

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, 8 February, 2010

Present:- Councillor Kevin Stewart (Chair), and Councillors Boulton, Dean, and McCaig (as a substitute for Councillor John Stewart) (Aberdeen City Council); Councillors Argyle, Graeme Clark, Robertson and Webster (Aberdeenshire Council); Ms. Jennifer Craw; and 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 Allison Swanson and Martin Allan (Aberdeen City Council).

Also In Attendance:- Mr. Nigel Wunsch, Network Rail and Frank Roach, Nestrans' Rail Advisor.

Apologies:- Apologies were intimated by Councillor John Stewart and Mr David Sullivan.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Board had before it the minute its previous meeting of 17 December, 2009.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the minute as an accurate record.

NETWORK RAIL - PRESENTATION

2. The Board received a presentation from Mr Nigel Wunsch, Network Rail, wherein he provided an overview of the operation of Network Rail, and outlined the key projects which Network Rail were progressing at the present moment. In particular highlighting the current status regarding potential improvements to the Aberdeen to Inverness rail line.

Firstly in terms of performance Mr Wunsch advised that Network Rail's performance up to Christmas period had been very good, with high levels of reliability, however the adverse weather conditions experienced throughout and since the festive period would have a major impact on the overall performance. Despite this 88% of trains did operate throughout the period.

Thereafter he provided an overview of the major projects being progressed and highlighted that at present no significant projects were being undertaken in the North East. In terms of the Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR) he explained that Network Rail was currently undertaking a review of the document to take a long

term view of the network with the economy and growth prediction for 20 to 30 years ahead. Network Rail was aiming to complete the consultation document by the end of 2010 with a final report to be published in 2011.

Specifically, in relation to potential improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness line he highlighted that there was a recommendation within the STPR to look at possible improvements to this section of rail. As such Transport Scotland had tasked Network Rail to identify options to improve the journey times on this route. He highlighted that a number of studies had already explored possibilities for this route and each had presented a number of recommendations. As such Network Rail would assess these previous studies as a starting point, thereafter they would explore and identify a range of options for discussion. He further highlighted that in looking at potential improvements they would explore the possibilities of introducing new stations at Dalcross and Kintore, however he intimated that this would add time to the current journey time and emphasised that Transport Scotland had requested that journey times be reduced. Specifically, in terms of the introduction of new stations he advised of the challenges of introducing further stops. At this point the success of the opening of the Laurencekirk station was discussed.

Members were then afforded the opportunity to ask questions during which they highlighted the findings of the rail action plan which was to be considered later on today's agenda (Article 4(A) refers) within which it was stated that the increase in usage since 2003/2004 in the North East had been much greater than the Scottish average, and that over half the journeys from the North East were over 100km whilst only 5% from Glasgow were. In this regard members asked whether further investment could further increase usage and asked whether in addition to past studies Network Rail would also be assessing the City and Shire structure plan when exploring potential improvements to the Aberdeen to Inverness line. In response Mr. Wunsch confirmed that they would study all such documents to assist in the identification of future development hot spots and areas where further investment was required.

Thereafter members discussed extensively the impact of the introduction of new train stations, in particular the impact on patronage and journey times. At this point Mr. Wunsch again emphasised the importance which Transport Scotland placed on the reduction of overall journey times.

The Board resolved:-

to thank Mr Wunsch for his informative presentation.

STRATEGY

3. (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 17 December, 2009, 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 held since the last meeting of the Board, these being:-

- (i) Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) Steering Group, 8 December, 2009;
- (ii) Officers meeting with the Scottish Government Director of Transportation, Johnathan Pryce, 18 January, 2010.

The minute of the meeting of the LABOF Steering Group of 8 December, 2009 was appended to the report.

The future programme of meetings was then set out involving a meeting of the RTP head officers in Edinburgh on 10 February, as well as the ACSEF meeting with the Cabinet Secretary John Swinney on 16 February, the RTP Chairs/CoSLA Meeting in Dumfries on 3 March, LABOF Steering Group meeting on 9 March, and finally a Nestrans Board meeting with the Minister for Transport on 12 March. The Board received an update from the Director in relation to the issues discussed at the meeting.

