

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 17 June 2015

Present: Councillor Milne (Chairperson); and Councillors Finlayson and Graham (as substitute for Councillor Grant) (Aberdeen City Council); Councillors Aitchison, Clark, Ford and Latham (as substitute for Councillor Argyle) (Aberdeenshire Council); and Sandra MacDonald (Non Councillor Member).

In attendance: Dr Margaret Bochel and Mark Skilling (Advisers to the Board); Derick Murray, Rab Dickson and Jennifer Anderson (Nestrans); Tom Buchan, Paul Finch and Lucy Johnston (Aberdeenshire Council); and Fiona Selbie and Iain Robertson (Aberdeen City Council).

Apologies: Councillor Argyle, Councillor Grant, Stephen Archer, Eddie Anderson, Duncan Cameron and Gerry Donald.

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 Convener welcomed Councillors David Aitchison and Martin Ford onto the Nestrans Board and informed members that Councillor Jackie Dunbar would join the Board at the next meeting after her appointment had been confirmed by Aberdeen City Council. The Director also announced that this would be Tom Buchan's last meeting and the Board thanked Mr Buchan for his contribution to Nestrans and wished him well in his new post.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2. The Chair proposed that item 4 of today's agenda be considered with the press and public excluded.

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 item 4 of business as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in paragraph 12 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 1 April 2015.

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In relation to item 12 of the previous minute, Councillor Finlayson asked if there was any further update on the development of the Craiginches site. Margaret Bochel (Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, ACC) advised that discussions with Scottish Government were still ongoing.

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 2 of this minute, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.

UPDATE ON MEMBER'S PLANNING INTERESTS

4. With reference to article 3 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by Fiona Selbie (Senior Solicitor, ACC) that provided members with legal advice.

Fiona Selbie provided the Board with legal advice.

The Board resolved:-

to note the legal advice provided.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

5. With reference to article 6 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 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 progress on liaison arrangements with other RTPs, the Scottish Government and others and arrangements for future meetings.

The Director spoke to the report and highlighted that access to Glasgow Queen Street Tunnels would be restricted for 20 weeks in 2016 and as a result, Aberdeen trains would be diverted which would add an estimated 30 minutes onto the journey time. He also advised that rail capacity and the resultant congestion had been driven by a 30% increase in Aberdeen's population since 1971; this was in comparison to marginal growth in Edinburgh, a static position in Dundee and a significant reduction in Glasgow's population. He added that he had passed this data onto Transport Scotland.

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The Director further advised that governance arrangements were being developed for the RTP Road Collaboration Programme in order for RTPs to share services with Local Authorities and they had received legal guidance in this area. He added that the RTPs had produced a collective response on the consultation on climate change reporting duties and they had agreed that reporting arrangements should be flexible to ensure proportionality with the size of the organisation.

The Director provided a further update on the East Coast Mainline Association and advised that he would sit on the Communications and Energy Sub Group. He also highlighted his and the Convener's attendance at the RTP Chair's Meeting in Edinburgh with the Minister for Transport and Islands on 11 June 2015 and he intended to request a meeting with the Minister to discuss the City Master Plan and other issues pertinent to Nestrans.

The Board resolved:-

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

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FUND UPDATE

6. With reference to article 3 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that informed members on progress in reviewing the STF guidance and on 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 Director spoke to the report and provided an update on the supplementary guidance and he hoped that this would be approved by both Authorities as soon as possible.

Thereafter there were questions on the procedures and trigger points for utilising STF contributions and the links between the STF and City Deal modelling.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to 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
- (ii) to note the payments made into the funds to date.

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ABERDEEN – INVERNESS RAIL ENHANCEMENTS

7. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members on progress regarding the project to upgrade the Aberdeen – Inverness railway and to develop a new railway station to the north of Kintore.

The report recommended -

that the Board –

- (a) note the progress with the Aberdeen – Inverness enhancement project and instruct officers to continue liaison with Transport Scotland and others to ensure that the objectives for the project are sufficient to adequately address future aspirations for rail development in the north east;
- (b) authorise development of the proposals for Kintore station, including a business case and application to the Scottish Stations Fund; and
- (c) note the progress regarding Inverurie Interchange and authorise officers to further develop proposals including investigating the potential for a Scottish Stations Fund contribution to the scheme.

The Director spoke to the report and he highlighted issues in relation to the dualling of the tracks on the Aberdeen to Inverness line. He also explained that Network Rail had proposed to complete the Inverness end of the line first and although this was the easier option, he opined that the completion of the Aberdeen end would be of greater benefit. With regards to Kintore Station, the Director explained that Nestrans continued to engage with Network Rail on rail work and with Aberdeenshire Council on the development of a business case for the station; in addition to ensuring that access roads and car parking facilities were delivered before the station was opened.

Thereafter there were questions on issues related to dualling the tracks on the Aberdeen to Inverness line from both an engineering and cost-benefit perspective and members highlighted that resilience should be an objective taken into consideration by Transport Scotland. Members also asked about platform extensions at Inch and Elgin Stations and aspirations for the construction of cross rail in order to increase rail capacity in the North East.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the progress with the Aberdeen – Inverness enhancement project and instruct officers to continue liaison with Transport Scotland and others to ensure that the objectives for the project are sufficient to adequately address future aspirations for rail development in the north east;
- (ii) to authorise development of the proposals for Kintore station, including a business case and application to the Scottish Stations Fund; and

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- (iii) to note the progress regarding Inverurie Interchange and authorise officers to further develop proposals including investigating the potential for a Scottish Stations Fund contribution to the scheme.

