

## NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

### Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, 14 April, 2010

Present:- Councillor Kevin Stewart (Chair), and Councillor Dean, (Aberdeen City Council); Councillors Argyle, Clark, Robertson and Webster (Aberdeenshire Council); Ms. Jennifer Crow; and Mr Eddie Anderson; and Dr. Margaret Bochel and Mr. Iain Gabriel (Advisors to the Board).

In Attendance:- Derick Murray, Rab Dickson and Kristy Morrison, Nestrans Office; and Alan Wood, Aberdeenshire Council; and Allison Swanson and Martin Allan (Aberdeen City Council).

Also In Attendance:- Dr. Jillian Anable, Aberdeen University Centre for Transport Research.

Apologies:- Apologies were intimated by Councillors Boulton and John Stewart (Aberdeen City Council).

### **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

1. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 8 February, 2010.

The Board resolved:-  
to approve the minute as an accurate record.

### **MINUTE OF THE APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

2. The Board had before it the minute of the Appointments Sub-Committee of 15 March, 2010.

The Board resolved:-  
to approve the minute as an accurate record.

### **DR. JILLIAN ANABLE – ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY'S CENTRE FOR TRANSPORT RESEARCH - PRESENTATION**

3. The Board received a presentation from Dr. Jillian Anable, Aberdeen University's Centre for Transport Research, wherein she provided a detailed overview of the aims and findings to date of two research studies, namely 'Smarter Choices Smarter Places' (SCSP) and 'Smarter Choices Follow-on Study'.

With regard the 'Smarter Choices Follow-on Study' she advised that this was a follow-up project to the original study entitled "Smarter Choices" undertaken in 2004 and commissioned by the Department for Transport. The Follow-on study had been commissioned to evaluate the progress made over the past few years in the three English Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns. The stated aims of the research were to evaluate the impact of each individual smart measure in each case study area; to assess the available evidence for the impact of the programme on traffic levels, carbon emissions and wider benefits (e.g. health); to draw conclusions on value-for-money; to look at any evidence for erosion of benefits due to induced traffic and also evidence for any synergistic effects; and to draw lessons for the delivery of large-scale smarter choices programmes elsewhere, including costs and staff resource needed. Dr. Anable provided a detailed overview of the methodology undertaken and the results to date.

Turning to the SCSP study, she advised that this was a three year study which focused on monitoring and evaluating the Scottish Government's £15m investment in seven local authorities across Scotland to develop travel behaviour change programmes known as 'smarter choices'. The investment in the towns of Barrhead, Kirkintilloch/Lenzie, Dumfries, Dundee, Glasgow East, Kirkwall, and Larbert/Stenhousemuir, included new infrastructure, innovative marketing techniques, financial incentives, streetscape improvements and more sharing of vehicles to make better use of urban space and create healthier and cleaner places to live and work. The aims of the study were to provide a baseline profile of travel behaviour against which change could be measured, establish the impacts of the investment in the seven towns and offer feedback to local authorities delivering the improvements to assist with the effectiveness of delivery. Again Dr. Anable provided a detailed overview of the methodology undertaken and the results to date.

**The Board resolved:-**

to thank Dr. Anable for her informative presentation.

**STRATEGY**

**4. (A) Liaison between Regional Transport Partnerships and the Scottish Government and Others**

With reference to article 3(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on liaison with other Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and the Scottish Government.

The report summarised the discussion at the following meetings which had been held since the last meeting of the Board, these being:-

- (i) RTP Lead Officers, 10 February, 2010;
- (ii) Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Futures (ACSEF) meeting with Cabinet Secretary John Swinney, 16 February, 2010;
- (iii) RTP Chairs/COSLA meeting, 3 March, 2010;
- (iv) Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) Steering Group, 9 March, 2010;

- (v) NESTRANS Board meeting with the Minister for Transport, 12 March, 2010; and
- (vi) RTP Lead Officers, 31 March, 2010.

The minute of the meeting of the Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) Steering Group of 11 March, 2010 was appended to the report.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note the progress on liaison arrangements with other RTPs and the Scottish Government and arrangements for future meetings; and
- (ii) to note progress from the LABOF Steering Group.

(B) Monitoring Report

With reference to article 4(D) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 29 April 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on progress in monitoring against the agreed targets and indicators contained in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) monitoring report.

