

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, 8 June, 2011

Present:- Councillor Anne Robertson (Deputy Chair); and Councillors Argyle, Clark and Webster (Aberdeenshire Council); Councillors Boulton, Dean, McCaig (as substitute for Councillor Kevin Stewart MSP) and John Stewart (Aberdeen City Council); 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 and Jenny Anderson (Nestrans Office); Derek Yule (Aberdeenshire Council); and Martin Allan (Aberdeen City Council).

Apologies:- Councillor Kevin Stewart MSP and Derek Provan.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 20 APRIL 2011

1. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 20 April, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the minute as an accurate record.

DAVID MIDDLETON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

2. The Board welcomed Mr. David Middleton, Chief Executive of Transport Scotland to the meeting.

Mr. Middleton addressed the Board, outlining a number of issues such as:-

- he was currently working with the new Ministerial Team at Holyrood which included Alex Neil, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment and Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transportation, as well as with John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth. He explained that a key deadline that Transport Scotland was working with the Government towards was the Budget Statement scheduled in September, 2011.
- he outlined a number of projects across Scotland which were close to being finalised or were in final stages of development, etc. He acknowledged the frustration that members of the public and parliamentarians in the North East of Scotland had regarding the slow progress of a number of projects in the area such as the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (in particular the legal challenges to this project) and the knock-on effect this legal challenge had on other infrastructure projects such as the Third Don Crossing, improvements to the Haudagain roundabout; the development of Park and

Ride in the area and rail improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness line as well as the opening of Kintore station.

- he explained the importance of using not for profit distribution models for the procurement of all of these projects and that it was proposed that all of the projects be put out to contract in one “deal”. He explained that with a diminished capital budget the Scottish Government and its agencies need to use not for profit distribution models and public private partnership projects to make as many efficiencies as possible during the contractual/procurement process.
- he then provided information on a review and reorganisation of representatives on Transport Scotland and explained that John Swinney was happy to receive and consider external views on specific projects.

Mr. Middleton explained that the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital investment or the Minister for Housing and Transportation could be invited to meet with the Board if required.

The Board were then invited to ask questions of Mr. Middleton.

The Board explained the importance of progressing projects as soon as possible and enquired whether preparatory work could be undertaken prior to the outcome of the court case on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Mr. Middleton explained that preparatory work could start at the right time and that Transport Scotland would work with the Board on management issues regarding the projects when required. The Board expressed their concern of putting all of the projects in one procurement deal. The Board reiterated the importance of moving quickly once the court case had been resolved and enabling preparatory work to be done on such projects like the Haudagain roundabout which was not purely an infrastructure project as there were major housing issues involved in the proposed project. Mr. Middleton took note of the tenants’ issues regarding the Haudagain roundabout improvement proposal.

The Board explained to Mr. Middleton the increase in train usage in the area and he agreed that he would talk with Scotrail and Network Rail regarding the increased figures, acknowledged the success of Laurencekirk station and explained that railway infrastructure was expensive. He explained that he would ensure that Scotrail/Network Rail spoke with a collective voice on North East issues so that all agencies would have a common understanding of the issues facing the North East. To help Mr. Middleton with this process it was agreed that officers in Nestrans provide him with statistical information on the usage of railways in the North East.

Mr. Middleton agreed that any financing models for funding transportation issues which Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government had not considered would be looked at if they were to be beneficial to all involved.

The Board then asked questions regarding the possibility of having grade separated junctions at Laurencekirk in relation to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route bundle. Mr Middleton said there was no intention to include these junctions at this stage and was then asked why Transport Scotland were requiring developers to provide two junctions. Mr. Middleton explained that all the junctions need to be appropriate for their needs and need to protect the safety of the access onto the road network.

The Board requested that David Middleton help Nestrans to assist them in the case for transportation projects in the North East of Scotland and acknowledged the frustrations felt in the North East regarding the delays of these.

The Board asked Mr. Middleton for his views regarding the high speed rail project, specifically asking if Transport Scotland would support the Board regarding increased landing slots to Heathrow. Mr. Middleton commended the sensible approach that the Board was taking regarding the geographical location of the high speed rail network in the United Kingdom and agreed that Transport Scotland would make representations on increased landing slots for Scottish airports whilst acknowledging that landing slots discussion was probably a longer term discussion topic. He further agreed that the North East's views on increased landing slots requires to be heard by the appropriate agencies.