With regards the minute of the LABOF Steering Group it was noted that no bus operators were present at the meeting. Members were advised that the meetings dates for 2010 had been set at the beginning of the year and that members could send substitutes but on that occasion the bus operators had not sent any.

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) Communication Strategy Update

With reference to article 3(B) 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 on progress on developing the Communication Strategy following the joint ASCEF/SDPA/Nestrans workshop in November, 2009.

The report advised that work on developing a communications strategy had progressed with discussions on a way forward being held with Aberdeen City and Shire's Economic Development and Public Relations Services. Such discussions had resulted in Aberdeenshire Council's Public Relations Service preparing a brief for a two stage approach towards strategy agreement and delivery, of which Phase 1 was intended to focus on the development and planning of the campaign with production of materials, agreeing a programme of meetings and securing funding to deliver objectives; and Phase 2 would be the delivery of the campaign. It was envisaged at this stage that Phase 1 might involve a tender process to identify a suitable consultant to pull the programme of events/campaigns etc. together and deliver the materials ie the picture of the visions to build the campaign around; whilst delivery of Phase 2 might be undertaken by a series of different types of contract to achieve the desired objectives. In light of this proposal a meeting of the two Councils', Public Relations and Economic Development services along with ASCEF/SDPA/Nestrans was held on 2 February to agree the process and the brief for Phase 1.

The Board resolved:-

to note the progress made on the development of the Communication Strategy.

(C) Meeting with the Minister for Transport

With reference to article 3(C) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which advised of a meeting with the Minister for Transport on 12 March, 2010 in Woodhill House at 12 noon, and a proposed agenda for that meeting was circulated.

The proposed agenda included the following topics for discussion with the Minister:-

- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route
- Balmedie to Tipperty
- Haudagain Roundabout
- A90 to A96 Park and Ride
- High Speed Rail
- Re-opening of Laurencekirk station as a successful model for Kintore
- Rail improvements central belt
- A90 North of Ellon, A96 Inveramsay Bridge, Laurencekirk
- Dyce to Portlethen/Stonehaven evening service
- Aberdeen to Inverness Sunday service improvements
- Rail Fares
- Inverurie Town Interchange
- Dyce Shuttle Bus – DDA compliance – Dyce Station
- Getabout

In light of the discussion following the presentation regarding rail route improvements and extended journey times, members proposed that this be added for as an item for discussion with the Minister.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the arrangements for the meeting with the Minister for Transport; and
- (ii) to request that route improvements and extended journey times be added to the proposed agenda as a topic for discussion with the Minister.

ACTION PLANS4. (A) Rail Action Plan

With reference to article 2(C) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 10 December 2008, the Board had before it a report by the Director which sought approval for the draft Rail Action Plan, as a supporting document for the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and to agree a process for consultation and development of rail priorities for the North East of Scotland.

By way of background the report reminded Members that the Board had previously considered reports on local rail matters and had concluded that a Rail Action Plan should be developed. The report asked that Members consider the first draft which could be the basis of informal discussions before a further version was prepared for formal consultation. This version was intended to encourage debate and

discussion on rail matters in the area and to give consideration to balancing the needs and priorities regarding rail travel to, from and within the North East. A first draft of the Rail Action Plan was attached as appendix 1 to the report for Members' consideration.

With regard to the Plan it was highlighted that one of the proposed actions was to establish a Rail Forum. Previously there was a North East Rail Transport Working Party which operated at a local authority member level with senior managers from each of the main rail operating companies and Network Rail. It covered a wide range of issues from availability of toilets for disabled people to strategic enhancement schemes. It fell into abeyance in 2002, with the responsibility for strategic rail issues being regarded as a Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) issue. Therefore, it was suggested that a Rail Forum be established in the North East involving the two Councils, Nestrans, business leaders and rail industry representatives and possibility including community representatives of towns and stations. An initial meeting to consider issues such as structure, format and regularity of meetings as well as being asked to consider the issues raised in the draft Rail Action Plan was proposed.

There followed extensive discussion regarding the draft Action Plan during which a number of issues were raised.