By way of background the report advised that the monitoring report provided information and background data to support the development of the RTS, as approved by the Scottish Government Ministers in July, 2008. This was the third monitoring report which considered progress towards achievements of the measures identified. It was highlighted that it would take many years for the Strategy to decisively influence most of the indicators, but it was Nestrans' intention to maintain regular monitoring of its targets and indicators. The full monitoring report would be published as part of the Annual Report, whilst a copy of the monitoring report was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report explained that there was a number of indicators for which targets had not been set and were monitored for information purposes only. In terms of the report findings, it was highlighted that of the forty-five indicators for which indicative targets had been identified, the following results could be summarised:-

|   | 2009 Monitoring Report | 2010 Monitoring Report |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| Indicators on Target                                  | 12                     | 18                     |
| Indicators with some success                          | 8                      | 13                     |
| Indicators moving in the wrong direction              | 7                      | 8                      |
| Indicators no significant change or no data available | 18                     | 6                      |

Thereafter the report highlighted a number of notable changes in the following areas since 2009:-

- Rail Patronage;
- Aberdeen Airport;
- Car and public transport times for 12 key routes;
- Number of taxis and private hire vehicles available;

- Motorcycle and powered two wheelers registered;
- Travel to schools;
- Cycling; and
- Travel to Work.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) in relation to Park and Ride patronage to request officers to identify, and advise the Board of the factors, including the charging regime, which had resulted in the high levels of patronage at the Bridge of Don Park and Ride during late 1990s; and
- (ii) to note the positive trends emerging against many of the targets and the progress towards meeting many of the targets that had been set.

**PROJECTS**

**5. (A) Access to Aberdeen from the South**

With reference to article 3c of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 29 April 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which advised on the latest progress in bringing forward projects identified within the Access to Aberdeen from the South study.

The report reminded the Board of the short, medium and long term options identified by the study, and of the previous funding allocations made by the Board in this regard. An overview of the current status of each of the options was provided and is summarised below.

In respect of Short term measures, it was noted that the Board had previously approved a sum of £60,000 from the 2009/2010 Capital Budget to develop the design and implementation of short term measures identified from the study.

To date monies allocated had been used to investigate a preferred improvement at the Wellington Road/Souterhead Road junction. Aberdeen City Council had since improved the implementation of the scheme to introduce part time signals in the morning peak period at the Langdykes Road arm of the junction; the tender had been awarded and the works were due to be complete by 31 March, 2010. In addition to this the preliminary design for a segregated left turn from the King George VI Bridge to West Tullos Road had been revised due to the significant costs associated with the initial design previously reported. A plan of the proposal was contained as appendix A to the report. Details of the outcome of further modelling of the junction were outlined. In terms of this proposal Aberdeen City Council had previously agreed the scheme to be progressed to tender stage. A sum of £75,000 to construct the slip lane was proposed in the draft 2010/2011 capital budget, which was to be considered by the Board as a separate item on the agenda (article 8b refers).

In terms of progress with the medium term measures, the £50,000 allocated had been utilised to develop the preliminary design of an improvement at the Wellington Road/Souterhead Road junction to more evenly distribute the capacity. At present the junction was partly signalised and was being supplemented by the short term

measures to introduce part time signals at the Langdykes Road arm, however this would be insufficient to address capacity requirements in the longer term. In light of this, preliminary designs had been prepared for three options to replace the roundabout with two linked traffic signal junctions and the options were currently being tested using a Paramics microsimulation model. Topographical surveys of the areas possibly affected by the junction options had also been commissioned. A sum of £100,000 had been proposed within the draft 2010/2011 capital budget to continue the preliminary design work to replace the roundabout at Southerhead and Hareness with signalised junctions and this would be considered as a separate item on the agenda (article 8b refers).

With regards the identification of a Park and Choose site, it was advised that Schoolhill had been identified as the optimum location in transport terms. To date this had been progressed to preliminary design stage with a topographical survey and geotechnical investigation having been undertaken and the potential for lorry parking facilities having been explored. This financial year a sum of £30,000 had been used to progress the preliminary stage, however the Minister for Transport had indicated that the construction of the A90(S) and A96 Park and Choose sites could be considered for inclusion within a contract for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, but this would require planning permission and any necessary land acquisitions to be in place in advance of the contract being tendered. As such an allocation of £100,000 was proposed within the draft 2010/2011 Capital Budget to progress the design of the A90(S) Park and Choose and submit a planning application.

