

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, 20 April, 2011

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

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

Apologies:- Councillor John Stewart.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT ITEM OF BUSINESS

1. 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 10) so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 6 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 16 FEBRUARY 2011

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 16 February, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the minute as an accurate record.

STRATEGY

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

With reference to article 4(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, 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) RTP Chairs/CoSLA, 2 March, 2011;
- (ii) Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF), 17 March, 2011;
- (iii) Meeting with Transport Scotland, 21 March, 2011;
- (iv) Joint Nestrans/STPA Workshop, 25 March, 2011;
- (v) Scottish Affairs Committee, 4 April, 2011; and
- (vi) RTP Lead Officers, 13 April, 2011;

The Board heard from the Director who advised that Mr. David Middleton Chief Executive, Transport Scotland would be attending the next Board meeting.

The Board resolved:-

to note progress on these and arrangements with other RTPs and the Scottish Government and arrangements for future meetings.

(B) Monitoring Report

With reference to article 4(B) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 15 April, 2010, 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 fourth monitoring report which considered progress towards achievements of the measures identified.

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 there were forty-five indicators for which indicator targets had been identified, and as a result, the following results could be summarised:-

	<u>2010 Monitoring Report</u>	<u>2011 Monitoring Report</u>
Indicators on Target	18	18
Indicators with some success	14	12
Indicators moving in the wrong direction	9	7
Indicators with no significant change or no data available	4	8

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

- Rail patronage;
- Aberdeen Airport;
- Road casualty statistics;
- Cycling;
- CO₂ emissions from road transport;
- Growth in transport;
- Car parking;
- Cost of a day bus ticket;
- Reliability of buses; and
- Proportion of HGVs on the road network.

Speaking in furtherance of the report the Director highlighted the successes in performance achievements throughout the year, as well as areas to be improved.

The Board discussed the monitoring report extensively, during which they raised various issues on which they felt the Board required further information and these areas are detailed in the resolutions below. In particular, Councillor Argyle advised of an email he had received which detailed difficulties individuals with visual impairments were experiencing at the Aberdeen Bus Station, where there was no audio announcement.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Director would submit new performance information to the Board throughout the forthcoming year;
- (ii) to note that at present there was no indicator regarding the ease of access for people with disabilities onto public transport and requested officers to explore the possibility of introducing an indicator for this area;
- (iii) to request officers to identify if Nestrans could address any of the issues raised in the e-mail received by Councillor Argyle regarding the bus station, and that this e-mail also be discussed with Mr. Stanley Flett, Vice-Chair of the Disability Advisory Group for his assistance;
- (iv) to request officers to clarify to Councillor Webster whether the statistics for congestion support the view that once the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is in operation, the required reduced levels of congestion would be achieved;
- (v) to request officers to arrange press coverage of the success of the Nestrans car share scheme, in particular highlighting the mileage saved figures;
- (vi) to request officers to examine why the Park and Ride patronage from the Bridge of Don had decreased and report back to a future meeting of the Board in this regard;
- (vii) in relation to the concerns regarding overcrowding on the Aberdeen to Inverness evening train, to note that Nestrans would undertake surveys on this matter and thereafter make further contact with Network Rail in this regard to emphasise the seriousness of the situation;
- (viii) in relation to rail usage numbers and the requirement for a train station at Kintore, to request that officers receive the views of local community councils in this regard to help lobby for the opening of a station at Kintore with this taking the form of a seminar which could tie into consultation on the Local Development Plan and the Local Transport Strategy;

- (ix) to request that the monitoring report be circulated to all new MSPs and current MPs, as well as the North East Transport Forum and other community groups, and that a press release regarding the report be prepared and released;
- (ix) to request officers to arrange a meeting with new Scottish Government Ministers and new MSPs, as soon as possible following the election to discuss the progress of the procurement of strategic transportation projects and to request that an update on progress in this area be provided to the Board at its meeting in June;
- (x) to request officers to seek the views of Mr. David Middleton, Chief Executive Transport Scotland regarding the procurement exercises at the Board's next meeting; and
- (x) to note the positive trends emerging against many of the targets and to note the progress towards meeting many of the targets that had been set.

(C) Bus Policy – An Agenda for Change?

The Board had before it a report by the Director which presented a request from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) to the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) Chairs to support a call for changes to the current national bus policy.

The report advised that at the RTP Chairs meeting on 2 March, 2011, a presentation on proposed changes to bus policy had been presented by SPT, who wanted to put forward a joint paper to the political parties to try and influence party manifestos. The meeting agreed that further information and time was required to fully understand the proposals and that the presentation plus additional background information be distributed to other RTPs.

Having now received the information, consideration of the proposals showed that some of them were significant changes to current national bus policy and that greater detail would be required to fully understand and assess others. Consequently, Nestrans, in accordance with the RTP Chairs' Memorandum of Understanding, were not in a position to consider agreeing to a joint RTP paper to the political parties. Although, unable to agree a joint Chairs' paper, Nestrans officials, in consultation with the Council's public transport units, agreed that there appeared to be merit in exploring the proposal further and that an RTP Lead Officers' meeting should be held for this purpose. This was held on Monday, 11 April, 2011.

The report presented the proposed five changes to the current National Bus Policy from the SPT, along with the discussion on each held at the officers' meeting.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note that discussions on the SPTs proposed changes to bus policy had taken place;
- (ii) to note that in the North East a number of the proposals were already being delivered, however Nestrans would be willing to assist in the proposal relating to legislation and in particular the requirement that the registration process be strengthened; and
- (iii) to note the proposed national patient service (as detailed in SPT's proposals) and agreed that this area should be subject to agreement with all parties locally, and requested that officers continue dialogue with the local

branch of the Scottish Ambulance Service in this regard, whilst agreeing to keep a watching brief on the national perspective.

