

## NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

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

Aberdeen, 16 February, 2011

Present:- Councillor Kevin Stewart (Chairperson), and Councillors Boulton, Dean and John Stewart (Aberdeen City Council); Councillors Argyle, Clark and Webster (Aberdeenshire Council); Mr. Derek Provan; and Mr. David Sullivan; Dr. Margaret Bochel; and Mr. Iain Gabriel (Advisers to the Board).

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

Apologies:- Councillor Robertson; and Eddie Anderson and Jennifer Craw.

#### **EXTERNAL MEMBERS TO THE BOARD**

1. The Chair welcomed Mr. Derek Provan to his first meeting of the Nestrans Board. The Chair explained that Mr. Provan had been appointed by the Scottish Ministers following a recommendation from Nestrans' Appointment Committee. The Chairperson explained that Mr. Provan was the Managing Director at BAA, Aberdeen Airport.

With reference to Article 1 of the minute of meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the Chairperson explained that Mr. David Sullivan, would be continuing as an external member to the Board.

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

- (i) to welcome Mr. Provan to the meeting; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the details.

#### **DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

2. The Chairperson proposed that the Board consider the report entitled "Dyce Shuttle Bus" in private with the press and public excluded.

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

that in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the report detailed below (at article 11) so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 6 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

## MINUTES

### 3. (A) Minute of its Previous Meeting

The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

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

to approve the minute as an accurate record.

### (B) Minutes of the Appointments Committee

The Board had before it the minutes of meetings of the Appointments Committee of 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 and 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

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

to note the minutes.

## STRATEGY

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

With reference to article 5(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 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 and others.

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

- (i) LABOF Steering Group meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2010;
- (ii) RTP Lead Officers meeting, Edinburgh, 9 February, 2011;

The report further explained that the RTP Chairs will hold a joint meeting with CoSLA in Shetland on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011.

The Board then heard the Director explain that at the RTP Lead Officers meeting in Edinburgh on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 the issue of the funding formulae for Regional Transport Partnerships was discussed. The Director explained that currently Nestrans does receive a higher share of funding compared to some of the other RTPs and the issue of undertaking a review of the funding formulae for RTPs was proposed. The Director explained that he had suggested that any review of the funding for RTPs should be undertaken with a wider review of the funding for local authorities in Scotland. The Director explained that the RTP Lead Officers had agreed to discuss this issue again following the elections in May, 2011.

The Board then asked questions regarding whether the issue of bus fares for children in full time education had been raised at recent LABOF meetings.

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

- (i) to thank the Director for his contribution at the RTP Lead Officers meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2011;

- (ii) to note that the issue of bus fares for children in full time education will be discussed at a future meeting of LABOF and will also be raised with the Scottish Government accordingly; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the report.

(B) Local Development Plans – Cumulative Impacts

With reference to article 3(B) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided information on the ongoing work that has progressed since the completion of the Local Development Plan Cumulative Transport Appraisal and which also outlined in particular, ongoing discussions on the mechanisms for delivery of strategic infrastructure to address the cumulative impacts of development.

The report explained that the results of the cumulative impact appraisal work identified a number of locations across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire where transport interventions would be required to fully support the level of development allocated in the emerging Local Development Plans for the two authorities.

The report explained that all developments have an impact on the wider transport network and not just on the immediate surroundings. The report explained that both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils have incorporated the findings of the Cumulative Transport Appraisal into their proposed Local Development Plans and have identified the need for developments to contribute towards strategic infrastructure to address the cumulative impact of development.

The report explained that it is recognised there are a number of current priorities identified for the enhancement of the strategic transport network in the region, and alongside this, a range of transport infrastructure will be required to support new development. The report advised that a working group (comprising representatives of Nestrans, the Strategic Development Planning Authority, and the 2 local authorities) had recommended that such transport schemes should be grouped in the following four categories:-

- (a) committed infrastructure that already has political support and funding allocated;
- (b) schemes which are committed politically and also listed in the Council's Local Development Plans as committed but funding is not confirmed;
- (c) strategic infrastructure required to address the cumulative impacts of development;
- (d) local infrastructure requirements required to mitigate the direct impact of specific development sites.

The report had appended to it the detailed schemes relating to (a), (b) and (c) above and the areas for intervention.