The Board resolved:-

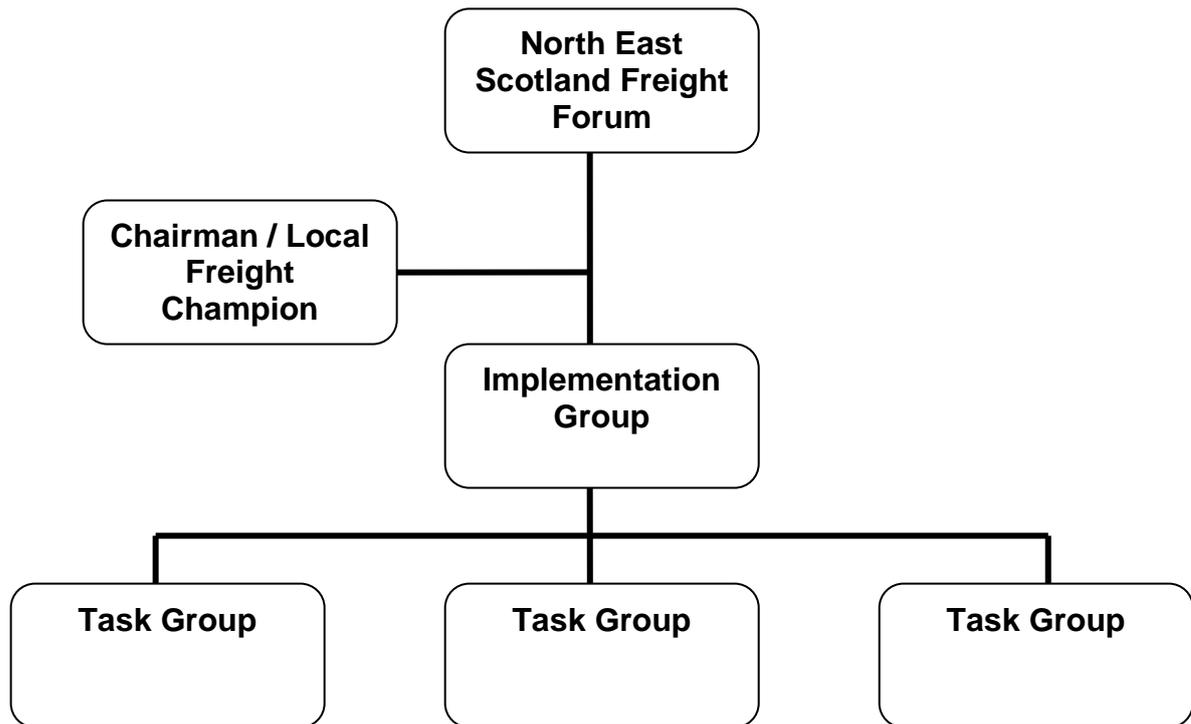
- (i) to approve the draft Rail Action Plan, attached as appendix one to the report, as a basis for discussion with stakeholders;
- (ii) to agree to the establishment of the North East Rail Forum, to which the Rail Action Plan should be presented prior to its finalisation;
- (iii) to instruct officers to report back on the results of discussions with a final Rail Action Plan for formal consultation later in the year;
- (iv) to request the Director to provide an explanation of a nosing strip to all members of the Board;
- (v) to request the Director to circulate the draft Action Plan to all elected members in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils as well as local MSPs and MPs;
- (vi) to request the Director to clarify the inconsistency at action 12 of the Action Plan to all members of the Board; and
- (viii) to request the Director to clarify the current position regarding the waiting room at Stonehaven station to all members of the Board.

(B) Freight Action Plan

With reference to article 9(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 30 October, 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update regarding progress on developing and delivering a Freight Action Plan for North East Scotland.

The report reminded Members that at its meeting on 30 October, 2009, it agreed to finalise the Freight Action Plan and to develop structures for delivering the actions. As such the following structure, detailed below had been developed, which would enable all stakeholders in the region and nationally to discuss key issues at a forum meeting, but for a small focus group to be responsible for delivery. It was suggested that the Implementation Group should consist of representatives from Nestrans and each of the local authorities, with direction from the Freight Champion

who would also chair the Forum. Specific tasks should be considered by the short life task group as necessary.



