	2	Mr Robert Andrew indicated that a Confederation of Passenger Transport Conference would be held in June 2024. Mr Ranald Robertson indicated that the SATE Project Team would be delivering a presentation to the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on 29 November 2023. Mr Robertson would circulate the presentation to Local Authority partners. It was agreed to note the updates. FINANCE
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 1 April to 30 September 2023	3	With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023 Ms Carolyn Moir, Partnership Treasurer, submitted a Report setting out the revenue monitoring position for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023 and the projected year end position. It was agreed to approve the revenue monitoring position for the period to 30 September 2023 as detailed in the Report.
Statement of Internal Control 2022/23	4	This item was withdrawn. RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY
Research/Strategy Development Programme for 2023/24	5	With reference to item 7 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Mr Ranald 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, changing priorities and funding opportunities identified since approval of the 2023/24 Business Plan at the Partnership meeting on 21 April 2023. The Report stated that the programme had been amended to reflect changes that had been identifies to the circumstances surrounding some projects. The key programme changes was an increase in the budget for the RURALITIES project for the current year to £100,000 as HITRANS were to receive additional budget from another partner dropping out. This was 100% funded by the EU Horizon Europe Programme. Appendix A to the Report provided detailed information on each change. It was agreed to approve the amendments to the Research and Strategy Development Programme 2023/24 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.
Active Travel Update	6	With reference to item 13 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Ms Vikki Trelfer submitted a Report providing an update on Active Travel Projects in which HITRANS were currently involved. The Report stated that for the 2023/24 financial year HITRANS had been awarded £955,000 from Transport Scotland's Regional Active Travel Fund. The Report provided a progress update on each of the programmes. The Report further provided an update on HI-BIKE stating that HITRANS would be taking on the assets from the Forth Bike and Go-eBIKE schemes which would allow the expansion of HI-BIKE within the current operating areas and potentially new Regional centres. It was agreed to: (1) note the Report: and (2) approve the recommendation to employ up to 2 x FTE eBike Technicians to maintain the HI Bike system on initial 2-year fixed term contracts.

Local Authority Ferries Investment – Capital Funding Case for Change	7	With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report on the case for capital investment to support resilience on local authority operated lifeline ferry services. It was highlighted that the Report had been updated to reflect comments from Members and Advisors at the September Partnership Meeting. The Report stated that local authorities which operated 'lifeline' ferry services had worked with partner Regional Transport Partnerships to develop a briefing paper setting out the current capital funding context and future financial requirements for necessary investment in vessels and infrastructure. The Report indicated that a solution for revenue funding of the ferry services had progressed, and it was highlighted that this was a very positive development. The Report detailed that the key issue now was capital funding for new vessels and infrastructure given the advanced age of the current ferry fleets. It was agreed to: (1) note the Report; and (2) authorise the Partnership Director to include the comments from Members in the final version prior to publication.
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) Update	8	With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Ms Gemma Robinson, EVIF Project Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on regional activity by a project management shared service under the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (EVIF) which was a shared service covering Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Moray Council, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council. It was agreed to note the Report.
Regional Transport Strategy Update	9	With reference to item 8 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Mr Neil Macrae, Partnership Manager, submitted a Report providing an update on the development of a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The Report stated that the development of the RTS involved three broad stages: ● Stage 1 – The Case for Change ● Stage 2 – Option Generation and Preliminary Options Appraisal ● Stage 3 – RTS Document The Report stated that HITRANS officers had been working with Stantec (who had been commissioned to support the development of the HITRANS RTS) to develop an initial working draft of policies and actions that would support the delivery of the RTS Strategy Objectives, and by extension address the transport problems identified. The Report indicated that officers would be arranging meetings with each Partner Council to discuss the draft set of policies and actions, which were detailed at Appendix A to the Report. It was agreed: (1) to note the Report; (2) to consider and provide feedback on the draft policies and action identified to address the options developed through the development of the initial stages in the RTS report and attached as Appendix A to the Report; (3) to issue a media statement of support to the dualling of the A96 and the Elgin and Keith By-Passes; and (4) that HITRANS Chair and Partnership Director be authorised to consider opportunities to support the launch of the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)	10	Ms Rebecca Purvis, Project Officer – Digital and DRT, submitted a Report providing an update on the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) App currently being deployed by HITRANS to help support the operation, booking and marketing of non-scheduled transport services across the Highlands and Islands. The Report stated that following a series of initial meeting with each Local Authority to identify services that could benefit from the DRT system and the hosting of webinars to demonstrate the application of the app to potential operators and community transport organisations, the phased rollout of the services was well underway. A summary of the services involved and work to date for each Local Authority was detailed within the Report.
-----------------------------------	----	---

It was agreed to note the Report.