The Chair then concluded the discussion by explaining that the Board had made it clear to Mr. Middleton their hopes for the future whilst outlining the excellent economic development environment of the North East of Scotland which requires an equally good transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Middleton thanked the Board for their time and reiterated that he would progress the issues discussed prior to the Ministerial meeting.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to agree that officers provide Mr. Middleton with the rail statistical information he requires to ensure that all Government agencies are aware of the transportation issues in the North East so that all agencies can speak with a collective voice on these matters;
- (ii) to agree that either the Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment or the Minister for Housing and Transportation be invited to meet with the Board to discuss the progress of the major infrastructure projects affecting the North East;
- (iii) to make representations to the Scottish Government on the progress of infrastructure projects in the North East prior to the budget announcement in September (to include writing to all local MSPs to gain their support) with reference made to the timelines for construction; and
- (iv) to request that officers continue to gather evidence and statistical information to help in this process.

STRATEGY

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

With reference to article 3(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 20 April, 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:-

- RTP Lead Officers meeting – Edinburgh – 11 May, 2011;
- Nestrans/Hitrans/Tactran/Zettrans – Aberdeen – 16 May, 2011;
- RTP Chairs/CoSLA meeting – Nairn – 1 June, 2011.

The report also provided details of future meetings.

The Board resolved:-

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

(B) National Planning Framework (NPF2) Action Plan – Annual Update

With reference to article 3(D) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 16 June, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which updated members on the 2nd National Planning Framework (NPF2) and on progress relating to actions in which Nestrans has an interest or involvement.

The report explained that the Scottish Government produces 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 relate to issues of interest to Nestrans. The report explained that these were reported to the Board in September, 2009 and updated in June, 2010.

Appended to the report was an action programme which provided an update on relevant actions, particularly those of interest to Nestrans. The report explained that this information is produced by (and also reported to) the Strategic Development Planning Authority, with whom Nestrans works closely.

The Board resolved:-

to note the report and the appendix attached.

(C) Regional Transport Strategy Update

With reference to article 5(B) of the minute of meeting of the Board of 8 December, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided members with information regarding the possibility of a review / refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy and outlined proposals to align the timescale with those of the Structure Plan/Strategic Development Plan.

The report explained that the Regional Transport Strategy was submitted to Scottish Ministers in March, 2007 and approved in the Spring of the following year.

Nestrans and the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) held a joint workshop at the Town House in Aberdeen on 25 March, 2011 at which the question of the need for a refresh of the Regional Transport Strategy was considered. Generally, there seemed to be a view that:-

- focus should remain on delivery;
- that the general thrust of policy direction was unchanged since preparation of the existing Strategy;
- that an update report should be prepared considering aspects that have changed since the existing Strategy was agreed, including delays to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, different focus in

- Aberdeen City Centre, new climate change obligations and the difficulties with the global economy impacting on expenditure, affordability of schemes and personal transport; and
- that the Strategy should be better-aligned to the Structure Plan/Strategic Development Plan, both in terms of consistency of message and timeframe for planning.

The report explained that the new Strategic Development Plan will cover a timeframe up to 2030/2035 and it is suggested that the Regional Transport Strategy timeframe be expanded to coincide with this.

The report also provided information on the close working arrangements between Nestrans and the Strategic Development Planning Authority, a key example of this would be the joint working on the cumulative impact of the long-term development, which was commissioned by Nestrans and the Strategic Development Planning Authority in partnership with the local authorities and Transport Scotland. This work enabled an assessment of the impacts on the transport network of the proposed development contained in the Structure Plan and Local Development Plan taking account of the transport interventions contained in the Regional Transport Strategy and was able to identify where further projects were required to ensure that the Transport Network can accommodate the proposed development.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the intention to better integrate the Regional Transport Strategy with the developing Strategic Development Plan; and
- (b) instruct further reports giving consideration to the development of the Regional Transport Strategy to cover the period to 2030/2035 and take account of changes which have occurred since the approval of the existing Regional Transport Strategy.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

(D) Community Planning in Aberdeen City

The Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on proposed amendments to the arrangements and structures for community planning in Aberdeen city.

The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA) had commissioned a report to examine their structures and methods of operation and this report made a number of recommendations, the principle of which was to streamline TACA itself to try and ensure that decision making was simplified and that the Board was attended by the appropriate people to assist in the decision making and taking back those decisions to the appropriate partners.

The Commission report had recommended that TACA be replaced by a smaller board which would be called the Strategic Co-ordinating Group consisting of the following members:-

- the Leader of Aberdeen City Council;
- the Chief Executive of Aberdeen City Council;

- the Chief Executive of NHS Grampian;
- the Chief Constable;
- the Chief Fire Officer;
- the Chief Executive of Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations;
- a representative from Economic Development (to be agreed by ACSEF); and
- the Chair of Aberdeen Civic Forum.