With regard to the Freight Action Plan launch it was advised that the Action Plan had now been amended to take account of the comments made by Members at its meeting on 30 October and was now published on the Nestrans website. A printed version was being produced and would be launched at an event in March, 2010, which would also update attendees of progress on a number of the Actions contained within the Plan.

The report highlighted that the Action Plan itself had recommended the establishment of a North East Scotland Freight Forum. This group would meet approximately annually and would consist of a wide range of local and national stakeholders. The Board had previously indicated that it would like Mr. Eddie Anderson to act as a local Champion on freight issues. It would therefore be appropriate for the Champion to be the Chair of the North East Freight Forum.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to agree the publication of the Freight Action Plan and the arrangements for delivering the Actions;
- (ii) that Mr. Eddie Anderson be appointed as Chairman of the North East Freight Forum; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

GENERAL

5. (A) Project Update

With reference to article 4(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, the Board had before it a progress chart summarising the work in the three sub-strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 1 February, 2010.

In relation to EC5 (Connections by Air) (Aberdeen Airport Improvements) the Director circulated a letter of response from the UK Border Agency regarding the greater consideration of courteous language in signage displayed at immigration control. Members discussed the response received and agreed that a letter highlighting this matter and the response received from the UK Border Agency be sent to the Home Secretary.

In relation to EC1a (Reducing journey times to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness) the Board heard from Mr. Frank Roach, its Advisor on rail matters, who explained that he had submitted a proposal for two additional services plus an additional service to Keith and Inverurie on a Sunday from Inverness to Aberdeen to Scotrail and had advised that Hitrans and Nestrans between them would be able to provide £50,000 to assist this project. Unfortunately Transport Scotland had advised that although this was good proposal there was no money to pursue this and had asked that Mr. Roach come back with further options. Members discussed the option and agreed that it would be appropriate to write to the Minister for Transport advising him of the options.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request the Director to write to the Home Secretary advising of their concerns regarding the language of the signage displayed at immigration control, making reference to the response received from the UK Border Agency and asking if there were steps he could take;
- (ii) to request Mr. Roach, its Advisor on Rail Matters, to write to the Minister of Transport advising of the proposal for additional Sunday services on the Aberdeen to Inverness line; and
- (iii) to note the update and report.

(B) Publications and Consultations

With reference to Article 4(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, 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) Aberdeen City Council Bus Information Strategy
Aberdeen City Council was currently seeking the public's views on the availability and quality of information concerning local bus services in the city as part of the process to develop a Bus Information Strategy for the city. Everybody who regularly travelled to, from or within Aberdeen, both bus users and non-bus users, were invited to take part in a short questionnaire. The consultation period ran from 11 January to 8 February, 2010. In addition to the public questionnaire, a letter had been drafted to the Council to express Nestrans' view that

the Strategy should ensure consistency in standards of information provision across the region. It was felt that the Strategy should be as similar as possible to the equivalent Bus Information Strategy recently produced by Aberdeenshire Council, which was fully endorsed by Nestrans.

- (ii) Aberdeen City Council Statutory Consultation on Car Parking
Aberdeen City Council had written to Nestrans as part of its statutory consultation for changes to on and off-street car parking within the city centre. The proposals included extending the hours of operation in the central roads and off-street car parks from 6.00pm on Monday – Saturday evenings to 8.00pm; including Golden Square within the management regime; converting East North Street car park from long-stay to short-stay and to introduce a flat fare of £1.50 for overnight parking in both short-stay and long-stay car parks. Comments were sought by 10 February, 2010 and the proposed response was attached as appendix 1 to the report.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request the Director to circulate a map detailing the boundaries of the Aberdeen city central car parking zone to all members of the Board; and
(ii) to otherwise note the contents of the report and to agree the attached appendices as Nestrans' comments where appropriate.

(C) Framework Agreement

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 18 February, 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which reminded the Board of the agreed process to commission the renewed Framework Agreement for Consultancy Services for Transportation and Environmental Related Professional Services, and sought approval to award the contract to the successful consultants with a start date of 1 April, 2010.

