

Regional Transport Partnerships Joint Chairs Meeting

Held at Castlebay Hotel, Isle of Barra on 2nd March 2016 at 0900

Minute of Meeting

Present: Cllr James Stockan, HITRANS (Chair)
Cllr Russell Imrie, SEStran
Cllr Tom McAughtrie, SWestrans
Cllr Will Dawson, Tactran
Cllr Michael Stout, Chair, ZetTrans
Cllr Peter Argyle, Nestrans
Cllr Jonathan Findlay, SPT

In attendance: Ranald Robertson, HITRANS (RR)
Derick Murray, Nestrans (DM)
Alex Macaulay, SEStran (AM)
Eric Guthrie, Tactran (EG)
Jayne Westbrook, HITRANS (Minutes)
Gordon Dickson, SPT (GD)
Douglas Kirkpatrick, SWestrans (DK)
Michael Craigie, ZetTrans (MC)

Apologies: Ewen Milligan, Transport Scotland
Tom Davy, Transport Scotland
Steven Herriot, Swestrans
Bruce Kiloh, SPT
Eric Stewart, SPT
George Eckton, CoSLA

Item	Action
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Stockan welcomed all to the meeting and noted the apologies received above.</p>	
<p>2. Host Presentation by HITRANS</p> <p>RR presented an overview of Barra Airport to the Chairs.</p> <p>Barra Airport opened in 1936 and in 2015 was dubbed 'best flight experience in the world'. HITRANS has supported the Barra air service over the years, however flying hours are limited due to tidal restrictions. Future plans are to address infrastructure struggles and continue to make the case for investment. The new PSO contract contains marketing requirements to dispel current beliefs that flights are too expensive and promote the island as an affordable place to visit, with fares regulated to a maximum of £150 fee even if booked short notice.</p>	

3. Minute of RTP Chairs Meeting on 2nd December 2016 and Matters Arising

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

Smart Ticketing: The group discussed an Action from the previous meeting (Item 12), regarding inviting Transport Scotland to the Lead Officers meeting to discuss smart & integrated ticketing, and how RTPs can support delivery. RR invited TS to the last RTP Lead Officers meeting where Bill Reeve from TS presented. The decision was made to re-action this.

Action: Lead Officers to take forward meetings with Transport Scotland regarding smart and integrated ticketing delivery & outcomes. RR

Cllr Stout suggested the need for Chairs to put pressure on driving forward the Transport Minister's ideas for smart ticketing. EG added that there is a short timeframe for ERDF funding so critical to follow up with TS on how RTPs can contribute. DM suggested a letter be composed to reinforce ambition.

Discussion followed regarding the integration of smart card travel – is it fully integrated for an entire journey wherever you live? Demand must be put on TS to ensure ticketing is smart *and* integrated and regulations are required.

Action: Write letter to the Minister detailing objectives/aspirations and support for the Minister's objectives for smart and integrated ticketing. RR to draft the letter and discuss detail with officers. RR

Audit Scotland Feedback: EG provided a verbal update relating to Item 3(ii) of previous meeting 'Audit Scotland Roads Maintenance Review'. A draft report is anticipated shortly and will be confidential, but can be shared between the steering group & Lead Officers.

EG

Action: EG will provide an update at the next Chairs meeting once report is released.

Item 11 Action (National Low Emissions Framework): Not much progress since last update but beneficial to bring forward to later item on agenda.

Item 16 Action on EU projects & ERDF: RR referred to the action where TS ensured that RTPs would be provided with information on ERDF going forward. TS are holding an event on 24th March to discuss ERDF and gives an opportunity to network & discover other EU projects.

Cllr Stout suggested that Chairs invite the Minister to the next meeting. RR did not follow-up an invite to this meeting due to the location and upcoming elections.

Action: RR to invite Minister to next meeting in June with early engagement. RR

4. Standards Commission Advice on RTP Board Member Involvement in Planning Decisions

DM provided an update emailed by Joanne Grey & Ewan Milligan to inform members of the current position. There have been some developments and Scottish Ministers have agreed to consult revision on code of conduct – expected in Summer 2016.

5. Transport for Regional Growth Seminar

AM reported on SEStran's successful Regional Growth Conference held on 5th November 2015, and suggested that the conference be repeated on a regular basis perhaps every two years as a wider RTP conference, including participation by CoSLA. Group are in support of this, with potential first RTP conference taking place in Autumn 2016. Cllr Findlay also suggested that individual regional seminars be held during the years in-between the conferences to discuss regional aspects – group are in agreement.

6. Active/Sustainable Travel Update

(i) Cycling Scotland / Sustrans Update

EG reported that a planned meeting with Active Travel organisations has not taken place yet. The Director of Sustrans could not attend the last lead officers meeting. It is intended to extend the invitation to Neil Langhorn of Transport Scotland again to build on active travel discussions.