Nestrans (with support from Scottish Enterprise and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership) raised the issue that if this Strategic Co-ordinating Group was to replace TACA then there was no mechanism that would allow Nestrans to fulfil its statutory duty to participate in community planning.

TACA had agreed to form the Strategic Co-ordinating Steering Group and asked officers to consider the issues raised by Nestrans and to report back to its next meeting on 16 May, 2011. At this meeting TACA decided:-

- to support the retention of the wider body (currently the Alliance) with the status of community planning partnership;
- that this be renamed “Community Planning Aberdeen” and should meet two or three times per year with the following streamlined membership:-
 - the eight members of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group;
 - the three partners with a statutory duty – Nestrans, Scottish Enterprise and the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership;
 - a business representative from the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce;
 - Aberdeen University;
 - Robert Gordon University;
 - Aberdeen College;
 - two Aberdeen City Councillors; and
 - one community representative.

TACA also requested officers to prepare a report presenting the structure and detailing the remit, role and responsibilities of each of the layers within the structure and the lines of communication between each for consideration at the Community Planning Aberdeen Board and also at the Alliance meeting on 23 June, 2011, and that thereafter, a constitution be drafted on that basis, and further information on the operation of the thematic groups be developed in conjunction with the existing Challenge Forums.

The report explained that therefore, the proposal now has Nestrans as a member of the Community Planning Partnership (now entitled “Community Planning Aberdeen”) with a voice to the actioning group, the Community Planning Aberdeen Board through the Economic Development representative who will have a duty to consult with Nestrans.

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the discussions at TACA and agree that Nestrans accepts the proposed changes at the TACA meeting on 23 June, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendation contained in the report; and
- (ii) to request that the Director report back on any concern he has regarding the communication within the Community Planning Aberdeen structure.

PROJECTS**4. (A) Access from the South**

With reference to article 6(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 December, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which advised members on the latest progress in bringing forward projects identified within the Access to Aberdeen from the South study. The report outlined short-term, medium-term and long-term measures in relation to the study.

In relation to short-term measures, the report highlighted the successful segregated left turn lane from the King George VI bridge to West Tullos which was funded by Nestrans as part of the 2010/11 capital budget. The report explained that given the success of this left turn slip lane, the affect of providing a segregated left turn lane at Great Southern Road to the A90 Stonehaven road at the roundabout on the south side of the Bridge of Dee had been looked at. This had started to be investigated using the £25,000 in the 2011/12 capital budget.

In relation to medium-term measures, the Access to Aberdeen from the South study identified the potential for traffic signals to more evenly distribute the capacity at the junctions of Southerhead Road and Hareness Road with Wellington Road. Funding was allocated to continue the preliminary design work to replace these roundabouts and officers at Aberdeen City Council developed three options at the Southerhead Road junction and a single layout for a traffic signal control junction with full pedestrian crossing facilities at the Hareness junction. Statistics showed significant variance in the results and the underlying reasons for this was now being investigated.

The report advised that although a solution is being investigated to address the capacity problems at the Bridge of Dee in the longer term, in the medium-term, in order to ensure that any strategic improvement on the Wellington Road corridor is fit for purpose and provides value for money, it is recommended that Nestrans waits to determine the impact of the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and the outcome of the Bridge of Dee study before determining the scale of any improvements still required on Wellington Road.

In relation to long-term measures, the study identified the need for additional capacity over the River Dee in the longer term and so a study began in 2010/11 to investigate transport improvements in this area using the methodology set out in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). A sum of £75,000 has been allocated within the 2011/12 revenue budget to continue the longer term studies with the next stage being to complete the pre-appraisal process by finalising the option sifting process, taking account of stakeholder contributions and determining the options to be taken forward for further assessment.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the progress with projects identified within the Access to Aberdeen from the South study; and
- (b) agree to defer further investigation into a strategic improvement on the A956 Wellington Road corridor until the impact of construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and outcome of the Bridge of Dee study are known.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

(B) Dyce Shuttle Bus Update

With reference to article 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 20 April, 2011, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on progress regarding the Service 80 Dyce shuttle bus operating between Dyce railway station, Aberdeen Airport, Aberdeen Heliport and Kirkhill industrial estate.