The report reminded members that in order to maximise the best use of staff time in achieving the transportation objectives of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and Nestrans and to help meet best value and efficient government targets, a framework agreement was commissioned in March, 2006 which engaged appropriate consultants on a quality/price basis for all of the transportation consultancy services that could not be undertaken in-house or by neighbouring authorities, either due to a skills shortage, the specialist nature of the work, or due to other workload commitments. The current framework agreement would end on 31 March, 2010. At its meeting on 18 February, 2009, the Board approved the setting up of a new consultancy framework agreement and instructed officers to commence the process of preparing the tender documents and to report back on the outcome.

As proposed, the new framework contract had been split into a number of separate packages, which was reflective of recent practice in other local authority areas. The various work packages were lifted within the report along with a summary list of the main types of work involved, namely:-

- (1) Policy Support and Development;
- (2) Strategic Planning;
- (3) Development and Delivery;

- (4) Traffic Signals and IT Solutions;
- (5) Public Transport Support and Development;
- (6) Technical Advice on Waste Management

With regard to finance it was advised that although there was no direct financial implications associated with the setting up of the framework agreement and no guarantee to the consultant of any work being awarded, there was potential that the total volume of work awarded by the three partners could exceed the limit necessary for the European notification. The consultancy framework agreement had therefore been commissioned in accordance with the European Procurement Procedures. It was previously agreed that the new commission would again be for three years with a possible extension of up to two years thereafter and that up to two consultants could be appointed for each work package. As a single consultant could tender for as many specialist areas as they wished, it was possible for them to be awarded more than one work package.

The report advised that an advert was placed in the European Journal on 27 June, 2009, and the resulting pre-tender questionnaire submissions were evaluated to draw up a short list of six consultants for each package. Tender documents were then issued and the returns assessed on a 60% quality/40% price basis. The recommended consultants for each package following the assessment process were as detailed below, with the consultant being listed alphabetically for each package:-

- (1) Policy Support and Development – AECOM Ltd and Sias Ltd;
- (2) Strategic Planning – AECOM Ltd and Sias Ltd;
- (3) Development and Delivery – AECOM Ltd and Jacob's Engineering UK Limited;
- (4) Traffic Signals and IT Solutions – AECOM Ltd and Halcrow Group Ltd;
- (5) Public Transport and Development – Jacobs Engineering UK Limited and MBA Consultancy Ltd;
- (6) Technical Advice on Waste Management – Halcrow Group Ltd.

As well as approval from the Board the procurement of the new framework contract would also be subject to approval by the appropriate Committees within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Providing this approval was granted the consultancy framework would begin on 1 April, 2010.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress of setting up the framework agreement; and
- (ii) to approve the award of contracts to the two successful consultants identified for each package to allow the framework agreement to begin on 1 April, 2010.

BUDGET MATTERS

6. (A) Budget Matters 2009/2010

With reference to article 5(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, the Board had before it a report by Alan Wood, advising on finance matters, which (1) provided a copy of the draft financial outturn position of

the Partnership; (2) provided an update on spend and programming of the partnership's 2009/2010 budget; and (3) alerted the Board to any matters arising.

Appendix 1 to the report set out a summary monitoring statement of expenditure to 31 December, 2009. This showed expenditure of £1,224,347 which was broadly in line with expectations at this time of year. It was highlighted that the forecast spend on a number of lines had been amended to reflect expected changes and programme costs. These changes would have resulted in a forecast underspend of £107,500. Details of all the amendments were attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

It was proposed to vire funds to meet the costs of the following:-

- £20,000 to Travel Planning to assist in the purchase of five additional I-Trace licences;
- £42,500 to assist in the cost of further Local Development Plan modelling;
- £10,000 to assist in the HOV study on the understanding that further European funding might be available to assist the overall programme;
- £4,000 to meet the additional costs of the RTPI expansion live web link;
- £31,000 to meet the cost of additional consultant led study at Dyce Drive and King Street, Castle Street.

