

HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy – Main Issues Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 HITRANS is now carrying out an exercise, similar to SEStran's RTS revision, to revise their regional transport strategy. They have published a Main Issues Report (MIR) for comment.
- 1.2 As part of the Main Issues Report there is a questionnaire with six main questions. The proposed response from SEStran is discussed below.

2. Main Issues

HITRANS have identified six main issues:

2.1 Economy

Due to the relative remoteness of some communities in the HITRANS area, there is a need to reduce travel times and improve connectivity to ensure businesses can efficiently transport goods to their markets and people can carry out business effectively.

Inverness Airport and rail stations are identified as key hubs for development.

2.2 Communities

Access deprivation has been identified as a key issue within the HITRANS area, with 18 – 24% of households not having access to a car. This can adversely affect the ability of residents to participate in everyday life especially in remote rural areas.

2.3 Lifeline transport

With the reduction of budgets for subsidising bus services there is an increase in the number of people without access to conventional bus services and the potential benefits of unlimited free travel.

2.4 Reliability and resilience

Recently there have been public transport reliability problems, mainly weather related. Cancellation of ferries and flights has been a particular problem as well as road and rail closures causing travel disruption.

2.5 Relationships and responsibilities

The responsibility for various transport facilities is split between Scottish Government, HITRANS and local authorities. Clarity in the roles that each partner undertakes will provide a more consistent approach.

2.6 Carbon Reduction

The role of HITRANS in reducing developing low carbon transport needs further development.

3. Discussion

- 3.1** The Main Issues Report identifies the relevant changes that have taken place since the last RTS and the emerging issues in the HITRANS area. A copy of the report can be found on the HITRANS web site:
[www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Corporate Documents/Strategy](http://www.hitrans.org.uk/Corporate/Corporate%20Documents/Strategy)
- 3.2** In contrast to the SEStran RTS, the main issues for HITRANS seem to be trying to improve accessibility by public transport and car to jobs and facilities especially from remote communities. This implies that there is a significantly different approach to the perceived travel problems.
- 3.3** As part of a consultation process, HITRANS has defined six questions for stakeholders and partners. As can be seen from the questions below they are rightly aimed at a local audience and not specifically aimed at gaining comments from other RTPs.
- Does the draft MIR fairly reflect the changes in policy and trends since the publication of first RTS in 2008?
 - Does the MIR fairly reflect the changes in key issues since the publication of the first RTS?
 - Are the draft RTS objectives appropriate and fitting?
 - HITRANS is currently responsible for the production of the RTS for their area. In terms of the HITRANS' role and activities, from your perspective what works well and why?
 - In terms of roles and activities what could be changed for the future as part of the refresh?
 - What are the key policies and proposals that should be focused upon?
- 3.4** In general HITRANS have focussed on areas of transport that are of particular importance to them as identified above. Accessibility appears to be a key issue but I would like to have seen more discussion on transport sustainability especially in connection with new development and the development of hubs.
- 3.5** Therefore it is proposed to respond to the consultation supporting the approach to the refresh and its focus on local issues. Comments as discussed above should also be included.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Board notes the development of the HITRANS RTS proposed comments on MIR as discussed above.

Alastair Short
Strategy Manager
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Policy Implications	None
Financial Implications	None
Race Equalities Implications	None
Gender Equalities Implications	None
Disability Equalities Implications	None
Climate Change Implications	None