

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, 16 June, 2010

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

In Attendance:- Derick Murray, Rab Dickson and Jennifer Anderson, Nestrans Office; and Alan Wood, Aberdeenshire Council; and Martin Allan and Grant Webster (Aberdeen City Council).

Also In Attendance:- Mr George Mair, CPT.

Apologies:- Apologies were intimated by Councillors Dean (Aberdeen City Council) and Robertson (Aberdeenshire Council); and Brian Juffs, Scottish Government's Bus Development Adviser.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14 April, 2010.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the minute as an accurate record.

PRESENTATION BY MR. GEORGE MAIR, CONFEDERATION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT

2. The Board received a presentation from Mr George Mair, Director of the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) for Scotland, wherein he provided an overview of the role and membership of the CPT.

Mr. Mair advised that the CPT represented and worked to enhance the reputation of the UK's bus, coach and light rail industries. At present the CPT represented approximately 1500 members, nationally, from the bus, coach and light rail operators, of which 90 to 95 were based in Scotland. Members ranged from multi-national companies to small family-run operators and represented a huge percentage of the commercial business in Scotland.

Details of the services provided by the CPT were provided, namely:- support on consultation on national and international legislation, local legislation, operational

practices and engineering standards; ensures that members' voices are heard and their interests safeguarded through having direct access to politicians and policy advisors at all levels of Government; protects the interests of its members by wishing to influence, inform and enhance the industry. Current issues being progressed by CPT included:- improving travel time and service reliability for bus passengers as well as quality partnerships.

Mr. Mair highlighted the uncertain future ahead as a result of the current economic climate. He also highlighted other key impacts on the industry such as carbon reduction, competition etc. To address some of the issues facing the industries the CPT had developed a number of guidance notes for operators.

Finally, Mr. Mair highlighted the areas for potential for the bus industry, in particular the modal shift, congestion and emission reduction, contribution to the aims of the Single Outcome Agreements, financial saving for local authorities. Ways in which the industry could unlock this potential were outlined.

The Board were then afforded the opportunity to ask questions to Mr. Mair.

The Board resolved:-

to thank Mr. Mair for his informative presentation.

STRATEGY

3. (A) Liaison Between Regional Transport Partnerships and with the Scottish Government and Others

With reference to article 4(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 14 April, 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 / CoSLA, 12 May 2010;
- (ii) RTP Chairs / CoSLA Transport Forum, 13 May 2010;
- (iii) RTP Chairs/ CoSLA meeting, 2 June 2010;
- (iv) RTP Chairs/ CPT meeting, 2 June 2010.

With regards the RTP Chairs meeting on 2 June 2010, and in particular in relation to the research paper by Scottish Enterprise, which had suggested that transport infrastructure was not a big factor for business, the Board discussed the report, which was included within the Information Bulletin along with a letter from the Chair to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate change (article 7 refers) and emphasised the importance of Nestrans' highlighting the importance of transport, and in particular infrastructure improvement to local businesses

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 request the Director to write to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change advising of the importance of transport, in particular infrastructure improvement to local north east businesses especially throughout the current economic climate, and highlighting the vital and positive impact transport had on the local economy and outlining the infrastructure improvements required within the area to assist businesses throughout the current economic climate.

(B) Travel Planning

With reference to article 3 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 14 April 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which highlighted the value for money achieved through travel planning measures.

The report reminded members that the University of Aberdeen's Centre for Transport Research had now carried out research into the effectiveness of travel planning measures that had been implemented in a number of English towns. The research had highlighted that the programmes implemented in England had had a significant effect in achieving their aims of traffic reduction and had proven to be value for money. A short summary of their effect was attached as Appendix A to the report.

In summary, the assessment into travel planning measures had concluded that expenditure on Smarter Choices measures was significantly cheaper than investing in large scale infrastructure projects and could have a similar effect to those projects, while delivering key aspects of the Government and Councils' agenda. In particular it had a key role to play to lock in the benefits of any improvements in the area. Smarter Choices measures provided good value for money.

Whilst the North East had not been part of the similar Scottish Smarter Choices programme, Nestrans and the two local authorities had been promoting similar measures throughout the area albeit on a smaller scale. The University's findings provided some evidence that such measures did provide value for money.