The report explained that there is an agreement between partners on the Working Group that a regional model for securing developer contributions for strategic infrastructure should be pursued with such a model being based on openness and transparency ensuring equity and common benefit. The report explained that there is also an agreement amongst those on the Working Group that the proposed approach should be based around the following principles:-

- major developments located within the strategic growth areas in the Aberdeen housing market area should be required to contribute to a single

ring-fenced fund set aside to deliver strategic transport improvements to address the cumulative impact of development;

- developer contributions to the strategic fund could be made on either a per-trip or per-house basis, proportionate to the predicted impact on the transport network of the development;
- Nestrans would be an appropriate body to manage this fund for strategic transport infrastructure, with schemes delivered according to a prioritised list agreed by all partners.

The report explained that discussions with Aberdeenshire Council's finance team have identified that it would be possible for Nestrans to hold the fund for strategic transport infrastructure with the funds raised through this mechanism ring-fenced for delivering the cumulative transport projects.

The report explained that there are a number of ways of taking this proposal forward but one is the possibility of debating these issues in the Strategic Development Plan main issues report. Addressing this through the Strategic Development Plan would mean that it is only agreed once and would apply to both Council area. The Working Group was in agreement that the mechanisms for delivery of strategic infrastructure, based around the principles outlined above, should be set out in supplementary guidance. This could be done under the current approved Structure Plan and, in time, the new Strategic Development Plan. It is currently anticipated that consultation could be carried alongside the main issues report, with the supplementary guidance approved later in 2011. The report explained that as there is a joint workshop planned for 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, between Nestrans and the Strategic Development Planning Authority, this subject could be one discussed at this event.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the discussions that have taken place amongst the Working Group;
- (b) support the principles outlined above in relation to mechanisms for developer contributions;
- (c) approve the proposal that Nestrans be the body to manage the fund for delivering strategic infrastructure and manage the processes for prioritisation and delivery;
- (d) note the schemes listed in the appendix to the report; and
- (e) refer this report to the two Councils for approval.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to congratulate the planning teams in both of the Councils for their work on this issue; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

**PROJECTS**

**5. (A) Aberdeen to Inverness Railway**

With reference to article 4(C) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2009, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided information on potential enhancements to the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line,

both in the short-term through an improved Sunday timetable and in the long term through major infrastructure development.

The report explained that a report commissioned by Hitrans and Nestrans containing proposals for increasing the number of services on the Aberdeen to Inverness route was considered by the Nestrans Board at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2009. The route currently has one of the lowest ratios of Sunday : weekday services in the country and the Board agreed to include enhancement as a proposal in the Rail Action Plan and to engage with ScotRail, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government to achieve better Sunday frequencies in the short term. The Board also agreed to allocate £25,000 from Nestrans' 2009/2010 revenue budget, in case there was a revenue shortfall which could prevent the proposal proceeding. Hitrans also allocated funding.

The report explained that unfortunately this proposal has not been able to be progressed due to other priorities within ScotRail. The issue was raised at the recent timetable and conference meeting attended by Rab Dickson of Nestrans and Frank Roach for Hitrans and the following is an extract from the draft minute:-

“Inverness to Aberdeen Sundays: Progress had not proved possible due to the ongoing calls of the Class 380 situation on ScotRail's planning resources, and there was still work to be done on refining the consultant's recommendations with a likelihood that one or two fewer services would be forthcoming than originally anticipated. ScotRail nevertheless remained keen to reach agreement with Hitrans and Nestrans on revenue support for a trial period, and Rab Dickson said that he would be happy to make budgetary provision.”

The report explained that the Board should continue to press for these enhancements, whilst recognising difficulties with ScotRail's Airdrie to Bathgate project and the need for them to sort the difficulties with the rolling stock which has delayed them assessing the proposals.

The report further explained that Members had been informed of the Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR) which was published in December, 2009 and which had indicated that an upgrade of the Aberdeen to Inverness line was a key priority.

The report explained that Transport Scotland instructed Network Rail to undertake a feasibility study into potential upgrade of the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line with the following objectives:-

- to consider the constraint on the rail and road network caused by Inveramsay Bridge;
- an end-to-end rail journey time of less than two hours;
- a regular clock-face timetable;
- a day time frequency of one train per hour in each direction, with additional short-runnings close to either end of the route; and
- consideration of additional stops at Kintore and Dalcross (Inverness Airport).

