

23 March 2023

Ariane Burgess MSP  
Convener  
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

By email: [localgov.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:localgov.committee@parliament.scot)

Dear Ms. Burgess

**Re: Inquiry into Community Planning**

Thank you for your letter of 6 March, advising of the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee post-legislative scrutiny of Part 2 of the Community Empowerment Act 2015, which created requirements for community planning. I have attempted to respond to your enquiries below:

**1. How HITRANS engages with the CPP and works in partnership with other members.**

**HITRANS engages in the community planning process across all five of our Community Planning Partnership areas. The detail by local authority area is set out below:**

**Argyll and Bute Council** – HITRANS is a partner with representation on the Community Planning Partnership Board. Our representative on the Board is the HITRANS elected board member for Argyll and Bute Council. In addition to this HITRANS Partnership Director represents HITRANS on the CPP Management Committee

**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar** – HITRANS is a partner with representation on the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Board. Our representative on the Board is the HITRANS Partnership Director. In addition to this HITRANS officers also take part in CPP sub-group meetings in areas relevant to Transportation including in areas such as sustainable population. The local transport strategy for the Outer Hebrides was designed to reflect the Outer Hebrides CPP area more broadly than focussing on the Council’s own transportation responsibilities and HITRANS worked closely with partners on the development of this Strategy.

**Highland Council** – HITRANS is not represented on the Board of the Highland Community Planning Partnership nor are we represented on the senior officers group. Our input to this Community Planning Partnership is limited to being involved as a partner in the Highland Outcome Improvement Partnership Infrastructure Group. HITRANS officers have suggested that involvement at Board and Senior Officer Groups in the Highland CPP would better reflect our status as a key agency in the Community Engagement Act.

**Moray Council** – HITRANS is a partner with representation on the Community Planning Partnership Board. Our representative on the Board is the HITRANS elected board member for Moray Council. In addition to this HITRANS Partnership Director represents HITRANS on the Community Planning Officers Group.

**Orkney Islands Council** – HITRANS is a partner with representation on the Orkney Community Planning Partnership Board. HITRANS Partnership Director also attends the CPP Board regularly when a strategic transport item is being covered. Our representative on the Board is the HITRANS elected board member for Orkney Islands Council. HITRANS officers also participate in the Orkney Internal and External Travel Forums.

**2. Whether there are any challenges or barriers to that engagement being effective.**

The biggest challenge HITRANS would identify relates to the nature of our organisation being small and lightly staffed. This can make it a challenge to cover every meeting. To this end it has been critically important to have the opportunity of our elected member in each CPP area represent HITRANS at CPP Board level. This also allows HITRANS to input to a wider range of subjects at the CPP as the locally based elected member will be closer to subjects across the CPP than might be the case of officers were to attend.

The resourcing of CPPs carries an expectation that all partners are equal but the role of the regional transport partnership as a local government partner body is quite different to the role of our partner Councils and other key CPP partners (HIE, Police, Fire and Rescue).

**3. Your views on whether the Act is meeting its objective of reducing inequalities, and the effectiveness of Local Outcome Improvement Plans and locality plans.**

Yes, the Community Planning process is focussed on addressing inequalities and seems to be meeting the objectives of the Community Empowerment Act.

**4. Whether the statutory partners as set out in Schedule 1 of the Act needs revisiting.**

Community Planning Partnerships have reviewed representation, but there is no need to revisit the schedule in the Act.

**5. Whether there is sufficient leadership at a local or national level to support community planning.**

Yes, in the Highlands and Islands, leadership is sufficient to support community planning. As a region there are also strong regional forums that bring together key agencies across that wider regional geography. Recognising the importance of the Regional Economic Partnership and Convention of the Highlands and Islands in the success of the region is also important.

I hope the above is helpful in contributing to the evidence required for the inquiry, but if you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Ranald Robertson**  
Director