

Meeting with Transport Scotland 21/03/11; Buchanan House, Glasgow

Meeting note

Attending:

Alison Irvine; Transport Scotland; part of meeting
Stuart Wilson; Transport Scotland
Sharon Wood; Transport Scotland
Derick Murray; North East Scotland Transport Partnership

Transport Scotland apologised for David Anderson not being able to attend the meeting. Nestrans had asked for the meeting to increase understanding of the Transport Scotland and Nestrans positions on various issues to ensure that each body was fully aware of what the other was trying to achieve.

- Nestrans Board meeting with David Middleton – 08/06/11

It was noted that David Middleton would be attending the Nestrans Board meeting in June. Noted that format was likely to be a pre meeting with Iain Gabriel/ Maggie Bochel/ David Middleton & Derick Murray followed by lunch then meeting with the Board which could be a 20 min presentation by David followed by half hour discussion.

Nestrans will prepare a briefing for Members, largely based on this agenda, and will share this with David before the meeting.

- Communication

Nestrans requested an increased level of communication between Nestrans and Transport Scotland highlighting recent press announcements made without any reference to the North East including Inveramsay Bridge, Laurencekirk Junctions, A90 Balmedie to Tippetty.

This was later compared to inclusion of Transport Scotland in projects being taken forward by the North East i.e. Bridge of Dee.

The North East would like to be able to contribute to schemes as they are under consideration i.e. Aberdeen to Inverness Railway and believe that they could help with development and Member/ Press understanding of the progress that is being made.

- Structure Plan/ Local Development Plan updates
 - Cumulative impact assessment

The good progress being made following the ACSEF Economic Manifesto & Structure Plan on the Strategic Development Plan and the Local Development Plans was highlighted. It was noted that the cumulative impact of the LDP's was being jointly considered with proposals to be discussed regarding joint supplementary guidance for the Structure Plan and the Strategic Development Plan relating to contributions to strategic transport projects.

- Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy
 - Link to STPR
 - Aberdeen to central belt
 - Aberdeen only considered as part of Intercity market not as a market area (unlike Edinburgh & Glasgow)
 - Overcrowding

Nestrans had noted their frustration about the lack of information available on the RUS in relation to being unable to meet the STPR commitment to a 20 min reduction in journey time between Aberdeen and the central belt. Transport Scotland indicated that they are in discussion with Network Rail about further information on the work that has been carried out by NR to date.

Nestrans also expressed the desire to see the Aberdeen area being considered as a separate market area as per Edinburgh and Glasgow. The North East consider the above average growth in the Aberdeen area over the past number of years and the structure plan indicate that Aberdeen has the potential to experience higher growth than would be predicted through the current consideration of only through intercity growth. This is underestimating the potential of projects in the North East.

Nestrans also noted an agreement with Network Rail to jointly carry out overcrowding surveys in the North East as current anecdotal evidence suggests that Network Rail are underestimating the levels of overcrowding on certain journeys.

Transport Scotland indicated that subject to Minister approval the GRIP 2 study on Aberdeen to Inverness would be published on the Transport Scotland website today.

- High Speed Rail
 - Need to benefit the whole country
 - How the N & NE can benefit

Nestrans highlighted the current position in the NE. That is that we are supporters of HSR to the central belt of Scotland and indeed support the position of starting construction at both ends given the very strong Scottish business case. However we are also in agreement with Edinburgh & Glasgow (and indeed with English cities further south) that if HSR doesn't come far enough north, cities and regions to the north of the HSR limit will be disadvantaged. This argument applies equally to the North and North East of Scotland as it does to the central belt.

However in our case we recognise that the lower population densities in our area will make HSR unviable in our area plus we would still be beyond the journey tipping time of 3 1/2 hours for transference to rail from air. We therefore need to find a different way to overcome the disadvantage created – a disadvantage that Edinburgh & Glasgow agree will exist. We are therefore looking for Transport Scotland and central belt support to the possibility of protecting a proportion of slots at Heathrow for peripheral airports – these slots to come from the reduced number of flights from Edinburgh, Glasgow & Manchester to Heathrow that the HSR assessment predicts will happen (rail share of market to increase from 20% to 50%)

- Projects
 - AWPR
 - **A90 Balmedie to Tippetty**

Confirmed to be considered as part of AWPR construction

- A96 P&R – Planning and land update

Nestrans advised that full planning permission has been received and negotiations are at an advanced stage on the land purchase.

- A90(S) P&R – Planning and land update

Nestrans advised that outline planning permission will shortly be applied for.

- Haudagain junction

Nestrans highlighted the Ministers and First Ministers commitment to construct this project immediately upon completion of the AWPR. It was noted that to achieve this timescale, assuming no further court action on AWPR, work on producing orders was required now to ensure that the full order process was completed in time.

It was further noted that Aberdeen City Council had the tricky task of re-housing a large number of tenants including a sizable proportion from houses with large bedroom numbers. This is thought will require around 3 years to complete and needs orders to be published to start.

Transport Scotland were therefore asked to clarify when the design work for this project will commence.

- Inveramsay Bridge
 - Consultants appointed

Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council would be keen to be involved as the design process moves forward. This is seen as a STAG requirement!

- Laurencekirk junctions

Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council would be keen to be involved in taking this project forward including understanding what is currently being costed for Transport Scotland.

It was thought that a high level meeting between Transport Scotland/ Strategic Development Plan team/ Aberdeenshire Council (Transport & Planning teams) and Nestrans might be helpful in determining a way forward to progress options.

- Bridge of Dee
 - Short and long term

Nestrans noted that some work was underway to try and identify some short term improvements at the south roundabout but that nothing had yet been identified as worthy of taking forward – still under assessment.

On the longer term proposals work was underway by Jacobs to carry out the objective setting, problem identification, option generation and option sifting and that Transport Scotland were involved in this work.

- Aberdeen to Inverness Railway
 - Kintore Station

Nestrans highlighted the anticipated increase in population being proposed in the Local Development Plan and the local keen-ness to have a station (single platform or double) in place prior to the large increase in population. Transport Scotland highlighted the Aberdeen to Inverness Study and the options for taking matters forward within that report. Transport Scotland expect a GRIP 3 report with a preferred option for Aberdeen to Inverness to be ready by early 2012.

- Third Don crossing

The Aberdeen City Council letter to Transport Scotland re construction as part of the AWPR contract was discussed. It was noted the strategic impact of the 3rd Don crossing particularly on the Haudagain junction.

- **Trunk Road cycle lanes**

Progress made with BEAR on developing Council proposals for cycle lanes along trunk roads in the region was noted.