The report explained that in moving from a two-bus operation to a single vehicle, there have been some teething problems and congestion in the evening peak which has caused some difficulties in ensuring connection to some trains. The report advised that a review of service timings was therefore carried out and a revised timetable has been prepared to ensure effective connections. The report explained that this revised timetable has additional time built in to ensure that even in heavy traffic, the shuttle bus will arrive at the station in time to meet connecting services. The report explained that indications from passengers were that it is more important to have a guaranteed connection than reduce waiting time at the station and the revised timetable will be introduced with effect from 13 June, 2011 and will be supported by publicity and promotion.

The report explained that initial indications of passenger numbers are that the move to a single bus operations has not impacted too dramatically on patronage and in the first three weeks of Central Coaches operation, the service carried an average of 193 passengers per day, fairly similar to the daily average previously carried on two buses. The report explained that overcrowding has not been identified as a major problem although buses do get busy at peak times, the new vehicle has room for standing passengers which has generally been sufficient to meet demand.

The report explained that as indicated in the report to the last Board meeting, First Aberdeen have decided to implement a Saturday only service operating 16 journeys between the station and the airport from 11 June, 2011 and Aberdeen City Council are considering whether it is possible to include it on promotional material prepared for the Service 80, but there is limited space on the leaflet and since the First service will operate on a different route, will have a different fare structure and use different vehicles, it may not be possible to do so.

The Board resolved:-

to note the detail contained in the report.

ACTION PLANS

5. (A) Health and Transport Monitoring Report

With reference to article 7(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 December, 2010, the Board had before it an update on the Health and Transport Action Plan.

The members discussed the problems associated with parking at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary's grounds and it was explained that NHS Grampian were acutely aware of these problems and that they had established a working group to look at this issue and they would report to the NHS Board on proposals accordingly.

The Board resolved:-

to note the monitoring report.

(B) Freight Action Plan

With reference to article 7(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 8 December, 2010, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided an update on progress regarding freight matters and details on the development of Nestrans' Freight Action Plan.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the detail contained in the report and its appendix; and
- (ii) to thank all individuals concerned in progressing the Freight Action Plan.

GENERAL

6. (A) Progress Report

With reference to article 5(A) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 20 April, 2011, the Board had before it a progress chart summarising the work in the three sub-strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 31 May, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

to note the report.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Deputy Chair intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)4(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that a proposed draft response on the air passenger duty consultation document be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Board to consider approving the said response.

(B) Publications and Consultations

With reference to article 5(B) of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 20 April, 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):-

- High Speed Rail;
- Reform of Air Passenger Duty (the Board were circulated this day with a draft response);
- Aberdeen City Council Draft Open Space Strategy;
- United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020; and
- Aberdeen City Council/Aberdeenshire Council/Moray Council Joint Road Safety Plan.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to agree the response detailed at Appendix 1 to the report in relation to the consultation on High Speed Rail, whilst noting that this has already been approved by Aberdeen City Council's Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee, and Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partnership and is to be considered by the Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee and Aberdeen City's Community Planning Partnership in June, 2011;
- (ii) in relation to the proposed extension of duty to private passenger flights (including helicopters), to agree to make representations to the Government making the case for exempting passengers on board helicopters serving installations at sea as these passengers are serving the oil and gas industry by the only practical means of transport available;
- (iii) in relation to the range of banding charges for air passenger duty, to agree to alert other regional transport partnerships in the North of Scotland about Nestrans' view that passengers who will not have the benefit of the investment in High Speed Rail to provide an alternative to short haul air travel should be exempt from air passenger duty;
- (iv) in relation to the regional impact of air passenger duty, to note that the Scottish Airports had commissioned a report by a consultant in 2010 which identified that an increase in air passenger duty could reduce the number of passengers to, from and within Scotland by as many as 1.2 million over a three year period, although the impact on Aberdeen Airport was less severe given the largely business nature of travel;
- (v) in relation to devolving air passenger duty to the Scottish Government, the Board agreed to amend the circulated proposed response in relation to this specific issue to emphasise the importance of North of Scotland passengers not being placed at a disadvantage due to the devolution of air passenger duty whilst seeking a commitment from the Government to use these powers in the best interest of passengers from the North of Scotland;
- (vi) to otherwise approve the proposed joint draft response prepared by BAA (Aberdeen) on the reform of air passenger duty as circulated and suggested that ACSEF should sign the letter as well as Nestrans; and
- (vii) to otherwise approve the responses to the consultation documents as detailed in the report and its appendices.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Deputy Chair intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)4(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that the following report be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Board to consider the draft statements for 2010/11 and to note the proposed plan submitted by Audit Scotland regarding audit arrangements for the 2010/11 audit.

