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Meeting Title: Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study –
Councillor Briefing Session

Attendees:

Councillors: Cllr C Buchan; Cllr B Topping; Cllr J Ingram; Cllr L Pirie; Cllr A Allan; Cllr A Gardiner; Cllr T Malone; Cllr S Pratt; Cllr S Smith; Cllr G Owen; Cllr R Cassie

Officers: Rab Dickson, Nestrans;
Paul Finch, Aberdeenshire Council;
Chris Paterson, Peter Brett Associates;
Elaine Brown - Aberdeenshire Council;
Margaret Jane Cardno– Aberdeenshire Council

Apologies: Cllr E Chapman; Cllr M Findlater; Cllr M Ford; Cllr J Gifford; Cllr I Gray; Cllr F Hood; Cllr F McRae; Cllr R Merson; Cllr A Robertson; Cllr M Roy; Cllr N Smith; Cllr M Watt. Chris White – Aberdeenshire Council.

Date of Meeting: 25/06/2015

Job Number: 32038

Item	Subject	Actions
1.	<p>Rab Dickson thanked members for attending the meeting. Rab provided some project background and then handed over to Chris Paterson who provided a presentation to members on the progress of the project to date, along with emerging themes which have been raised through the baseline and engagement sections of the study.</p> <p>Paul Finch then chaired the question and answer session. The remainder of these minutes detail the specific questions from the floor and any responses from the project team.</p>	
2.	<p>Councillor Topping thanked the project team for the presentation and was pleased the study was underway. He noted that residents of both Fraserburgh and Peterhead can feel 'cut off' due to the distance from Aberdeen and the poor quality transport links. Freight links were also raised, both for livestock and fish produce. Councillor Topping felt road upgrades would be the minimum improvement required, and any rail additions would be most welcome. Councillor Topping felt that while these interventions would be well used by commuters, they would also play a role in encouraging tourism to the area and could help reduce the outward drift of younger people. He enquired whether to what extent the previous alignment was currently being protected from development</p>	
3.	<p>Councillor Buchan asked if light rail was under consideration as part of the study. He also emphasised that Fraserburgh has a low proportion of residents who work in the town.</p> <p>Chris Paterson explained that at this stage no options had been</p>	

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	<p>selected for progression to the next phase however this was a multimodal study and all relevant options will be considered. He also noted that light rail had been suggested by others.</p>	
4.	<p>Councillor Malone believed that while the A90 was clearly a busy route, he was concerned that using 24 hour average traffic figures would not accurately reflect traffic conditions. Councillor Malone asked for assurance that the study will reflect high use time periods and the significant levels of HGV's on the route.</p> <p>Chris Paterson explained that as part of the evidence gathering elements of the work, we already have access to vehicle counts on routes which are broken down by time period and importantly by vehicle class. Chris noted that an analysis had been undertaken which suggested the proportion of HGV's using the route was up to 14% at particular locations, and that the study is looking at usage patterns at different times of the day.</p>	
5.	<p>Councillor Pratt noted he felt there was more traffic travelling north to Fraserburgh on the A952 than on the A90 to Peterhead.</p> <p>Rab Dickson noted that all strategic routes were being considered as part of the study and that other measures are also being developed including measures to encourage peak-spreading.</p>	
6.	<p>Councillor Owen noted that she had attended a number of public meetings recently with key Transport Scotland officers. She was concerned however that Transport Scotland appeared to be unaware of increasing business activity in Peterhead, and had very little understanding of the Energetica corridor.</p> <p>Chris Paterson noted that as part of the data gathering stage, the project team have undertaken a socio economic analysis of the area, picking up these critical business developments. The socio economic analysis will be key evidence for the project moving forward.</p>	
7.	<p>Councillor Pirie asked if park and ride sites should be expanded to both Fraserburgh and Peterhead.</p> <p>Rab Dickson noted that Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council have a number of park and ride sites across the study area, with a number of mini park and rides planned. There are currently no suggestions that park and ride sites are required at Fraserburgh or Peterhead however if there was an appetite for this it would be investigated.</p>	
8.	<p>Councillor Gardiner noted that existing routes within the study area were not fit for purpose. He also believes that it is important to not only attract new businesses to the area but also to ensure that the area remains attractive to businesses currently located within it. The business community believe there are real attractions to locating within Fraserburgh and Peterhead. However, the transport network can be a barrier to business development, particularly the road links. Councillor Gardiner believes this study represents a real opportunity to capitalise.</p> <p>Chris Paterson noted that the steering group team understood the concerns of the business community and to this end we have engaged with businesses through a number of measures including; the business survey, direct engagement with key businesses and meetings with council officers responsible for the Energetica project.</p>	

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9.	<p>Councillor Smith recognises that the business community have told us within this study that rail interventions less of a priority for the business community than road upgrades. Councillor Smith however, believes that a rail line that effectively removes a number of cars from strategic routes will help businesses as there will be less congestion on routes.</p> <p>Councillor Smith also noted that Aberdeen is further developing industrial areas to the north and east of the City. This development will only lead to additional transport problems.</p> <p>Councillor Smith also highlighted the opportunities that a rail link may bring to the area, by making it more attractive for professional people to live in the Aberdeen area, but work within the various towns in the study area.</p> <p>Chris Paterson noted that the steering group had directed the project team that the study should not only consider current transport issues but also planned and committed transport and land use development proposals. The study is following a similar timeline to the Regional Transport Strategy effectively ensuring that any recommendations that are made will be future proofed and based on committed developments and the future transport network.</p>	
10.	<p>Councillor Ingram noted that the AWPR and associated Balmedie to Tippetty dualling project would be a major improvement on the transport network. However, he believed dualling should be extended to the Toll of Birness. He also emphasised the importance of the A952 through Central Buchan and the potential for upgrading or by-passing Mintlaw.</p>	
11.	<p>Councillor Topping noted that in response to questions of whether improved connectivity would damage the viability of Fraserburgh and Peterhead, that Inverurie has good road and rail connections and thrives.</p>	
12.	<p>Councillor Buchan noted the long timescale which would be required to get major road and rail improvements in the area. He also noted that environmental considerations are important, and that carbon emissions will become increasingly relevant. He sought assurances that any long term proposals will be environmentally viable.</p> <p>Chris Paterson responded that we currently have Energised Environments, a specialist team of environmental consultants on our study team. The environmental consultants will be involved in our appraisal of options and option selection throughout the study to ensure all environmental matters are considered.</p>	
13.	<p>Elaine Brown asked what the public drop-in sessions would entail.</p> <p>Paul Finch noted that the format of the sessions was still to be finalised but he envisaged a session held in each of the three main towns located across the study area whereby members of the public could attend, look over our proposals and ask questions of the study team. Paul expected each drop-in session would be staffed by members of Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council and the Consultant Team.</p>	
14.	<p>Councillor Ingram asked why the local media and press were not present at this briefing session, believing that an effective media engagement campaign would lend weight behind the goals of the</p>	

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	<p>study. He believed it is worth establishing good relations with the media in terms of this project.</p> <p>Paul Finch noted that whilst there was no media present this evening, the media were present at Paul's earlier briefing at Aberdeenshire Council.</p>	
15.	<p>Councillor Buchan enquired as to the response rates of the public survey from the Fraserburgh area.</p> <p>Chris Paterson responded that he didn't have this information to hand, but it was available and he would get back to Councillor Buchan later.</p>	CP to respond to Councillor Buchan
16.	<p>Paul Finch thanked members and closed the meeting, noting that the full study team would be available for any further follow up questions as required.</p>	