Finally, turning to long term measures, it was advised that monies allocated to date had been used to develop a new Paramics microsimulation model to replace the earlier 2004 version and extend it to include the Coast Road, Victoria Bridge and further upstream junctions to the north of the River Dee. £150,000 from the 2010/2011 Revenue Budget had been allocated for project feasibility and development to progress the testing of the various options using the new model and to undertake any necessary economic and environmental appraisal.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to request the Director to monitor the position at the King George VI Bridge and report back to the Board in this regard;
- (ii) to note that the proposed works at the King George VI Bridge would be undertaken in August/September 2010, and to request officers to issue a press release in this regard; and
- (iii) to note the progress with projects identified within the Access to Aberdeen from the South study and the proposals for capital funding in 2010/2011, which were the subject of a separate report on today's agenda.

**ACTION PLAN**

**6. (A) Health and Transport Action Plan Update**

With reference to article 5a of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update regarding progress on the delivery of the Health and Transport Action Plan, one of the supporting documents to the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The report reminded members that the Board had approved the Health and Transport Action Plan in June 2008, and that in December of that year, a programme co-ordinator was appointed to take forward the actions within the plan. The co-ordinator regularly reported to the Health and Transport Action Plan Steering Group and an extract from the quarterly report was set out in the report.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the progress in regard to delivery of the Health and Transport Action Plan.

(B) Freight Action Plan Update

With reference to article 4(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update regarding progress on developing and delivering a Freight Action Plan, one of the supporting documents to the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The report advised that the inaugural meeting of the North East Freight Forum was held at the Palm Court Hotel in Aberdeen on Tuesday 9 March. Over 20 delegates attended the event, including representatives from major hauliers, the Scottish Government and the Road Haulage Association. At the meeting it was agreed that the Freight Forum should meet on a regular basis and that freight matters as identified in the Freight Action Plan should be taken forward by an implementation group which would include Nestrans and officers from the two local authorities. Copies of the Freight Action Plan and summary were circulated for members' information.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the progress in regard to the Freight Action Plan.

**GENERAL**

7. (A) Project Update

With reference to article 5(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a progress charge summarising the work in the three sub-strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 6 April, 2010.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the update and the report.

(B) Publications and Consultation

With reference to article 5(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which summarised and advised of various recent consultation documents received and presented suggested responses to the following documents (as detailed in the appendix to the report):-

(i) Tay Plan Main Issues Report

The Strategic Development Plan Authority for the travel to work area around Dundee had recently published a Main Issues Report entitled "Options for

Scotland's SusTAYnable Region 2012-2032" and comments were sought by 2 July, 2010. The key issues for Nestrans were the strategic transport connections, particularly those around Dundee which was one of the primary routes south from Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

It was recommended that Nestrans respond to the consultation highlighting the importance of the strategic links through the Tayplan area, particularly the importance of bringing forward proposals to alleviate traffic around Dundee and the strategic rail connection currently constrained by the single track section at Usan. Nestrans should offer no objection to the proposed rail station openings, but would wish to ensure that these contribute to enhanced journey times between the north east and central belt, rather than causing longer journeys.

(ii) East Coast Main Line Consultation

The East Coast Main Line rail franchise had now been taken into government ownership and Aberdeen to London trains were being operated by East Coast Limited. As such, East Coast were currently consulting on a revision to the timetable from May 2011. Branded as Eureka, the changes were to enable clock face departure times to and from London with additional trains between London and Leeds and Lincoln. The proposed timetable detailing the services to and from Aberdeen was detailed.

(iii) Competition Commission Investigation into Local Bus Services

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) referred the local bus market to the Competition Commission (CC) for further investigation, following its initial study into the sector and public consultation. An initial request for information was received from the CC in relation to this investigation into local services. A number of specific questions/requests were made and the information provided was set out at Appendix A to the report.

(iv) General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) Consultation on the 2011 Census

The GROS was currently consulting widely with users of census data to make sure the census output products were relevant and practical for them to use. As part of the consultation a number of roadshow events were being held across the country. The event in Aberdeen would be held on 28 April, 2010.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to request the Director to write to East Coast regarding the Board's concerns about the reliability of the arrival times of the East Coast Main Line trains and to report back to the Board in this regard; and
- (ii) to note the contents of the report and agree the attached appendices as Nestrans' comments where appropriate.

(C) Tier 2 Ferries Meetings

The Board had before it a report by the Director which informed of recent discussions at the statutory Tier 2 Northern Isles Ferries consultation meetings on which Nestrans sat.

By way of background the report advised that the Scottish Government had a series of consultation meetings to discuss the lifeline ferry services to the Northern Isles; there were three levels of Consultation meetings with Nestrans being part of the Tier 2 – regional interest and national considerations being discussed at Tier 3 meetings. Nestrans sat to represent the North East interest in relation to the lifeline services between Aberdeen and Orkney/Shetland.