The forecast for the revenue budget projects had been amended to reflect the effect of these proposals. There were no changes to the capital programme at the time and the outturn remained at £3,114,000 which matches the grant available. With the recent periods of adverse weather it would be reasonable to expect that this would impact on completion dates. At the time of writing officers did not have certain information to update the Board however an update would be available at the next Board meeting.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the 2009/2010 budget monitoring report as at 31 December, 2009;
- (ii) to agree the changes to programme costs and the virements identified in Appendix 2, and in particular the additional contribution of up to £107,500 for the additional costs of the proposed virements detailed in the report, which were to be met by the predicted areas of underspend.

(B) 2010/2011 Budgets

With reference to article 5(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, the Board had before it a report by Alan Wood, its advisor on finance matters, which sought approval for the 2010/2011 revenue budget and advised the Board of progress in developing the 2010/2011.

The report reminded members that at its last meeting the Board agreed the suggested funding levels for 2010/2011 based on the proposed contribution to be requested from the Councils and the anticipated revenue support from the Scottish Government. The report provided a suggested 2010/2011 revenue budget for discussion based on an anticipated funding level of £1,190,750, although this amount might have to be reviewed pending formal confirmation of the Government grant. Proposals for the capital budget based on the anticipated funding of £3,114,000 were still being finalised and it was intended to report this to the next

meeting of the Board on 14 April, 2010, when the outcome of Council budget deliberations and therefore available funding levels were known.

With regard to the revenue budget, it was advised that the budget had again been drafted to support the implementation of the Regional Transport Strategy. The core costs reflected the running of Nestrans and had been based on previous allocations, with adjustments applied in accordance with inflation and levels of expenditure achieved in previous years. The non core costs were for the feasibility assessment and preparation of Regional Transport Projects. A reference had been included to show which strand of the RTS each project contributed to. This would help clarify how the budgets were developing in relation to the RTS objectives. The projects were split into the following sections:-

- Action Plan Project
- General Projects outwith the Action Plan
- Project Feasibility and Monitoring
- Contingency
- Travel Planning

The proposed budget was attached as Appendix 1 to the report along with the indicative proposals for the detailed expenditure within each project heading attached as Appendix 2.

In relation to the 2009/2010 Capital Budget, it was advised that Nestrans officers and Council colleagues had been considering the contents of the agreed Delivery Plan and the projects therein that were feasible for delivery in 2010/2011. There were however a number of schemes within the Delivery Plan that were not at the stage of being ready for delivery and officers have had to consider other suitable projects that built on previous years expenditure, could be undertaken in time and support the Regional Transport Strategy and various supporting Action Plans. This work was ongoing with final information on the details, deliverability and costs of some capital projects still to be confirmed. It was therefore proposed to delay the report on the draft 2010/2011 capital budget until the next meeting of the Board on 14 April, 2010, to allow project details to be confirmed. It was highlighted that as the next meeting was to be held on 14 April, delay in consideration of the budget until that time would not have a significantly adverse impact on delivery. The Councils would be considering their 2010/2011 budgets later this month and the revised timescale would also allow the outcome of the Council budget deliberations with regard to the funding levels requested by Nestrans to be incorporated.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the Revenue Budget as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the anticipated funding levels being confirmed and making any appropriate adjustments following Board's consideration;
- (ii) to instruct a further report detailing the proposed capital budget for consideration at the next Board meeting on 14 April, 2010.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

7. The Board had before it a report by the Director providing an update on various projects for members' information.

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

- Performance Indicators
- Letter to British Airways concerning flight cancellations
- Economic Regulation of Airport
- High Speed Rail
- Office of Fair Trading Refers Local Bus Services to Competition Commission
- Bus Re-regulation and Changes to the Concessionary Fares Bill – Consultation Results
- Fochabers and Mosstodloch ByPass
- Aberdeenshire Council Review of Supported Bus Services
- Multi-Modal Freight Hubs
- East Coast Rail Franchise
- Sustainable Travel Grants Scheme
- Nestrans Press Releases
- Dyce Shuttle Bus
- Getabout Events

The Board resolved:-

to note the contents of the report.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

8. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director summarising recent and forthcoming conferences of interest to the Partnership along with the presentations by Nestrans and its partners.

The Board resolved:-

to note the information.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

9. With reference to article 8 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 17 December, 2009, 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.

- **KEVIN STEWART, Chairperson**.