The Board resolved:-

to note the contents of the report.

(C) Transport Scotland – Scottish Government Transport Directorate Re-Organisation

The Board had before it a report by the Director which highlighted the Scottish Government's intention to reorganise the two parts of its organisation with responsibility for Transport, the Transport Directorate and Transport Scotland.

By way of background the report provided an overview of the current organisational structure for transport responsibilities within Scotland and reminded members that the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland had been carrying out a review of the operations of its own Directorate and Transport Scotland.

The report explained that on 28 April 2010, Nestrans had received a letter from Jonathan Pryce, Director of Transport and David Middleton, Chief Executive of Transport Scotland (a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report) advising that the review of the operations of its own directorate and Transport

Scotland had now concluded and had recommended that the Transport Directorate and Transport Scotland should be merged into a new Agency, which was also to be called Transport Scotland.

The report advised that the letter highlighted that the principle of the merger had been agreed but that the detail of how this would be achieved was still to be resolved.

In terms of consultation to date, it was advised that CoSLA had had some discussion with the Government regarding the proposal and to date had determined that there was no consequential impact on the responsibilities of either Regional Transport Partnerships or Local Authorities. The Government had however acknowledged to CoSLA that the previous arrangement for accountability to the Transport Scotland Board would need to be revisited in light of the reorganisation.

The Board discussed the membership of the new Transport Board wherein members emphasised the importance of the new Board containing regional representatives.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request the Director to write to the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change asking for information on the membership of the new Board and highlighting the importance of the membership containing regional representatives; and
- (ii) to request the Director to discuss potential representation from the North East on the Board with ACSEF and the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of commerce, to ensure that there was at least one person to be nominated with experience and background of working in the regions of Scotland, and that once nominees had been identified to request the Director to write to the freight and bus operators asking them to support the nominee; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

(D) Second National Planning Framework (NPF2) Action Plan Update

The Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on the second National Planning Framework (NPF2), and in particular highlighted progress relating to actions in which Nestrans had an interest or involvement.

The report advised that the Scottish Government had produced National Planning Frameworks to provide strategic direction on land use matters at a national level. The NPF2 was produced in 2008 and a number of specific actions which related to issues of interest to Nestrans; these were reported to the Board in September 2009. An Action Programme which provided an update on relevant actions, with those of particular interest to Nestrans highlighted by shading was appended to the report.

The board discussed possible funding streams, in particular the low carbon transport fund, which could potentially support the continuation of the Dyce shuttle bus, which Nestrans was financially supporting until March 2011. The Director advised that he had been in discussion with First Bus to discuss the route and at present First thought that this might route might be viable to become a commercial route.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request the Chair to write to Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council to request that monies from the low carbon transport fund be accessed to assist support the continued delivery of the Dyce shuttle bus route and other routes across the city; and
- (ii) to note the report and its appendix.

ACTION PLAN**4. (A) Rail Action Plan; Report on Consultation**

With reference to article 5a of the minute of the meeting of the Board on 8 February 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on responses received regarding the first discussion draft on the Rail Action Plan.

The report advised that in total, some 27 responses had been received, mostly welcoming the draft and suggesting ways of enhancing rail travel to, from and within the north east. A summary of responses had been prepared, indicating some 116 points and suggesting amendments to the Action Plan to take account of those responses which were valid in helping to further the actions proposed. Thereafter, it was proposed that an amended version of the Action Plan could form the basis of informed discussion with the rail industry at a meeting to be held in the summer. The purpose of the meeting would be to try to encourage a co-operation between Nestrans, the local authorities, Transport Scotland, Network Rail and operators in taking forward a plan which incorporated shared vision and priorities, recognising that these partners might have different opinions but acknowledging where agreed objectives could be achieved.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve this report as the result of the consultation on the first discussion draft;
- (ii) to agree to an officer-level meeting being held with the rail industry to seek common objectives in taking forward the Rail Action Plan; and
- (iii) to instruct that a final Rail Action Plan be brought back to a future meeting of the Board for approval thereafter.

GENERAL**5. (A) Progress Report**

The Board had before it a report updating on the progress made so far on the Regional Transport Strategy.