The report explained that Network Rail have now produced a draft report and have submitted that to Transport Scotland. Discussion indicate that these objectives can be achieved, that the Inveramsay Bridge issue is not a major problem for the rail services and that the project has therefore been passed to the Trunk Roads

Division for further development and that initial estimates of the potential costs of such an upgrade could be achieved within the original STPR threshold of £250 – £500 million.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the above proposals and the progress which has been possible;
- (b) provide funding in future budgets to ensure continued progress and development as appropriate, including an allocation to make a contribution towards any revenue shortfall on Sunday enhancements between Aberdeen and Inverness;
- (c) seek assurances from Transport Scotland that they will share the findings of the Network Rail report on upgrading the line; and
- (d) instruct officers to press for early progress on these projects, including Kintore station and report back to a future Board meeting.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to instruct the Director to write to ScotRail requesting that they allocate sufficient resources to deal with the Aberdeen to Inverness Sunday service issues; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

**GENERAL**

**6. (A) Progress Report**

With reference to article 8(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the Board had before it a progress chart summarising the work in the three Sub-Strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2011.

The Board heard the Director provide further details on the Rail Utilisation Statement (RUS) specifically in relation to the possible 20 minute reduction in travel time between Aberdeen and the Central Belt. The Director explained that various options were being looked at to achieve the reduction and also that joint survey work was to be undertaken between Nestrans and Network Rail regarding overcrowding at Dyce Station and between Aberdeen and Stonehaven.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the details.

**(B) Publications and Consultations**

With reference to article 8(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 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):-

- statutory consultation on proposed charge increases at pay and display car parks in Aberdeenshire
- Cairngorm National Park – Local Development Plan main issues report.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the content of the report and agreed to the proposed responses (as detailed in the appendix to the report).

**BUDGET MATTERS****7. (A) Budget Matters**

With reference to article 9 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the Board had before it a report from its financial adviser which provided an update on spend and programming of the Partnership's 2010/2011 budget and also provided a forecast out-turn.

The report explained that as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2010, the budget showed an expenditure of £1,929,089. The report explained that this spend is broadly in line with expectations but it is anticipated that there will be an underspend on the revenue programme of £63,484. The report explained that this has arisen from expected underspends on a number of lines, the most significant of which being the Partnership office section and refers to expected underspends in areas such as travel, conference costs, training and purchase of equipment.

**The Board resolved:-**

to note the monitoring position and forecast.

**MATTER OF URGENCY**

**The Chair intimated that he had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Scotland Government Act 1973 that the following report be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Board to make an early in principle decision in relation to the Partnership's budget for financial year 2011 / 2012.**

**(B) 2011 / 2012 Budgets**

With reference to Article 9(C) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which asked the Board to agree capital and revenue budgets for 2011/2012, subject to available funding being confirmed.

The report explained that at its last meeting, the Board instructed a report detailing the proposed 2011/2012 capital and revenue budget expenditure for consideration. The report explained that the suggested revenue budget had been prepared for discussion which reflects anticipated funding levels, and the assumed budget of £1,039,212 has been based on an indicated 15% reduction in previous revenue support from the Scottish Government and a continued 5% reduction in the previous year's revenue contributions from the Councils.

The report explained that the Board previously approved the Nestrans' delivery plan as a priority setting document that showed a general programme of work to

deliver the Regional Transport Strategy, whilst noting that this is subject to future budget and partner agreements.

The report explained that the delivery plan anticipated funding levels of £3.114 million capital, however in advance of Council budget deliberations the budget for 2011/2012 has been assumed to remain at last year's level of £2.843 million, which comprised of allocations from Aberdeenshire Council of £1.432 million and Aberdeen City Council of £1.411 million.

The report then provided information in more detail on the proposed revenue and capital budgets (appended to the report were the line to line budgets for both the revenue and capital accounts).

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board approve the 2011/2012 revenue and capital budgets as detailed in the appendices to the report, subject to anticipated funding levels being confirmed and make any appropriate adjustments following the Board's consideration.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to agree the budgets detailed in the appendices in principle subject to anticipated funding levels being confirmed;
- (ii) to note that all members of the Board will receive information on where the "Scoot" traffic light management system are in place in Aberdeen City;
- (iii) to note that the Director would raise the concerns of the Board that the external audit charge seems to be excessive;
- (iv) to note that the Director would re-examine the office costs detailed in the budget to see if they can be lowered; and
- (v) to otherwise note the report.