The last meeting of the Consultation Group was held in Kirkwall on 8 February 2010, at which various issues were discussed, but of most interest to Nestrans was the discussion on the impact of the proposed offshore wind farm at Aberdeen on operation of services from Aberdeen Harbour. The Consultation Group heard from Bill Davidson of North Link Ferries about the impact the proposal would have on the Northern Isles Ferries. There was some concern within the Group and it was agreed to hold the next meeting in Aberdeen with the agenda focusing on this issue. The meeting had still to be arranged (possibly 24 June, 2010) but Nestrans had proposed that Aberdeen Renewable Energy Group (AREG) be invited to give a presentation on the proposal and consultations that were taking place. In addition it was proposed that Nestrans host that meeting, offer to chair the meeting if appropriate and provide hospitality in the form of a buffet lunch for participants, at a cost of no more than £500.

The report provided an overview of the discussion held at the meeting regarding the Government's proposal to amend the Aberdeen to Kirkwall timetable to reduce fuel and save money, and advise that a meeting had been arranged in Kirkwall on 17 March to discuss this matter and Richard Hatfield of the Government's Ferries Division would be in attendance. Following the discussion on this matter, it was agreed that both Orkney and Shetland Islands Councils would convene meetings of the Tier 1 Stakeholders Consultation meetings and that Richard Hatfield would seek the Minister's agreement to defer a final decision until the outcome of those meetings was known. In addition, a short-life working group had been established to consider the range of options for cost cutting measures both immediately and for the longer term.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to host the summer 2010 meeting of the Tier 2 Consultation Group; and
- (ii) to note the ongoing discussions regarding the cost-cutting measures likely to be imposed on the Northern Isles ferries and to instruct officers to keep the Board informed of such changes, both in the short term and for the forthcoming winter timetable.

**BUDGET MATTERS**

**8. Budget Matters 2009/2010**

With reference to article 6(A) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a report by Alan Wood, advising on finance matters, which provided an update on spend and programming of the Partnership's budget to date and to alert the Board to any matters arising.

Appendix 1 to the report set out a summary monitoring statement of expenditure to 28 February, 2010, this showed expenditure of £2,186,581, which was probably in

line with expectations at this time of year. This figure represented expenditure to date of 74% of the revenue budget and 40% of the capital budget. It was highlighted that the lower expenditure on capital projects was due to the majority of the construction projects being undertaken towards the end of the financial year, following completion of the necessary earlier design process. Many of the schemes had also been delayed due to the adverse weather conditions, therefore although the projects were all now nearing completion, invoices had yet to be received.

With regards to the capital budget, it was advised that monitoring of this budget had, however, shown a projected underspend, which was mainly due to tenders coming in at lower prices than experienced in previous years, and some reductions in the additional length of cycleway that it had been feasible to construct this year. As such it was proposed to use this underspend by allocating contributions of £11,135 towards the purchase of car club vehicles for Aberdeen city, £48,000 to install a zebra crossing at Market Place, Inverurie and £75,000 to each Council to assist with strategic road maintenance that had been necessary as a result of the recent lengthy period of below freezing conditions. Contributions to resurfacing of strategic routes that had been undertaken this financial year by both authorities had been identified should the Board be in agreement. This adjustment would allow the forecast spend on the capital programme to remain at £3,114,000 and matched the available grant. At the time of writing officers were not aware of any significant issues affecting the revenue budget other than those that had been identified in earlier reports.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to request the Director to issue a press release highlighting that Nestrans had allocated £75,000 to each Council to assist with strategic road maintenance;
- (ii) to note the 2009/10 Revenue budget and Programme monitoring report as at 28 February, 2010; and
- (iii) the additional capital expenditure that had been proposed within the report.

(B) 2010/2011 Budgets

With reference to article 6(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a report by Alan Wood, its advisor on finance matters, which provided an update on available funding in 2010/2011, and sought approval for the Budget for 2010/2011.

By way of background the report reminded Members that the Board had previously approved the Nestrans Delivery Plan as a priority setting document for the period 2010-2021, which showed a general programme of works to deliver the Regional Transport Strategy, whilst noting that this was subject to future budget and partner agreements. The Delivery Plan anticipated funding levels of £3,114,000 capital, however, in light of Council budget deliberations the available budget for 2010/2011 was £2,843,000 which comprised of allocations from Aberdeenshire Council of £1,432,000 and Aberdeen City Council of £1,411,000. With regard the Revenue Grant In Aid, it was advised that an offer had now been received from the Scottish Government for 2010/2011, which confirmed that it would remain at the same level as in 2009/2010 and amount up to £920,000. In addition, requested Council contributions of £135,375 had been approved by both authorities and funding levels

of £1,190,750 were therefore in place for the Nestrans 2010/2011 Revenue Budget as approved by the Board on 8 February, 2010.

