

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 1 April 2015

Present: Councillor Milne (Chairperson); Councillor Argyle (Deputy Chair); Eddie Anderson (Deputy Chair); and Councillors Finlayson, Grant and McCaig (Aberdeen City Council); Councillors Clark and Latham (Aberdeenshire Council); Gerry Donald and Sandra MacDonald (Non Councillor Members).

In attendance: Dr Margaret Bochel (Adviser to the Board); Derick Murray, Rab Dickson and Kathryn Mackay (Nestrans); Tom Buchan, Ewan Wallace and Lucy Johnston (Aberdeenshire Council); and Fiona Selbie and Iain Robertson (Aberdeen City Council).

Apologies: Councillor Alan Buchan and Duncan Cameron.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located at the following link:

<http://www.nestrans.org.uk/board-meetings.html>

OPENING REMARKS

1. The Board was requested to determine that item 3b Strategic Transport Update which contained exempt information as described in Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, be taken in private. The Chair also proposed that item 3b be considered following item 1 Minute of Previous Meeting and that the Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan section of item 6b Publications and Consultations be brought forward and taken following item 2 Presentation: Aecom re City Centre Master plan.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) 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 item 3b of business so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 12 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act; and
- (ii) to agree that agenda items 3b Strategic Transport Update and 6b Publications and Consultations be brought forward.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Argyle and Latham declared an interest with regards to item 6b of business by virtue of being board members of the Cairngorms National Park Authority but considered that the nature of their interests would not require them to leave the meeting.

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MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 20 February 2015.

The Director updated the Board that in relation to item 8 Draft Consultation Response to the Low Emission Strategy for Scotland he had received feedback that Sustrans and Cycling Scotland had disagreed with Nestrans' view that the delivery of Active Travel was overly complex and that the number of bodies involved was excessive.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the minute as a correct record; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the update provided.

In accordance with the decision recorded under Item 1 of this minute, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FUND UPDATE

3. With reference to article 3 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on progress in reviewing the STF guidance and on the payments received and agreements made in relation to the Strategic Transport Fund to date.

The report recommended -

that the Board –

- (a) note the steps being taken in the review of the STF, the key changes made to the guidance and the timescales set out by the SDPA for this; and
- (b) note the payments made into the funds to date.

The Board was provided with legal advice from Fiona Selbie (Senior Solicitor, Aberdeen City Council).

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the legal advice provided;
- (ii) to request that a legal options paper be produced and cascaded to members for the week beginning 20 April 2015;
- (iii) to note the steps taken in the review of the STF, the key changes made to the guidance and the timescales set out by the SDPA for this; and
- (iv) to note the payments made into the funds to date.

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PRESENTATION: RUSSELL HENDERSON, AECOM RE CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN

4. The Board received a presentation from Mr Russell Henderson, Aecom Associate Director of Transportation on transport matters relating to the Aberdeen City Master Plan.

During his presentation Mr Henderson outlined information that related to:

- Walkable Aberdeen City and the pedestrianisation of Aberdeen city centre on Union Street and Schoolhill Road
- Urban relief routes
- Cycling highways and more inclusive throughways
- Cycle parking hubs and cycle hire schemes
- Car parking
- Bus prioritisation and shifting modes from the car to more sustainable public transport alternatives
- Bus gates and radial routes into the City Centre
- Airport bus priority and a direct rail route to the airport terminal
- The development of a more inclusive and permeable Aberdeen Bus Station
- Disabled access to the city centre
- Better frontage of Aberdeen Railway Station and better connectivity with Union Street
- Unlocking spare capacity on the Aberdeen to Inverness railway line
- Public consultation events and estimated expenditure
- The communication strategy and managing expectations

Mr Henderson then answered questions from the Board on the importance of a communication strategy to turnaround perceptions that buses provided a poor or unreliable service and he stressed that for this to be improved it would be necessary to improve not only city centre routes but also raydale routes into the city. The Board also asked Mr Henderson about his assertion that parking in Aberdeen was cost effective and he explained to members that this was the case as the cost for long stay commuters to park in the city centre was very reasonable and added that pricing was one of the few options available to disincentivise the public from bringing their cars into the city centre. Mr Henderson further explained that the objective of raising parking charges was not to target short term city centre parking but to dissuade commuters who continually parked on a long stay basis.

The Board also discussed the challenge posed by the introduction of more buses onto Union Street, the promotion of dwelling in the city centre and the impact of the North East weather on this objective; in addition to the importance of addressing concerns of disabled groups particularly the visually and mobility impaired and that in order for

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significant change to be effected such as the reduction of city centre parking and the removal of junctions, a Road Traffic Order would likely be needed.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to thank Mr Henderson for the informative presentation; and
- (ii) otherwise note the information provided.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS: ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN

5. With reference to article 8 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that informed members of recent publications and consultation papers of interest and asked members to agree a response where possible.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the contents of the report and approve the attached appendix as Nestrans' response to the consultation on the Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan.

