
5a Freight Action Plan Update

- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress with the Freight Action Plan.

- Background

The Regional Transport Strategy approved in 2008 indicated the need for four action plans to provide further detail on priority policy areas. One of these was a Freight Action Plan.

A Freight Action Plan was approved by the Nestrans Board at its meeting in October 2009 after work commissioned through Aecom consultants. A copy is on the Nestrans website at http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/Final%20Freight%20Action%20Plan.pdf.

Thereafter, a North East Freight Forum was established and held its inaugural meeting on 9 March 2010, chaired by Eddie Anderson, the identified Freight Champion.

- Update

The Freight Action Plan identified a number of short-term actions which were ratified by the Freight Forum as priorities for delivery. This report updates members on progress on these priority projects and suggests a second meeting of the Freight Forum in early 2011.

Lorry Parking

Aecom were commissioned in 2009 to provide an overview of overnight lorry parking in the region. A draft report has now been received and comments have been provided by Nestrans officers, local authority representatives and hauliers associations. The report concludes that there is a lack of suitable lorry parking facilities, particularly for overnight stops and most notably to the south side of Aberdeen; that Altens lorry park is not currently functioning as a suitable, secure overnight lorry park; although the free lorry parks at Peterhead and Fraserburgh do appear to be operating effectively; that there is evidence of sufficient demand to justify a new lorry parking facility to be located to the south of Aberdeen which could attract up to 30 lorries per night. Although the specific location is important, as it must be relatively straightforward to access from the principal freight routes, and ideally located reasonably close to facilities such as supermarkets / food outlets, the principal facilities to be provided are toilets and showers, along with access to food / refreshments. Safety and security were highlighted as being important considerations, which could include overnight manning, security lighting and CCTV, along with a regulated barrier control system (which could be used for revenue collection). The proposed Park & Ride site at Portlethen which is currently the subject of pre-application consultations will include an area for lorry parking which could satisfy this demand.

HGV route maps

The Freight Forum agreed that it would be worthwhile producing maps of the region indicating recommended HGV routeing, height and weight restrictions and facilities for goods delivery drivers such as overnight parking. Plans have now been prepared through Aberdeenshire Council's graphics service with a map of Aberdeen with detailed insets of industrial estates and on the reverse, a plan of Aberdeenshire with details of major industrial areas in the Aberdeenshire towns. It is intended that the plans can be printed or

downloaded from a website easing routeing decisions and identifying restrictions as well as facilities such as lorry parking sites.

Distribution Centre

As part of the StratMoS European project to which Nestrans are contributing, it has been agreed to commission a study to look at the opportunities for providing a distribution centre on the edge of Aberdeen. This would enable large vehicles from the central belt or beyond to bring goods to the region, but local deliveries could be made in smaller, more efficient and less-polluting vehicles.

The study will consider the appropriate size for such a facility, the best location and operational aspects. It will consider whether there is a need to be located on a railhead and what facilities would be required on-site to support its operation.

Low Emission Zone

As part of Aberdeen City Council's proposals to investigate the potential for a Low Emission Zone in the City Centre to tackle air quality issues, Nestrans are leading (through the Freight Forum) investigation into the issues relating to lorry restrictions. With match funding through involvement in the CARE North InterReg IV project, consultants will be commissioned to ascertain the role of a LEZ in improving air quality, the area where restrictions would need to be implemented, hours of any restrictions, and the benefits which could be anticipated. It would also be necessary to identify the impacts, particularly on the economy and the complementary measures which are needed to make such a scheme operate effectively. There are therefore strong links between this piece of work and the Freight Distribution Strategy and distribution centre.

Freight Distribution Strategy

Also through Nestrans' involvement in the CARE North project, a study will be starting shortly looking at the issues surrounding goods distribution in and around Aberdeen City Centre. Focussed on four key themes (access to Aberdeen Harbour, the retail industry, other City deliveries and through traffic), the work will seek to identify ways of ensuring efficient and effective delivery which does not harm the economic prospects of the region, but addresses the air quality problems within the identified Air Quality Management Area and aims to reduce the carbon footprint associated with deliveries.

Wellington Road

Members may recall the findings of the "Southern Approach Segregation and Prioritisation (HOV/LV) Lanes Study" which were reported to Board on 30 October 2009. Looking into the prospects for High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes or Large Vehicle Lanes, the study concluded that an HOV lane on Stonehaven Road was unlikely to be successful in advance of AWPR being in place and that the objectives of improving HGV running times on Wellington Road would benefit more from recalibrating the signal controlled junctions rather than providing a dedicated lane.

Funding has been secured within the Freight Action Plan budget to provide advance detection loops at two junctions. On the southbound approach to the signals at Greenbank Road (Glencraft) and at Craigshaw Drive (Shell) detector loops in the inside lane would identify slow moving large vehicles (lorries and buses) and provide a few seconds additional greentime to prevent their being stopped at the lights. Although this would have minor impact on vehicles on other legs, it provides for more reliable journey times for priority vehicles and should reduce hill starts and idling on a steep incline, thereby reducing emissions and pollution. This scheme is estimated to cost around £15,000 per junction and

can be implemented through the StratMoS European project, which will enable it to be part funded and results documented as a demonstration project.

Freight Facilities Grants

One of the victims of the recent budget announcements is that the Scottish Government has drastically reduced the funding available for supporting modal shift through the provision of grants. The Freight Facilities Grant, which provided a subsidy to enable freight to shift from road to other modes has been cut and a number of organisations have started lobbying to have it reinstated.

Freight Forum

It is intended to hold another Freight Forum meeting early in 2011. This would provide an opportunity to update members regarding the projects described above, launch and distribute maps and ensure dialogue in respect of the proposals including the Low Emission Zone.

It is probable that a suitable date in February can be found, and it is suggested that the Forum should be held in Aberdeen to maximise the likelihood of participation.

- Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

1. notes the progress with regard to the Freight Action Plan.

RD/19 November 2010