The report explained that the Delivery Plan gave a starting point for the formation of the Capital Budget and the projects with Nestrans' involvement it contained for 2010/2011 were shown in appendix 1 to the report. It was recognised that the Delivery Plan was not an agreed spending plan and would require revision throughout the period of its operation as more detailed investigations were undertaken and proposed projects were completed, abandoned or superseded by future proposals that might arise. A number of the projects proposed for 2010/2011 in the plan therefore no longer required funding and these sums had been indicated by shading within the appendix along with a statement as to why they were not being progressed at this time. Nestrans officers and Council colleagues therefore had put forward a series of further projects based upon the action from the various action plans and previously commissioned studies.

The proposed budget was contained in appendix 1 along with the base Delivery Plan project. The proposed expenditure had been grouped into projects matching the strands of the Regional Transport Strategy and details given to show where expenditure was likely to achieve Action Plan or previous study aims.

The report highlighted that although there was no allowance within the 2010-2011 Delivery Plan for Nestrans involvement in prioritising maintenance, this had become a high priority for both local authorities as a result of the sustained period of winter weather that had been experienced, therefore it had been considered appropriate for Nestrans to contribute to a prioritised maintenance with the strategic road network. Attention was also drawn to the proposal for Variable Message Signing which provided the third phase in extending the signs that had been installed from Aberdeen city centre outwards in recent years. The overall cost of the proposal was £400,000, but there was a risk that the scheme could not be completed within one financial year. Therefore a proposal had been included to only fund £200,000 in 2010/2011 to cover the cost of design and purchase of signs, but as it was more likely that the works would be issued as one contract to achieve best value for money, the Board should note that there would be a legal commitment to funding the remaining £200,000 cost in 2011/2012. Members might therefore wish to consider whether they wished to commit funding over a two year period in advance of future allocations being known, or would prefer to reallocate this as a further contribution towards prioritised maintenance on strategic roles. A reserve list of projects had been prepared should the need arise, projects could be prioritised from this list and reported to a future Board meeting for approval.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to note that the revenue funding for 2010/2011 had been confirmed and was now in place;
- (ii) to approve the 2010/2011 Capital Budget making appropriate adjustments following the Board's consideration;
- (iii) not to allocate £200,000 to the Variable Message Signing project, and to instead allocate such monies to Strategic Roads – Prioritised Maintenance, and to consult with the Conveners of the appropriate Committee of both local authorities regarding prioritised maintenance projects on the strategic road network for the next financial year; and

- (iv) to request the Director to circulate a briefing note to all Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councillors on the SCOOT system and advising where they operate within the city.

## **INFORMATION BULLETIN**

9. The Board had before it a report by the Director which provided information and updates on the Board for a number of matters not requiring a decision.

The report provided updates on the current position of the following projects:-

- Letter to British Airways concerning flight cancellations
- Third runway at Heathrow
- East Coast begins installation of CCTV on trains
- ACSEF Youth Summit
- Access for all Small Schemes
- North East Transport Consultative Forum
- Nestrans Press Releases
- Getabout Events
- Dyce TMO
- South Aberdeen Travel Plan Network

### **The Board resolved:-**

to note the contents of the report.

## **CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS**

10. With reference to article 8 of the minute of meeting of the Board of 8 February, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director summarising recent and forthcoming conferences of interest to the Partnership along with presentations by Nestrans and its partners.

### **The Board resolved:-**

to note the information.

## **PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

11. With reference to article 9 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 February 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director detailing pending business and information on reports to be submitted to future Board meetings.

### **The Board resolved:-**

to note the report of pending business and to agree the provisional scheduling of major reports to future Board meetings.

**MEETING DATE**

12. The Board heard from the Chair who advised that as a result of the rescheduling of Aberdeen City Council's committee cycle, the Board meeting scheduled for 6 October 2010, now clashed with a meeting of Aberdeen City Council, therefore the Board meeting had been re-arranged and was now to be held on 29 September 2010.

**SIGNAGE**

13. The Board discussed and highlighted the importance of Nestrans being accredited on project signage for their contribution and participation to vital transport projects across the North East.

- **KEVIN STEWART, Chairperson**.