The Director highlighted item EC1b: Improved train capacity, comfort and reliability, stating that the project to improve accessibility to stations for people with mobility impairments was currently on hold following uncertainty regarding funding from the Department for Transport. He also brought to the Board's attention items IC2a: Strategic Roads Capacity Improvements – Detailed design and construction of segregated left turn slip lane from King George VI Bridge to West Tullos Road; and IC2d: Prioritised maintenance for strategic routes, with particular benefits for public

transport and sustainable modes – Queen Elizabeth Bridge, stating that both these projects had been awarded to contractors and should be completed by Autumn 2010.

With regards to item IC7a: Encourage enhanced bus services to Aberdeen Airport (introduction of a bus lane from terminal to junction with Dyce Drive), Cllr Jill Webster queried whether it would be viable to look at the frequency of buses to and from the Airport before considering this. The Director explained that there had recently been a reduction in bus services to the airport due to the time taken to access and vacate the airport's grounds. He suggested that if this could be improved, then the bus companies would be more likely to increase their service to the airport. He also reminded members that the bus lane would also be utilised by the large numbers of taxis to and from the airport.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) in relation to IC2e (Support Local Authorities in bringing forward Local Transport Strategy projects that contributed to Local Development Plan), to note that a report on this matter would be submitted to the Board at its meeting in August 2010; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report and the progress made.

(B) Publications and Consultation

With reference to article 7(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 14 April, 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) Moray Local Transport Strategy

The Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee of Moray Council had approved that consultation be undertaken on a draft Local Transport Strategy and had sought the input of Nestrans as part of the consultation.

There were a number of schemes and initiatives of considerable relevance due to the cross-boundary nature of transport links to and from the Moray area, but also a number of joint initiatives including the Road Casualty Reduction Strategy which were Grampian-wide. Responses were required by 25 June 2010, and a draft response for members' approval or comments was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Director brought to the Board's attention a paragraph in the draft response which said, 'The conclusion that Policies to reduce traffic levels in Moray were 'wholly inappropriate' ignored the need for policies which addressed national concerns regarding traffic, carbon emissions and air quality concerns.'

(ii) Aberdeen City & Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority Development Plan Scheme

The Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) has agreed a statutory Development Plan Scheme setting out an indicative project plan

to December 2013 for the first strategic development plan for Aberdeen City and Shire. It was the intention that Nestrans and the SDPA team would work jointly on developing transport assessments and ensure that land use policies were closely linked with the Regional Transport Strategy to ensure that: proposals for transport interventions are where they are most needed for the future development of the region; accord with strategic planning; and ensure best value for the authorities.

(iii) Climate Change Public Sector Duty

Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act places duties on public bodies relating to climate change. The duties on the face of the Act (section 44) require that a public body must, in exercising its functions, act:

- In the way best calculated to contribute to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
- In the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programme; and
- In a way that it considers most sustainable.

The duties come into force on the 1 January 2011 and apply to all 'public bodies' defined as a Scottish public authority within the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. A public consultation on draft guidance would take place in summer 2010, however Nestrans had attended a pre-consultation workshop on 25 March in Dundee which sought views on the shape of the draft guidance.

(iv) Audit Scotland: Audit on Concessionary Fares

Audit Scotland was undertaking a performance audit of the Scottish Government's National Concessionary Travel scheme for older and disabled people. This work would evaluate the development, introduction and management of the scheme and assess the costs, benefits and future risks. The work would consider the reasons for introducing the scheme, the effectiveness of the performance management arrangements and the strength of the financial management arrangements. It would also review the governance and accountability arrangements of the agencies involved and evaluate the Scottish Government's and Transport Scotland's role in managing the scheme. It was anticipated that the findings of this report will be published in September 2010.

The reasons for the inquiry were:

- Costs are significant and risks of fraud
- Large numbers using the scheme and the predicted increase in usage
- Difficulties of partnership working and accountability arrangements
- Diversity and equality
- Sustainability

Issues being considered included:

- Meeting the needs of the most socially excluded groups
- Is eligibility most appropriately targeted
- What impact could changes have on supported services
- What other modes could be included (i.e. community transport)
- Linkages to integrated ticketing

(v) Trans-European Transport Network

The European Commission has announced that it was to review the Trans-European Transport Network. The existing network consisted of roads, railways and high speed rail lines, waterways, ports and airports of significance. Thirty priority axes had been identified and a number of significant trans-national projects on these routes are being developed. There were only a few projects which involved the United Kingdom, including West Coast Main Rail Line and improved links to/from Ireland via Stranraer. There were no axes identified which extended north of the Central Belt of Scotland.

