

8 Information Bulletin

o Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information and updates for the Board on a number of matters not requiring decision.

o Airports Commission

In a speech on 7 October 2013 Sir Howard Davies, the Commission's Chairman, highlighted the Airports Commission's emerging thinking, on which it is inviting comments. The speech can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/aviation-capacity-in-the-uk>

In summary the speech notes the following:

- pressure on the UK's busiest airports is likely to continue to grow even if we take a more conservative view of future aviation demand than the DfT has in the past. This is likely to see levels of future demand in excess of capacity in the south east of England airport system.
- importantly, this appears to be the case even if future aviation demand is constrained in order to meet the government's legislated climate change objectives.
- it is difficult to see how the market alone could resolve the capacity / demand imbalance in the south east. Regional airports are already serving their local markets effectively but it is difficult to see how they can absorb all the excess demand. The tools available to government to influence the location of flights are also very limited.

Taken together, these considerations **point to the need for new runway infrastructure in the south east of England** in the coming decades.

The speech included the following quotes:

- Our provisional view, therefore, is that additional capacity will need to be provided, alongside an overall framework for managing emissions growth, if we are to deliver the best outcomes in both environmental and connectivity terms.
- We have been given a clear message from many regional stakeholders that while their local airports are important to their economies, so is access to the international connectivity available in London and the south east.
- Links to other European hubs from regional airports provide an alternative to some degree, but this is not always the best solution either for passengers or for the environment.
- Distributing demand to some destinations across a number of airports could see a higher number of smaller flights being needed to achieve the same degree of national connectivity. We will say more on this point later.
- An attempt to rely only on runways currently in operation would be likely to produce a distinctly sub-optimal solution for passengers, connectivity and the economy.

o **National Transport Awards**

The UK Transport Awards were announced at a ceremony in London on 17 October 2013. Two local entries were short listed: Aberdeenshire Council in the category of Achievements in Cycling for the Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town; and Aberdeen City Council in the category of Transport City of the Year. As Scottish Local Authority of the Year, Aberdeen City Council was also shortlisted in the category of Transport Local Authority of the Year.

o **Scottish Cities Alliance Hydrogen Bus Project**

Board Members will be aware of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Bus Project. The Scottish Cities Alliance, led by Aberdeen City Council, have also been pursuing another Hydrogen project to identify an outline business case for extending hydrogen supply to cars and across Scotland.

At a recent meeting in Aberdeen a European Group made an offer for some study work on how this might be achieved alongside extending hydrogen buses from a demonstration project to a full regional roll out. This was an offer of study funding that does not require match funding.

The group wishes to find out how a number of regions in Europe could roll out hydrogen generation and supply, with particular reference to building a sufficient number of buses to ensure that the cost of these buses becomes more affordable. They are looking for around 3 or 4 regions to develop the infrastructure for around 100 buses each thereby creating a market big enough to reduce price whilst providing a region wide refuelling facility.

Clearly being part of this study would put the region in a prime position for a roll out for which the group has considerable funding. However this would likely require an unidentified amount of local funding.

For us, the offer of a study for around 100 buses would suggest a Scotland wide study. The Scottish Cities Alliance called a meeting in Dundee of the members of the Alliance, the RTP's and Transport Scotland to determine two things:

- Did we (as Scotland) want to pursue this further and
- How would such a project be governed

The meeting agreed that there was merit in following up the offer to find out further information on what was planned and what the inputs were that the European Group would expect from the Scottish end. This input would be likely to include to public authorities, bus companies, hydrogen generation and suppliers, bus maintenance and manufacture amongst others.

The European group are being invited to a meeting, possibly in Aberdeen, in early November for further discussion.

o **Prestwick Airport**

On 8 October 2013, the Deputy First Minister made an announcement to the Scottish Parliament on Prestwick Airport. This can be found at; <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/OfficialReport.aspx> with the announcement starting at branch 23384.

In summary, the Deputy First Minister said that the airport had been up for sale for a considerable period with no purchaser found. There were therefore two options open, purchase by Government or closure. Having considered the options the Government had decided to enter negotiations to purchase the airport.

This course is difficult because European State Aid Guidelines mean that the Government would have to operate the airport as if it was a commercial entity. Whilst no buyer could be found to operate the airport, currently losing £7m per annum and in need of investment, the Government had commissioned a study which showed that, although difficult and requiring sale of some assets, the airport could be returned to profitability.

The Government had considered this a better option than the closure of the airport.

• **Third Don crossing and Airport link road update**

In an update report to Aberdeen City Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 29 August 2013, the follow progress update was provided:

- Third Don Crossing:
 - design and contract documentation currently underway; start construction - late 2013, with main contract underway early 2014; opening - autumn 2015;
- A96 Park and Choose:
 - design and contract documentation currently underway; start construction - early 2014; opening - autumn 2015;
- Dyce Drive Link Road:
 - design and contract documentation currently underway; start construction - early 2014; opening - early 2015 (connection to A96 subject to AWPR contract programme)

• **South College Street and Berryden Road update**

In an update report to Aberdeen City Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 29 August 2013, the follow progress update was provided:

- South College Street Corridor Improvements:
 - Start construction - early 2015; opening - early 2016
- Berryden Corridor Phase 1:
 - design underway; start construction - autumn 2015; opening - autumn 2016

• **Proposed feasibility study: Buchan corridor**

At its meeting on 9 May 2013, Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee asked that Nestrans' RTS "...refresh document should also contain 'short term' aspirations which would incorporate a feasibility study which would identify a number of options for a modern rail line into the Buchan area".