(ii) Smarter Choices Smarter Places Update

AM updated on the Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding for 2016/17. The funding will be on the same basis as last year, with an allocation to 32 local authorities depending on size, with minimum allocation of 50,000 for smaller authorities, and will be administered by Paths for All. The funding by-passed RTPs but it's referred to in the documentation that local authorities should coordinate with RTPs.

DM stated that local authorities with tighter budgets and smaller staffing are struggling to match fund and provide resources to deliver. EG added that we are over-subscribed with match-funding. Cllr Stockan suggested it as an item to take forward to the Minister.

7. Bus Issues

(i) Bus Stakeholder Group/ Bus Service Registration

GD provided an update from recent discussions at the Bus Stakeholder Group.

(ii) Transport Focus Bus Survey 2016

EG discussed the bus passenger satisfaction survey with an estimated cost of c£70-80,000. EG requested that RTPs put appropriate contribution in (e.g. £10-15,000) collectively to build on previous work.

Cllr Findlay stated the importance of working together with the bus industry; not just commercial companies but also community transport. EG will continue with dialogue of collaborative contribution.

8. NTS Refresh

RR discussed the National Transport Strategy Refresh paper for noting. In April 2015 the Minister for Transport and the Islands announced a refresh of Scotland's NTS, in partnership with CoSLA. It recommends a deeper review of the NTS in the next Scottish Parliamentary term. Discussion followed regarding RTPs involvement with the refresh.

Action: The Secretariat to draft a letter to the Minister offering the role of RTPs as partner with CoSLA should the proposed revision of the NTS go forward in the new Parliament. This action should take place once a new Minister is in place as this will determine if a new NTS review is to go forward. BK

Discussion followed regarding the setup of a joint RTPs website due to some webpages on TS no longer functioning. Cllr Dawson suggested a link from RTPs and TS websites rather than creating a standalone website.

Action: Lead Officers will explore option of Joint Chairs website/webpage and take back as Item for the next Chairs meeting. Lead Officers

9. Air Service Update**(i) Air Service Scoping Paper**

RR provided an update of the Air Service Scoping Paper. Issues are being pulled together to present a paper at the next Island Transport Forum. Working closely with TS, RR hopes for a draft scoping paper by end of March 2016.

SCDI were commissioned to produce an online survey to help gather views on the existing services & discover the most important issues to passengers. Over 1400 responses were received with results currently being reviewed. Main themes emerging are the high fares to the Islands & unreliable services, resulting in increased land travel over air due to the possibility of missed meetings, etc. The scoping paper should inform necessary remedial action.

10. Ferries Update

(i) Northern Isles Ferry Service Contract STAG

MC discussed the need for more engagement with businesses, communities, etc. and to tackle the issues of fares. There is a limited time to conclude study (October 2016 deadline) so must move quickly. MC believes it is well-intended and set out but underestimates significant fares issue. Costs & reliability are key influences on decisions to move to Orkney, Shetland, etc. and are thus major influences on economic impacts on the Islands.

11. Rail Issues

(i) High Speed Rail

AM reported that they are awaiting with interest information from the Cabinet Secretary and Minister on progress with high speed rail, and are hoping for an announcement in the next couple of weeks before the onset of purdah. AM will advise once the meeting date has been announced, with provisional date being 9th March.

(ii) ECMA

AM reported on the upcoming board meeting which Cllr Dawson & Cllr Imrie will be attending. Virgin East Coast held a session in York as part of its proactive liaison with stakeholders, discussing set-up communications, staff & website. Meetings will be held in Scottish Parliament & Westminster after the Scottish elections & referendum.

EG questioned if there is a requirement for RTPs to make a financial contribution to ECMA next year? AM responded that the paper going to the joint board next week will cover the budget & these aspects.

Discussion followed regarding plans to develop the network, including north of Edinburgh developments, perceived risks of the current service & aspirations for Inverness-London routes.

Action: The RTPs serviced by the ECML would write to the ORR EG to express concern at the risk of open access operations undermining the opportunity for the franchisee to improve Scottish services.

(iii) Scotland Route Study

RR provided an update on the Scotland Route Study and highlighted the paper for noting. Consultation is currently ongoing with response due by 10th March.

12. National Concessionary Travel Scheme Entitlement

RR highlighted the report which covers the most recent meeting of the CoSLA Development Economy & Sustainability Committee considering issues regarding entitlements with the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. RR noted that RTPs have been asked to provide information on local and regional entitlements provided over and above National Concessionary Travel Schemes in their areas.

RR

Action: RR will send out a template.

13. RTP Secretariat / Lead Officer External Representation

The changeover of RTP Secretariat from HITRANS to SPT will come into effect from 3 March 2016. Discussion followed regarding the list of responsibilities reallocated due to the retirement of SEStran's Partnership Director.

Cllr Findlay agreed that SPT will provide a candidate but to take the place on BRT UK. BRT UK will invite that nominee to be the replacement.

14. AOB

Date of next meeting: 15th June (Swestrans)
Location: Gatehouse of Fleet (near Stranraer)