(vi) Aberdeen: City of the Future

Aberdeen University's Centre for Transport Research has produced a Document titled Aberdeen: City of the Future – A contribution towards discussions on a future transport strategy for Aberdeen and its Region, June 2010. This was launched at a conference on Thursday 10 June 2010. It was highlighted that due to the timescale from the receipt of the paper to the distribution of the Board's papers it had not been possible to include comment within these papers. Subsequently, the Chair had written to the University in this regard and a copy of that letter was circulated to members at the meeting.

At this point the Chair advised that he was deeply unhappy at the short notice given by the University for comment, and indeed that many other members did not seem to have received any chance to comment. He explained that contents of the document was not in line with Nestrans strategies and vision.

(vii) Understanding Why Some People Do Not Use Buses

Published in April 2010, the report presented the findings of research commissioned by the Scottish Government to explore the reasons why some people do not use buses and what might encourage them to do so. The study was qualitative in nature aiming to map the range and diversity of views of those who use the bus infrequently or not at all. The study report made a number of recommendations which were outlined in the paper. The report on the study could be viewed on the Scottish Government's website.

(viii) Scottish Government Assessment of Scottish Transport Statistics

The UK Statistics Authority was currently assessing the following transport statistics produced by the Scottish Government:

- Scottish Transport Statistics
- Main Transport Trends
- Key Road Casualty Statistics
- Reported Road Casualties Scotland
- Bus and Coach Statistics
- National Travel Survey – Scottish results

The UK Statistics Authority operated independently at arm's length from government with the objective to promote and safeguard the production and quality of official statistics. To this end, they assessed all National Statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Consultation with users of the statistics was a key part of the assessment process and a response to a number of questions was requested. Nestrans response to this consultation was provided in Appendix 2. This was submitted to the assessment team by their deadline of 2 June, 2010.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to reiterate that the detail contained in the Aberdeen University's Centre for Transport Research document did not form part of Nestrans strategy or vision; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

(C) Heathrow's third runway and High Speed Rail

The Board had before it a report by the Director highlighting the new UK Government's intention (as mentioned in the coalition manifesto and coalition agreement) to drop proposals for a third runway at Heathrow and consider policy options should this proposal be implemented.

By way of background, extracts from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat manifesto were attached to the report as appendices. Also attached was an extract from the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition agreement.

The report stated that it was clear from the attached documents that the new Government would not be pursuing a new third runway at Heathrow, which Nestrans had had a policy of supporting. The coalition agreement discussed proposals for a high speed rail (HSR) network but was not clear on the extent of the network. The Conservative manifesto discussed a network to Leeds and Manchester as phase one with extension to Scotland as phase two. This would be important for the North East because even if that network doesn't extend to this region it will need to extend far enough (Edinburgh & Glasgow) to ensure that air services to these areas are reduced by mode shift to the new rail service. This would have the potential to provide some relief to capacity at Heathrow.

The report suggested three options for Nestrans to consider when re-evaluating its position:

- Continue to campaign for a third runway to alleviate congestion;
- Ask the new Government to consider relaxing the current planning restrictions on runway operations:-
 - This could include relaxing rules on alternation. Alternation limits use of the two existing runways to either landing or take off use at different times resulting in residents not being under a flight path at times.