The Director briefly summarised Nestrans' response to the City Centre Master Plan and distributed an appended document that supplemented this response. He also advised that the penultimate line of the first paragraph of the appended document should read '*the proposed orders may have to be submitted to Scottish Government for approval in a second stage of the process*'.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the contents of the report and approve the revised attached appendix as Nestrans' response to the consultation on the Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan; and
- (ii) otherwise note the information provided.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

6. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on liaison with other RTP's and with Scottish Government and other organisations.

The report recommended -

that the Board note the progress on liaison arrangements with other RTP's, the Scottish Government and others and arrangements for future meetings.

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The Director spoke to the report and explained that a more detailed briefing note on the Nestrans/SDPA Workshop would be distributed to members in due course. He also advised that the Laurencekirk Consultants report was complex and therefore the main findings and conclusions would be distilled into a more accessible Executive Summary for Scottish Government to consider. He also explained that further timescales had to be agreed with Transport Scotland but that he would aim to bring the Executive Summary to the next Board meeting. The Director further advised that Rab Dickson and himself would meet with Transport Scotland on 27 April and would raise the development of a single rail track at Montrose with them. The Director also highlighted that the RTP Chairs Meeting on 4 March focussed on road servicing and that a more detailed RTP road collaboration programme would be presented to the next RTP Meeting.

The Board resolved:-

to note the progress on liaison arrangements with other RTP's, the Scottish Government and others and arrangements for future meetings.

FRASERBURGH/PETERHEAD TO ABERDEEN STRATEGIC TRANSPORT STUDY: PROGRESS UPDATE AND INCEPTION REPORT

7. The Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on progress regarding the on-going strategic transport study on the corridor between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the contents of the report, the Inception Report and the agreed engagement process.

The Director spoke to the report and explained that the stakeholder workshops had concluded and that the study was underway and had made good progress. The Director then answered questions on the impact that the project would have on not only commuters and freight traffic but also other projects such as the AWPR and the Third Don Crossing.

The Board resolved:-

to note the contents of the report, the Inception Report and the agreed engagement process.

NATIONAL CONNECTIVITY TASK FORCE

8. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that advised members of the

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progress of the National Connectivity Task Force in the preparation of a report for consideration by the Airports Commission.

The report recommended –

that the Board consider the contents of the National Connectivity Task Force report and whether to endorse the report by recommending it to the UK and Scottish Governments and the Department for Transport.

The Director spoke to the report and explained that he was encouraged that Heathrow Airport had welcomed the report and he was particularly encouraged by their commitment to reduce landing charges for domestic regional aircraft. The Director further advised that if the findings and recommendations were to be accepted by the Airports Commission Dundee and Inverness would benefit significantly but the commitments made to Aberdeen were not as clear cut and the benefits perhaps would be less tangible. The Director also informed the Board that Gatwick Airport had opposed the findings and recommendations in the report largely because the Task Force was funded by Heathrow, though it was established on an independent basis. The Director advised the Board that he was hopeful that the Airports Commission would give the report due consideration as it was a significant piece of work and its findings were thoroughly evidenced.

The Board resolved:-

to endorse the report and recommend it to the UK and Scottish Governments and the Department for Transport.

RAIL MATTERS: NOTE OF ABELLIO SEMINAR

9. With reference to article 5 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on rail matters, particularly the commencement of Abellio as the new operator of the Scotrail franchise and to report on the seminar held by Nestrans with Abellio in February.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the contents of the report.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and advised the Board that Abellio had taken over the Scotrail franchise on 1 April and that formerly First ScotRail employees had been retained under similar roles and working conditions.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) to wish Abellio well as the new operator of the ScotRail franchise.

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HEALTH AND TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

10. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on the Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP), and sought approval of the HTAP Annual Report 2015.

The report recommended –

that the Board –

- (a) note the contents of the report and the HTAP Annual Report 2015; and
- (b) request that the report be forwarded to each of the Community Planning Partnerships.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and then summarised the HTAP Programme Manager's annual report. Mr Dickson highlighted the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC) and their provision of a dedicated telephone service that provided guidance on accessing suitable transport options to and from appointments for those who had no means of personal transport. The THInC service had also compiled a database of services as a means to gauge the level of demand to enable HTAP partners to identify gaps in transport provision within Aberdeen City. Mr Dickson further explained that the THInC service aimed to further coordinate and improve health related transportation through further engagement with public, private and third sector bodies and by piloting a booking system for all those that would not qualify for an assisted service by the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the contents of the report and the HTAP Annual Report 2015; and
- (ii) to request that the report be forwarded to each of the Community Planning Partnerships.