Scottish Islands Passport Project Update	11	With reference to item 11 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 April 2023 Ms Katy Beasley, Scottish Islands Passport Manager, provided an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. The Report stated that the second in the series of island travelogues would launch in the run up to Christmas and that work on the next two travelogues had started. The third full travelogue would be based on the theme of sustainable and active travel and the fourth would be a revision of the pilot travelogue Eat, Drink and Explore but with double the number of islands than the original.
--	----	--

It was agreed to note the Report.

Community Bus Fund	12	Mr Neil MacRae, Partnership Manager submitted an update on the Community Bus Fund, which had been launched by the Scottish Government on 22 September 2023. The Report stated that the Community Bus Fund would provide funding of over £5m this financial year to support local authorities to explore the full range of options set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, including municipal bus services.
--------------------	----	--

The details for the reporting mechanisms in association with this grant would be discussed and agreed with CoSLA and ATCO representatives following the launch. The Report further stated that HITRANS had submitted an application to the resource fund for £35k to develop an information and ticketing strategy for the HITRANS area.

It was agreed to note the Report.

Shared Services Update - Public Transport Information Provision	13	With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 November 2023, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, submitted a Report on the shared service model for co-ordinating the provision of public transport information across the HITRANS area. The contract for the supply of the public transport database was awarded in July 2020 to METZ who provide the database to Transport for London. Downstream data is supplied to Traveline Scotland and real time suppliers from the database including VIX who manage real-time display assets across the HITRANS area. Work to improve the source information received from operators is being done with the operators themselves and Local Authorities.
---	----	---

It was agreed to:

- (1) note the Report; and**
- (2) approve the appointment of a Public Transport Information Officer on a permanent basis.**

Rail Round Up	14	Mr Frank Roach, Partnership Manager submitted a Report providing an update on rail projects. The appraisal for additional services around Fort William had been completed and the Report detailed the impact of the case for investment and national and local levels. Updates were provided in relation to Fastline Faslane, Evanton Station, Inverness Station Masterplan and Waste Not.
---------------	----	---

It was agreed to approve the Report.

EUROPEAN PROJECTS

EU Funding Consolidated Update	15	With reference to item 18 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 September 2023, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director, 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 Horizon Europe. HITRANS is currently involved in four active European projects, as well as providing support to the Low Carbon Travel and Transport (LCTT) projects. The Appendix to the Report provided details on all projects including status, timelines, description of main activities, Gantt Chart, and a consolidated budgets table. As of August 2023, HITRANS total budget for European projects was £3,347,744.82. It was agreed to note the Report.
FASTER Project	16	With reference to item 14 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 April 2023 Ms Gemma Robinson, FASTER Project Officer submitted a Report on the development of the FASTER project funded through the INTEREGG VA Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Report stated that the project had launched in October 2020 and was a joint proposal between seven partners across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland to support the overarching ambitions to transition to low carbon transport systems. The key objective of FASTER was to install 73 interoperable rapid charge points (50kw capacity) in the INTERREG VA region by June 2023., ensuring the availability of charging stations is not a major obstacle to EV Market penetration. It would also provide an additional supportive, emerging environment for suppliers and consumers, providing increased confidence and reassurance in regional commitment to the emerging EV market. It was agreed to note the Report.
Risk Management and Risk Register Update November 2023	17	Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report in respect of the review of the Strategic, Management/Operational and Financial risks faced by the Partnership and through doing so ensure significant risks are identified, evaluated and controlled. The Report stated that the HITRANS Risk Register was subject to annual review, the latest of which was undertaken in November 2022. This has, again, been reviewed by Officers to ensure it continues to support the good management of the major risks faced by HITRANS. The revised list of risk management controls was appended to the Report. It was agreed to approve adoption of the HITRANS Risk Register November 2023 as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.
Staff Payroll	18	Mrs Gillian Morrison, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, submitted a Report which sought approval to align staff salary scales and grades with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, who provide the HITRANS Human Resources function. It was indicated in the Report that automation into the system would allow increments and pay awards to automatically be awarded to staff payroll and prevent pay awards/increments being missed. It was agreed to: (1) note the Report; (2) approve the adoption and alignment of HITRANS staff salary scales and grades with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES); and (3) place the Partnership Managers (THC) SCP54, backdated to April 2021.

With reference to item 6 of the Minute of meeting of 15 September 2023, Mr Ranald Robertson, Partnership Director submitted a Report seeking approval of the revised Scheme of Delegation detailed in the Appendix to the Report. The Report stated that the Partnership's Legal Advisor and Partnership Director had undertaken a review of the Scheme of delegation to ensure it remained fit for purpose and proposed a number of minor amendments for the Board's consideration.

It was agreed to adopt the Scheme of Delegation as enclosed in the Appendix to the Report.