- Relaxing this would allow both take off and landing from both runways thereby increasing capacity.
- This could also include allowing increased night time flights thereby increasing capacity
 - Both these measures were rejected as interim measures (prior to a third runway but to provide instant additional capacity) by the previous Government.
 - Ask that the Government implement a series of measures including:
 - Extending the HSR network to Scotland as part of phase 1 of that project
 - Include Heathrow as a part of the HSR network as discussed in the Conservative manifesto
 - Bring forward electrification of the line between the central belt and Aberdeen to be ready in time for the introduction of HSR in Scotland to enable through trains from Aberdeen to London taking advantage of the HSR route from the central belt south
 - Plus either
 - Incorporate some measures of the 2nd option above
 - Or investigate with the European authorities ways of ensuring appropriate access for peripheral regions to their national hub airports (currently the Department for Transport defines Public Service Orders as applying to a place i.e. London rather than a specific airport or hub airport)

A letter from the Nestrans Chair had already been sent to the new Secretary of State for Transport highlighting the importance to the North East of Scotland's economy of access to world energy centres via the UK's only hub airport at Heathrow. A copy of this letter was attached as Appendix 2. In addition, further to this meeting a further letter would be prepared based on the new policy agreed by the Board to continue to press the case for access to Heathrow and its importance to our economy.

Discussion took place over the policy or combination of policies to adopt. It was decided early on that continuing to campaign for a third runway was no longer a viable option and so the focus turned to discussing the HSR network, along with bringing forward the electrification of the line between the central belt and Aberdeen. It was raised that, in the short term, the Board should be looking at lobbying for the planning restrictions on runway operations at Heathrow to be relaxed, thus alleviating capacity issues temporarily.

The Board resolved:-

that the adopted policy should be a combination of lobbying to get planning restrictions relaxed along with supporting the High Speed Rail network extending to Scotland in phase 1 and electrification of the railway line from the central belt to Aberdeen.

BUDGET MATTERS

6. (A) Budget Matters 2009/2010 and 2010/11 and Draft Final Accounts 2009/10

The Board had before it a report by the Treasurer to the Board providing the Board with a copy of the draft financial outturn position for 2009/10 and an update on spend and programming of the Partnership's 2010/11 budgets, and to alert the Board to any matters arising.

By way of background, the Board requested that a general budget report be submitted to each Board meeting, monitoring expenditure, identifying any potential budget issues, and reporting on any particular expenditure requests. The reports are prepared jointly by the Nestrans office and Finance officials from Aberdeenshire Council.

The Board also had a statutory responsibility to prepare its Statement of Accounts by 30 June, following the 31 March financial year end. The unaudited Statement of Accounts must be presented to the Board prior to being passed to the Partnership's External Auditor, Audit Scotland, and advertised for public inspection.

Appendix 1 to the report sets out a summary monitoring statement of expenditure to 31 May 2010. It should be noted that the provision of £200,000 for works to improve bus punctuality on the Buchan-King Street corridor may not be spent in full and only £100,000 will be required in 2010/11. The report proposed to vire £100,000 from the budget to allow further maintenance on strategic routes.

Appendix 2 to the report sets out a summary monitoring statement of expenditure to 31 March 2010 which was expanded in Appendix 3 the draft Statement of Accounts for 2009/10.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the 2010/2011 revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 May 2010;
- (ii) to agree to vire £100,000 budget provision from Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnership costs to Strategic Maintenance;
- (iii) to note the 2009/10 revenue budget monitoring report as at 31 March 2010; and
- (iv) to approve the submission of the draft accounts for 2009/10 to Audit Scotland.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

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

- A90 Laurencekirk junctions
- Fresnel lens project
- Inverurie Station & Laurencekirk Station passenger numbers
- North East Transport Consultative Forum

- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- Nestrans Press Releases
- Getabout Events
- Transport as an economic enabler

In addition, the Director distributed further information which included:

- BA Strikes: An analysis of how Aberdeen compared to Edinburgh & Glasgow?;
- A further letter from UK Border Agency to Nestrans regarding Border Control Signage at Aberdeen Airport;
- Aberdeenshire Council Dialogue Youth Transport Event; and
- A letter from Transport Scotland to Nestrans in relation to rail enhancements in the north east.

The Board resolved:-

to note the contents of the report and additional materials.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

8. With reference to article 10 of the minute of meeting of the Board of 14 April, 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 report.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

9. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 14 April, 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:-

- (i) to note that the Board's Annual Report as well as an accumulative impact assessment report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board and;
- (ii) to note that Kevin Brown, Managing Director at Aberdeen Airport was leaving to start a new post at Edinburgh Airport; It was agreed that a congratulations letter be sent to Mr Brown, thanking him for his time at Aberdeen Airport and wishing him the best for the future.

- **KEVIN STEWART, Chairperson.**