

3b Strategic Transport Fund Update

o Purpose of Report

To update Board members on progress in reviewing the STF guidance and on payments received and agreements made in relation to the Strategic Transport Fund to date.

o Background

The Strategic Development Planning Authority adopted the supplementary guidance 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund' in December 2011. This guidance is non-statutory supplementary guidance in support of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and was adopted with the intention that it would be reviewed and adopted as statutory guidance as part of the new Strategic Development Plan.

o Review of the STF Guidance

At the Board meeting in August 2014 it was stated that a report would be going to the SDPA on 24th September providing a more detailed schedule for review of STF guidance and the process for moving this to statutory guidance under the new Strategic Development Plan and that this would be reported back to the Nestrans Board.

The following was reported to the SDPA Board on 24th September 2014:

"With the approval of the SDP, there is not the opportunity to turn the non-statutory guidance into statutory Supplementary Guidance, while at the same time responding to the concerns the Reporters at the SDP Examination and learning the lessons from its implementation over the last two years.

Further work was commissioned over the summer to clarify the evidence base to support the review. This has clarified the link between all new developments in the area and all the proposed interventions (with one possible exception). This overcomes the difficulty presented by the way the evidence was previously presented. However, this has raised the need for one further clarification before we can proceed to the next stage of draft guidance.

It is recognized that there is an urgency about reducing uncertainty regarding the details of the revised guidance but there is also a need to proceed at an appropriate pace with appropriate evidence, input and feedback from the development industry.

In the Examination Report, the Reporter commended the SDPA for its stated intention to go beyond the statutory minimum when it comes to consulting on the guidance (the SDP Examination Report para 26, p118). Given the timescales involved, it would not be possible to consult in a way which was beyond the statutory minimum requirements and report back a response to that consultation within one cycle of SDPA meetings. In order to implement this, it is proposed to carry out informal engagement with interested parties on the STF before bringing a draft for consultation to the next meeting of the SDPA.

While it is recognised that it may not be possible to meet the concerns of all parties with an interest in the guidance, this approach has the best chance of listening and responding to those concerns, rather than rushing to new guidance prematurely.

It is proposed that informal engagement takes place with the development industry on the basis of a clarified evidence base and ideas about possible refinements to the STF guidance.

Consultation on draft Supplementary Guidance on the STF would then take place from 12 December 2014 to 6 February 2015 (8 weeks to account for the Christmas and New Year breaks). The results of this would be reported back to the SDPA on 25 March 2015 with the intention of immediately submitting the revised guidance to the Scottish Government. This would be followed by a minimum 28 day period during which the Scottish Government considers whether to issue a direction regarding the adoption of the guidance (although this period can be extended by the Scottish Government). Formal adoption of the Supplementary Guidance would take place at the first meeting of the SDPA after this period. While dates have yet to be set for meetings of the SDPA in 2015/16, this is likely to be towards the end of June 2015. However it is possible that an earlier meeting could be organised to speed up the adoption process if appropriate.”

Nestrans is assisting the SDPA in commissioning further clarification of the cumulative transport appraisal modeling work and will continue to work with them in the review and development of the revised guidance.

o Update on agreements and payments into the fund

Since the last Board meeting in August there has been one further payment to the STF of £104,991.

In total, contributions of £10,341,904 have been agreed in relation to the STF of which £1,413,628 is currently held by Nestrans.

To date there has been no expenditure of STF monies from the fund.

o Recommendation

The Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the steps being taken in the review of the STF and the timescales set out by the SDPA for this; and
- b) Note the payments made into the funds to date.