PROGRESS REPORT

11. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a progress report that summarised the work of the three sub section strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy and the Health and Transport Action Plan as at 24 March 2015.

The Board considered the contents of the progress reports and there were questions on the Parkway Strategic Cycle Links and the Aberdeen City and Shire Bus Stop Information Initiatives.

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The Board resolved:-

to note the progress reports.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

12. With reference to article 8 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that informed members of recent publications and consultation papers of interest and asked members to agree a response where possible.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the contents of the report and approve the attached appendices as Nestrans' response to the consultation on the City Council's Local Transport Strategy Refresh, City Local Development Plan and Active Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and advised that the Local Transport Strategy Refresh had fitted well with Nestrans' action plans and Regional Transport Strategy and he welcomed the progress made against the strategy's key performance indicators. Mr Dickson also welcomed the City Council's Local Development Plan particularly the preferred option of a new deep water harbour facility at Nigg Bay and the proposed reallocation of a section of land at Dyce close to the railway station for transport purposes. Mr Dickson however explained that Nestrans required further detail on the widening of Wellington Road and the proposed development on the Craiginches site; Dr Margaret Bochel advised the Board that the City Council was currently engaged in on-going discussions with the Scottish Government on this matter and would inform the Board of any decisions as and when they were made. Mr Dickson also welcomed the Cairngorms Active Strategy but explained that there should be a stronger emphasis on how to achieve everyday active journeys between local attractions, places of work and recreation within the National Park.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to cascade a press release that would promote the progress made against the strategy's key performance indicators and the effective engagement between Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council in reference to on-going efforts to deliver a successful Local Transport Strategy Refresh;
- (ii) to request an update from Aberdeen City Council on the Scottish Government's decision with regards to the widening of Wellington Road and the proposed development of the Craiginches site once a decision had been formalised; and
- (iii) otherwise to note the contents of the report and approve the attached appendices as Nestrans' response to the consultation on the City Council's Local Transport Strategy Refresh, City Local Development Plan and Active Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy.

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2014/15 BUDGET MATTERS

13. With reference to article 10 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Treasurer that provided an update on the partnership's 2014/15 budget and forecast outturn and to consider any budget or monitoring issues that may arise.

The report recommended –

that the Board –

- (a) note the monitoring position and forecast presented in Appendix 1; and
- (b) approve the proposed budget virement.

Tom Buchan summarised the report and explained that a budget virement had been proposed to be taken from the A90 Park and Choose Project to augment the budget of the A920 Colpy to Potts Rayne Project. Mr Buchan also asked the Board to note that the Strategic Transport Fund had accrued a total of £1,473,163 as at 28 February 2015.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the monitoring position and forecast presented in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed budget virement.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

14. With reference to article 13 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director which provided information and updates to members on a number of matters not requiring a decision as follows.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the contents of the report.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and highlighted that the National Walking and Cycling Network proposals for 2014-19 did not include any routes or schemes in the North East. He added that this was most disappointing considering that a total of 30 schemes had been proposed across Scotland and that the North East's land mass and population base had warranted the inclusion of a national route. Mr Dickson advised that there were several routes in the North East that warranted inclusion and he resolved to bring those to the attention of the Scottish Government. Mr Dickson further advised that the Coastal Scheme was not proposed under the five year strategy and was a longer term project due to be delivered by 2034.

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Mr Dickson also highlighted the Cycling Scotland: Annual Monitoring Report 2015 and explained that he found the methodology to be flawed due to small sample sizes and advised that in his view the data and conclusions were not robust.

The Chair also informed members that negotiations with the Scottish and UK Governments with regards to the Aberdeen City Region Deal continued to be progressed.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to present a response to the Scottish Government expressing concern about the lack of National Walking and Cycling Networks proposed for development in 2014-19 in the North East of Scotland and to provide a list of suggested routes for their consideration; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the information bulletin.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

15. With reference to article 14 of the minute of the previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that outlined recent and forthcoming conferences of interest to Nestrans.

The Board resolved:-

to note the report.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

16. With reference to article 15 of the minute of its previous meeting of 20 February 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director which advised of progress on pending business requested by the Board and major reports scheduled for forthcoming Board meetings, and provided the opportunity to add to or amend this scheduling.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the report on pending business and agree the provisional scheduling of major reports to future Board meetings.

The Board resolved:-

to note the report on pending business and agree the provisional scheduling of major reports to future Board meetings.

-RAMSAY MILNE, Chairperson.