
4a Fraserburgh/Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study

o Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress regarding the ongoing strategic transport study on the corridor between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen.

o Background

Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy contains a commitment to undertake a study into the issues and problems relating to strategic transport movements north from Aberdeen to Ellon, Peterhead and Fraserburgh. This is intended to include examining the potential for rail or other mass transport options and issues relating to connectivity and the limitations of the existing roads.

A Steering Group has been established consisting of representatives of Nestrans, Transport Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council.

After a tendering exercise in late 2014, a consortium of consultants was appointed in November 2014 to undertake an appraisal using Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. The commission will be led by SIAS Transport Planners, in association with Peter Brett Associates and Natural Capital.

o Inception Report

The consultants have produced an Inception Report, indicating the programme and stages proposed for the study and an engagement programme for developing options for appraisal. A copy of the Inception Report has been provided on Nestrans website at: http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/76920_Fraserburgh_and_Peterhead_to_Aberdeen_Strategic_Transport_Study_-_Inception_Report_FINAL.pdf

o Progress

The consultants have initiated key consultations in the form of stakeholder workshops and intend to conduct targeted meetings and consultations with appropriate groups and individuals. There have been enquiries regarding the opportunity for elected members to input and for public consultations to take place. At this stage, before there are any options or proposals on which to consult, the consultants are primarily involved in information gathering and collating the evidence which can then be utilised in the appraisal. Members briefings and public consultations are intended for later in the process.

Attached to this report is a short briefing note on the proposed engagement and consultation arrangements currently agreed.

o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the contents of this report, the Inception Report and the agreed Engagement process.

RD/19 March 2015

Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study Briefing Note 1 (March 2015) - Member and Public Engagement Introduction

This Briefing Note seeks to provide an update regarding the proposed level of engagement with Elected Members and the Public with respect to the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study.

The Study is being led by Nestrans, with Aberdeenshire Council Officers providing support as key members of the Study Steering Group along with colleagues from Transport Scotland and Aberdeen City Council. A Consultant team, led by SIAS, have been commissioned to undertake the work, which follows the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) which is the Government's required process for undertaking studies of this nature. STAG provides a clear process for building a Business Case using robust assessment. It must be followed to comply with Government guidance and to attract future funding for the identified interventions.

The study has an initial phase of data collection, analysis and stakeholder engagement. This will enable the Consultants to draw together a clear understanding of problems and opportunities, prior to developing potential options for further investigation. The study programme began in February 2015 and it is currently anticipated to run until January 2016.

Details of the engagement programme, which have been agreed with the consultants, is provided as an Appendix to this briefing note.

1. Elected Members' Briefing

In terms of Elected Member engagement, the initial approach included provision for correspondence/questionnaires and updates to Area Committees.

The Study Steering Group is currently looking at opportunities for an Elected Member briefing during the initial stages of the study in order to add further to the initial evidence gathering process. This will be arranged such that the initial outcomes from the Officer and business Stakeholders engagement can be fed back to Members, thereby allowing an open discussion on this initial evidence and questions to be answered in an open forum.

It would also be the intention to build in similar opportunities to repeat this arrangement during the study process.

2. Public Consultation

In terms of public consultation, experience suggests that this is more meaningfully undertaken when there is "something to consult about" and is key to understanding public opinion and preferences, rather than technical data. During the initial information gathering/analysis stage, there is probably little to meaningfully engage with the wider public although the opportunity does exist in the proposed approach for groups such as Community Councils as well as individuals to input to the process. However, when initial stages of work are completed, an early understanding of problems and opportunities will have been gained, along with potential long lists of options. At that stage, public consultation is a critical part of how we verify these initial stages of work. Any such consultations will be held in the three principal Aberdeenshire

towns included in the study area – Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Ellon plus those Aberdeen communities affected and could take the form of “drop-in” sessions.

Proposals will be developed in discussion with officers, making best use of available resources and existing networks. The Steering Group are looking at proposals and how such opportunities can be built into the study programme, most likely during late summer 2015.

3. Ongoing Updates

As the study gets underway, there is a recognised need to keep Members and affected Stakeholders involved and informed at appropriate stages of the work. When the most feasible options start to become more crystallised then there will be opportunities to influence national priorities and programmes, which are ultimately where many of the required improvements will have to sit. The critical output from the study will be putting in place the foundations for a robust business case, which has been developed on an inclusive basis.

There is a key role for Transport Scotland, not only during this feasibility study, but also the future delivery and operation of whatever options emerge from the process. In line with many of the projects across North East Scotland, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Nestrans officers will seek to ensure that national strategies and investment programmes reflect the crucial role that this area plays in the Scottish economy and are fully engaging with Transport Scotland.

Appendix – Currently Agreed Engagement Plan

(Proposals for additional Member briefings, and Public engagement, as discussed above, to be added when finalised with Nestrans, Consultants, and the Study Steering Group team, including Aberdeenshire Council Area Managers/Officers)

Two initial workshops:

- *A Transport and Land-use Workshop is being held on Monday 30 March in Aberdeenshire Council Offices. Attendees at this workshop are mainly Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Council representatives from transport, planning and environmental teams.*
- *An Economic & Enterprise Workshop is being held on Tuesday 31 March at Buchan Braes Hotel. A wide range of individuals including a number of local businesses and representatives from various industry groups have been invited.*

One-to-one meetings or phone calls with:

- *The two main bus operators in the study area (First and Stagecoach)*
- *Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen Port Authorities*
- *Network Rail and Abellio*
- *Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association, and key players in the freight industry in the region*
- *Transport Scotland key representatives*
- *Key businesses in the fishing and oil & gas industries*
- *Visit Scotland, Visit Aberdeen and Aberdeen Outdoor Access Forum*
- *Community Transport providers in the area*
- *Sustrans*
- *Cycling Scotland*
- *Police Scotland*
- *Scottish Ambulance Service*
- *Scottish Fire and Rescue*

An on-line business survey sent to all major employers in the area.

An on-line public questionnaire advertised through both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's council websites/twitter feeds and through Nestrans. The questionnaire will be sent directly to all Community Councils for their awareness.

Email correspondence, with key questions to all MP's, MSP's and Councillors for the study area.

Written consultation with a range of environmental consultees.

A tailored active travel questionnaire to a range of walking, cycling and horse-riding groups.

Email correspondence with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Council's equalities teams.

Email/telephone correspondence with:

- *Scottish Prison Service and the Court Services*
- *Aberdeen and Robert Gordon Universities*
- *North East College*
- *Scottish Association of Public Transport*
- *NHS Grampian*
- *Aberdeen Airport*
- *Rail Future (Scotland)*
- *Transform Scotland*

Please note that the Engagement Programme has recently started, and is due to run from March until end May/mid-June.