On 17 October, Derick Murray and Rab Dickson attended a meeting in Glasgow with Transport Scotland to establish the principles for developing a feasibility study.

It was agreed that this should be an all-modes study, following STAG principles and under the banner of Energetica. Transport Scotland were supportive of this approach and noted that the Transport Minister has offered to support the study along these lines.

It was noted that the Strategic Development Plan for Aberdeen City & Shire focusses development towards the City and three main arterial corridors. There are a number of planned transport interventions and any study should look beyond these and consider transport needs after construction of AWPR, Balmedie-Tipperty, Third Don Crossing and other schemes – current issues may not be those that the study should focus on.

It was agreed that any study should consider the whole corridor between Aberdeen and Peterhead and Fraserburgh, incorporating the route of the former railway line, the A90 which broadly follows the coast and the area between.

A broad range of transport options should be considered, including road enhancements and needs to be clear on what are the main drivers for upgrade - Freight issues, commuter journeys, access through Aberdeen or other demands?

It was agreed that Nestrans should speak to transport officers at Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council with a view to agreeing the scope of a feasibility study and to develop a brief. A Client Group will be established to oversee the project and Transport Scotland, as contributors to the study, should be invited to sit on that group. It should be assumed that the study will be conducted during 2014/15. It is likely that modelling would be undertaken using ASAM.

o **Dyce railway station and turning circle**

Work has started on the refurbishment and upgrade of Dyce Station. These works, scheduled for completion by the end of March 2014, include a new footbridge, lift access between the platforms, waiting room and ticketing facilities. At this time it is not known whether the station will be staffed.

Planning permission has been granted for the new turning circle on the west side of the station. Negotiations are advanced regarding leasing ground from Aberdeen International Airport and the project is being progressed towards construction.

o **Letter from the Minister for Transport re rail issues**

At the last Board meeting Members requested that a letter be sent to the Minister for Transport and Veterans regarding concern over progress on the Aberdeen to Inverness and the Aberdeen to Central Belt projects. A response has been received from the Minister sharing concern for the progress of these matters and assuring us that an Aberdeen to Central Belt study will be sent to Nestrans shortly and that the Aberdeen to Inverness study will be delivered to Transport Scotland by the turn of the year.

o **Nestrans Press Releases**

3 September 2013: Launch of new Co-Wheels electric vehicles and charging points in Aberdeen



Aberdeen's Co-Wheels car club has become the first in Scotland to operate electric vehicles. The social enterprise has taken delivery of three Nissan Leafs and a Mitsubishi i-MiEV which members can use at a cheaper rate than fossil-fuelled vehicles, and re-charge across the city.

13 September 2013: Join in European Mobility Week 3013

The following events are being held as part of European Mobility week 2013:

- Sat 14th Getabout Cycle Roadshow at the Garioch Sports Centre in Inverurie 10:00 until 15:00 FREE
- Sun 15th Pedal for Scotland family ride at Aberdeen Beach 09:30 - 16:00 + lots of activities FREE
- Mon 16th – Thurs 19th Getabout Cycle Roadshow at various North East schools
- Fri 20th Getabout Sustainable Transport information stall George Street Aberdeen
- Sat 21st Getabout Cycle Roadshow at Duthie Park Aberdeen 10:00 until 15:00 FREE
- Sunday 22nd Getabout Family Festival on Schoolhill and Belmont Street Aberdeen 10:00 until 16:00 All Free (apart from BBQ)

16 September 2013: Consultation on Bridge of Dee Improvements

A public consultation is being undertaken on a key transportation project to investigate capacity issues and potential opportunities relating to the existing transport network in the Bridge of Dee area.

The study is being funded by Nestrans and follows on from previous work, completed in May 2008, which identified the long-term need for additional capacity across the River Dee.

19 September 2013 Vacancies announced on Nestrans Board

The North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) currently has two vacancies for non-Councillor Board Members.

o Getabout

Since the last meeting of the Board, there has been a very busy time for the Getabout partnership including European Mobility Week:

- three Getabout Cycle Road shows were held in Aberdeenshire at Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Portlethen;
- three Oil Company Foyer events;
- European Mobility Week event at Inverurie Garioch Sports Centre;
- Cycling Scotland Pedal for Scotland family ride Aberdeen was attended by nearly 300 entrants. Cycling Scotland have reported that this represents a better turn out than the first Family rides in both Edinburgh and Glasgow;
- The third Tour De Rayne at Rayne North School;
- Event at Forehills School Aberdeen;
- Event at Tough School Aberdeenshire;
- Event at Hannover Street School Aberdeen;
- George Street mobility event in partnership with Aberdeen City Council;
- Event at Duthie Park Aberdeen;
- European Car Free Day in Schoolhill and Belmont Street Aberdeen. This was the biggest and best Car Free day the region has ever seen, the partners closed Schoolhill and replaced the traffic with the bike roadshow, Climbing Wall, Dance moves studio dancing in the street, First Aberdeen Northern Lights Bus, Stagecoach Electric Hybrid bus, ARR Craib HGV for a cycle safety demonstration,

Energy Savings Scotland, Alpine Bikes/Tiso, City Wardens, MUSIC Project Cycle smoothie maker, Haigs Butchers and the Co Wheels Car Club electric cars. Feedback was very positive indeed Haigs sold 600 burgers in their street BBQ and sold more coffee in 1 hour than they normally do in a day. An approximate attendance of around 3,000 people were there;

- Liftshare week featured a rerun of the TV advert (Aberdeenshire), radio ads and petrol pump nozzle advertising.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

RGM/RD/DK 15 October 2013