PROJECTS

4. (A) Aberdeen - Inverness Rail Line

The Board had before it a report by the Director which informed of progress regarding the study into the potential upgrade of the Aberdeen – Inverness railway line.

The report advised that the Guide to Rail Investment Procedures (GRIP) 2 stage Engineering Study had now been published by Transport Scotland. The Aberdeen to Inverness upgrade was one of four priorities in the current Government's proposal for rail improvements in Scotland.

The study had identified three options to meet the study brief. It was advised that at this stage, option 3 appeared to provide the most effective and efficient solution. Option 3 crosses the hourly service at Huntly which results in crossing at Elgin. This option requires loops at: between Aberdeen and Dyce, Kintore, Forres and east of Dalcross station. The next stage in the study process, the GRIP 3 proposals identifying a preferred option was due for completion in early 2012. An overview of each of the three options was provided.

The Board discussed the options, during which Eddie Anderson advised of potential usage of the Raiths Farm freight depot for standing trains etc. which may help with the development proposals.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to explore the potential usage of the Raiths Farm freight depot for standing trains etc and report back to a future meeting of the board in this regard; and
- (ii) to note the report and to request offices to write to the Minister for Transport post election, encouraging rapid development and implementation of the proposals.

(B) Ferry Issues : Update

The Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on the current situation regarding ferries, including the initial result of the Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) experiment, the Northern Isles ferry tendering process and other ferry matters.

The Board resolved:-

to note the contents of the report.

GENERAL

5. (A) Progress Report

With reference to article 6(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, the Board had before it a progress chart summarising the work in the three sub-strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 13 April, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

to note the report.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Prior to considering the following item, Mr. Provan declared an interest as an External Board member in relation to his employment at BAA Aberdeen. Mr. Provan did not consider it necessary to remove himself from the meeting during consideration of the item.

(B) Publications and Consultations

With reference to article 6(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, the Board had before it a report by the Director which summarised and advised of recent consultation documents received, and presented suggested responses to the following documents (as detailed in the appendix to the report):-

- European Transport White Paper;
- High Speed Rail;
- Competition Commission Consultation on Financial Reporting requirements for Aberdeen Airport;
- Proposed changes to Off-Street Parking within Aberdeen City (preliminary statutory consultation);
- Greener Growth – views sought on new Aviation Policy; and
- Consultation on the possibility of allowing an increase in the length of articulated lorries.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request that the staff in the two Councils who deal with European matters comment on the European Transport White Paper, to include the City and Shire's transportation aspirations, and also request that the North Sea Commission highlight the areas' aspirations too;
- (ii) in relation to the High Speed Rail consultation, to request officers to talk to other peripheral regions in the UK to discuss a common bond and whether a single voice could be developed regarding access to London (eg Heathrow hub access for the North East of Scotland); that the joint RTPs letter to Mr. Baker, MP, Minister of State at the Department of Transport (which formed one of the appendices to the report) be sent to Edinburgh/Glasgow agencies as well as to the Chamber of Commerce to gather support for High Speed Rail coming to Scotland; and that this matter be raised at the next meetings of both the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnerships with ACSEF potentially providing a presentation on the added value to the economy; and

- (iii) to otherwise note the content of the report and to approve the proposed responses (as detailed in the appendix to the report).

BUDGET MATTERS

6. (A) Budget Matters

With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, 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 and highlighted the necessity to amend the 2011/2012 Capital Project allocations.

The report explained that as at 28 February, 2011, the budget showed an expenditure of £2,681,578. This was broadly in line with expectations, however, officers now anticipated an underspend on the revenue programme of £105,862, and this had arisen from expected underspends on a number of lines. Officers had been encouraged to consider alternative opportunities to maximise the benefit of the available funding but it was unlikely that full spend would occur.

With regards to the programme, it was advised that the programme had largely gone to plan in 2010/2011 and cost forecasts were still on budget. However, officers had already been alerted to an issue which affected the 2011/2012 programme which had previously been approved by the Board. A number of key decisions had now been made concerning a Third River Don crossing and it was now considered that a contribution of £250,000 was appropriate to allow progression of an appropriate design. Therefore, it was proposed to reduce the contribution for the strategic maintenance of the Beach Esplanade by the same amount.

The report also explained that Transport Scotland had advanced £500K Integration Transport Fund (ITF) money, for the Inverurie transport interchange.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the monitoring position and forecast;
- (ii) to note the additional ITF funding; and
- (iii) to approve the virement from within the 2011/2012 Programme to assist in the costs of the Third River Don crossing development.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

7. With reference to article 8 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, 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 Government – Roads Maintenance Review and Summit;
- Intercity Express Programme;
- Competition Commission decision on BAA sale of Edinburgh or Glasgow Airports;
- Access to London Airports;
- Response from the Traffic Commissioner;
- Scottish Transport Awards;
- Review of Media Coverage April, 2010 – March, 2011;
- First in Aberdeen New Ticket Initiative;
- Nestrans Press Releases; and
- Getabout Events.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request officers to gather information on the added value the Getabout campaign and events have had on communities and to publicise the events planned; and
- (ii) to note the contents of the report.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

8. With reference to article 9 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, 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 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, 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 1 of the minute, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.

DYCE SHUTTLE BUS

10. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 16 February, 2011, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update in respect of the Dyce Service 80 Shuttle Bus.

The Board resolved:-

to ratify the decision to appoint Central Coaches as the new operator of the Dyce Service 80 Shuttle Bus and to otherwise note the content of the report.

- **KEVIN STEWART, Chairperson.**