BUDGET MATTERS

7. (A) Draft Accounts for 2010/11 and Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2010/11

The Board had before it a report by the Treasurer to the Board which explained that the Board is required to consider the draft statements for 2010/11 and to note the proposed plans submitted by Audit Scotland regarding audit arrangements for 2010/11. The report also provided an update on the Board's 2011/12 budgets to alert them to any matters arising.

The report explained that the plan for the 2010/11 audit process from Audit Scotland was attached to the appendix to the report and it set out the respective responsibilities of those involved, the general approach to be taken by Audit Scotland, the reporting arrangements with a timescale for key outputs and a summary of major financial issues facing the Board.

The report explained that the draft financial statements for 2010/11 were attached as Appendix 2 to the report and explained that members would note the statements were presented under the new International Financial Reporting Standards format. The report explained that Appendix 3 to the report provided the standard budget monitoring statement for the year to 31 March, 2011 to allow the Board to better relate to the changes in the format of the statements.

The report explained that the Board approved draft capital and revenue budgets for 2011/12 at their meeting on 16 February, 2011, subject to anticipated funding levels being confirmed. The report explained that the 2011/12 capital allocations to Nestrans from the Councils has now been confirmed as £1.411m from Aberdeen City Council and £1.172m from Aberdeenshire Council. The report explained that this resulted in a £260,000 shortfall in comparison with the previously assumed funding. The report advised that a cost benefit analysis has recently been completed for the A944 Wellgrove Road/Straik Road traffic signal installation in Westhill that had an approved budget of £270,000. The report explained that the costs have greatly increased for the scheme and as a result there is a poor benefit to cost ratio and therefore it is recommended this project is no longer progressed and this will also address the reduction to the available 2011/12 capital budget.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the Audit Scotland Audit Plan for 2010/11;
- (b) considers the draft financial statements for 2010/11 and approves their issue to the Controller of Audit; and

- (c) notes the available 2011/12 capital budget and agrees to dropping the £270,000 A944 Wellgrove Road/ Straik Road, Westhill project.

The Board then discussed some of the detail contained in the report, specifically they raised concern that the salary details of the Director of Nestrans (including pension details) were included in the public papers. The Treasurer to the Board explained that the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 1985 (as amended by the Local Authority (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2011) advise that the salaries of senior officers need to be disclosed in the Statement of Accounts of the Board.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to make representations to the Scottish Government regarding their concern that the Directors pension details and salary details were included in a public document; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

8. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 20 April, 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:-

- Access from Scotland to London at Heathrow – letter from Transport Minister;
- Rail Update;
- Competition Commission's Report on Buses;
- M74 Extension Completion;
- Nestrans Press Releases; and
- Getabout Events.

The Board resolved:-

to note the details contained in the report.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

9. With reference to article 8 of the minute of meeting of the Board of 20 April, 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 Deputy Chair wished Nestrans and the two Councils the best of luck at the forthcoming Scottish Transport Awards on 16 June, 2011.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note that Derick Murray, with Hitrans, would present at a meeting in Edinburgh on 30 June, 2011 organised by the Glasgow Edinburgh Collaboration to discuss High Speed Rail. The Northern RTPs would highlight the implications for the North of Scotland of the High Speed Rail proposals and the North's view on how to ensure the whole of Scotland could benefit; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

10. With reference to article 9 of the minute of meeting of the Board of 20 April, 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.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Board resolved in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraphs 6 and 10 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

MATTER OF URGENCY

The Deputy Chair intimated that she had directed in terms of Section 50(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, that a verbal update by the Director on the future public relations contract for the Partnership be considered as a matter of urgency to enable the Board to make an early decision on this contractual arrangement.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Prior to the Board considering the following item the representative of the Board's current public relations contract declared an interest in the item and left the meeting.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTRACT

11. The Board heard the Director explain that the current public relations contract for Nestrans had expired and that the Board would have to consider its future public relations requirements. The Director explained that there remained a

possibility of a joint public relations contract between Nestrans and ACSEF however the timing of such a joint contract would not be achievable until 2012.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request that all members of the Board receive background information in relation to the options available for the public relations contract, following which each member would submit their comments on the options to the Director to collate; and
- (ii) to agree that once each member of the Board had put forward their views in relation to the options available that delegated authority be granted to the Director in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Board to make a final decision on the Board's public relations contractual arrangements and to report the outcome to the next meeting for its information.

- **ANNE ROBERTSON, Deputy Chair.**