**INFORMATION BULLETIN**

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, 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/issues:-

- Scottish Transport Awards entries
- Response from Traffic Commissioner
- Real Time Bus Website
- City Car Parking charges
- Balmedie/Tipperty
- Scottish Marine Regions – Defining their boundaries
- Car Club City Centre Parking Bays
- Scottish Parliament Motion
- High Speed Rail
- Nestrans Press Releases
- Getabout Events
- Performance Indicators



**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) in relation to the response from the Traffic Commissioner (as detailed in the appendix to the Information Bulletin and at article 5(A) of the minute of the previous meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010), to request that the Director write again to the Traffic Commissioner (a) re-emphasising the concern regarding the statements within the Public Inquiry on the First Bus strikes and the fact that Aberdeen City Council nor Nestrans had been invited to participate in the Inquiry; and (b) that if she was unwilling to meet with the Board then representatives of the Board would be willing to visit her to discuss the issues concerned;
- (ii) to congratulate staff on the successful Getabout adverts which were a good example of joint working between various partner organisations; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the details.

**CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS**

9. With reference to article 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 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**

10. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8<sup>th</sup> December, 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.

**In accordance with the decision recorded under article 2 of the minute, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.**

**DYCE SHUTTLE BUS**

11. The Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update to Members in respect of the Dyce Service 80 shuttle bus. The report also sought funding to ensure the continuation of this service towards commerciality.

The report provided details on the background to the inception of the shuttle bus and its use since December, 2008. The report explained that in the two years of

operation, over 100,000 trips have been made on the service which averages out to be around 5,000 passengers per month or around 250 trips per day.

The report provided information on discussions being held between Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council's Public Transport Unit and First Aberdeen regarding the continuation of the service. The report provided an indicative timetable based on the possibility of utilising a single bus rather than two buses. The report explained that although the original service was the subject of tender bids to seek the cheapest operator, the market has not been tested since the initial inauguration of the service some 27 months ago and therefore should be market tested.

In relation to the timetable the report explained that a single vehicle could operate between 0627 hrs and 1845 hrs making 20 round trips and provides 26 calls at the airport with reasonable links to the rail service, departing Dyce station within 10 minutes of 86% of arrivals and arriving at Dyce station within 10 minutes before 77% of departures during the day. The report explained that it is hoped therefore this frequency could continue to meet the objectives of the scheme in providing a connection between the station and the airport, heliport and industrial estate which would be acceptable to users.

The report explained that certain journeys can experience overcrowding issues and this is currently mitigated by timetabling two buses in close succession, however, it is highly unlikely that any easy solution to this problem can be found and it is possible that potential passengers would have to find an alternative if the bus was full.

The report explained that the possibility of extending the service to Saturdays and Sundays should be included as an option in any competitive tender process and it is suggested that the service may not require to serve Kirkhill industrial estate on weekends and a less frequent option could be provided on Sundays as train services are fairly infrequent.

The report explained that if a subsidy is required, then the service specification should be set by the subsidising authority including setting fares, establishing timetables and outlining the specifications such as type/quality of bus. The concept of a reducing subsidy would give an operator a greater incentive to build the business towards commerciality.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the proposals and agree to seek competitive tenders to continue the operation of the Dyce Service 80 shuttle bus; and
- (b) to agree funding within the next financial year to support the continued operation of the shuttle bus.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to agree that if a Best Value tender is received which is higher than the agreed level of funding to support the continued operation of the shuttle bus, then delegated powers be given to the Director to authorise the acceptance of the tender, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Board;
- (ii) to request that the Director submit a report to the next meeting of the Board which details (a) whether any of the companies in the locality would consider subsidising the shuttle bus, and (b) identify possible solutions to the

- overcrowding issue at peak periods (including utilising a larger bus which could operate from adjacent streets) in order to meet demand;
- (iii) to agree to review the fares for the shuttle bus after 6 months whilst considering how the route can become commercially viable;
  - (iv) to request that officers arrange suitable publicity regarding the future operation of the shuttle bus to enable the greatest awareness of the route; and
  - (v) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.
- **KEVIN STEWART, Chairperson**.