DYCE TRANSPORT ENHANCEMENTS

8. With reference to article 12 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, The Board had before it a report by the Director that provided an update in regard to transport developments in and around Dyce.

The report recommended –

that the Board –

- (a) welcome the production of the ‘Commuting to Dyce’ leaflet;
- (b) note the progress regarding development of Dyce Station and other transport enhancements in the Dyce area;
- (c) endorse the Dyce Station Car Park extension report; and
- (d) authorise officers to further develop proposals for an extension to the car park at Dyce Station, in partnership with local authority colleagues, Network Rail and Abellio ScotRail.

The Director disseminated the ‘Commuting to Dyce’ leaflet to members and spoke to the report. He advised that Aecom consultants had conducted a survey on behalf of Nestrans on car parking availability in the vicinity of Dyce station to support a previous representation to Aberdeen City Council on reallocating land close to the station for transport purposes. He added that the results of the study could be accessed on the Nestrans website.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to welcome the production of the ‘Commuting to Dyce’ leaflet;
- (ii) to note the progress regarding development of Dyce Station and other transport enhancements in the Dyce area;
- (iii) to endorse the Dyce Station Car Park extension report; and
- (iv) to authorise officers to further develop proposals for an extension to the car park at Dyce Station, in partnership with local authority colleagues, Network Rail and Abellio ScotRail.

SUSTRANS COMMUNITY LINKS FUNDING

9. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that advised members of the successful bids to the Sustrans Community Links Funding Programme.

The report recommended –

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that the Board note the contents of the report.

The Director spoke to the report and advised that Nestrans had worked constructively with Sustrans and £1.5million for cycling infrastructure had been allocated to eight projects within the Nestrans area.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to thank Sustrans for their constructive engagement with Nestrans in relation to the Sustrans Community Links Funding Programme;
- (ii) to thank officers for their efforts in securing £1.5million in match funding for cycling infrastructure within the Nestrans area; and
- (iii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

ACCESS TO LAURENCEKIRK STUDY

10. With reference to article 14 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that informed members that the Access to Laurencekirk Study had been completed and a draft report submitted for consideration. Approval was being sought to finalise and publish the study and refer it to the appropriate roads authorities with a recommendation that further more detailed appraisal would be undertaken to develop and implement a preferred solution.

The report recommended –

that the Board –

- (a) note and approve the principle of the findings within the draft study to allow the report to be finalised and published; and
- (b) remit the study to Transport Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council for their consideration with a recommendation that further more detailed appraisal would be undertaken to develop and implement a preferred solution.

The Director spoke to the report and advised that the study was funded by Nestrans and Transport Scotland and had been undertaken in accordance with Design Manual and Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 1 and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) methodologies. He also explained that the study had found that there would be benefit in upgrading the A90/A937 South Junction at Laurencekirk and highlighted that this was a significant milestone in the project's development and the study had now been referred to Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland for their consideration.

Thereafter there were questions on options regarding the Central Reserve at Laurencekirk and the rate of housing development in the vicinity of the proposed South Laurencekirk upgraded junction.

The Board resolved:-

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- (i) to note and approve the principle of the findings within the draft study to allow the report to be finalised and published; and
- (ii) to remit the study to Transport Scotland and Aberdeenshire Council for their consideration with a recommendation that further more detailed appraisal would be undertaken to develop and implement a preferred solution.

BUS ACTION PLAN

11. With reference to article 4 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Director that updated members in regard to a number of issues relating to the Bus Action Plan.

The report recommended –

that the Board –

- (a) welcome the results of the Bus Satisfaction Survey; and
- (b) note the findings of the barriers to Bus Use study and continue to work with operators, other partners and the Chamber of Commerce towards progressing the recommendations contained in the report.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and highlighted the Bus Satisfaction Survey conducted through the Quality Partnership and he explained that the survey returned largely positive results with overall satisfaction increasing from 85% in 2014 to 91% in 2015. Mr Dickson also highlighted the Barriers to Bus Use study which investigated the factors that prevented greater bus use in Aberdeen and it found that *quicker journey times* was the most popular response and he advised that *expensive fares* was only the fifth highest response.

Thereafter there were questions on the representativeness of the Barriers to Bus Use study particularly in relation to the results which found that *expensive fares* was only the fifth greatest barrier to bus use; to this point Mr Dickson advised that the survey's demographic makeup was representative of Aberdeen's population and was available to view on the Nestrans website. There were also further questions on the promotion of bikes on buses; and how the City Centre Master Plan and the next Transport Strategy would promote and increase bus accessibility.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to welcome the results of the Bus Satisfaction Survey; and
- (ii) to note the findings of the barriers to Bus Use study and continue to work with operators, other partners and the Chamber of Commerce towards progressing the recommendations contained in the report.

PROGRESS REPORT

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12. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a progress report that summarised the work of the three sub section strategies of the Regional Transport Strategy as at 9 June 2015.

The Board considered the contents of the progress reports and there were questions on ACC's review of accident statistics to identify actions and route improvements; and when the Aberdeen to Fraserburgh fieldwork study would be submitted to the Board. With regards to the fieldwork study, the Director advised that he aimed to report to the Board early next year.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to request an update from ACC colleagues on the review of accident statistics within the In-depth accident study on key corridors routes project; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the progress reports.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

13. With reference to article 12 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 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 appropriate.

The report recommended –

that the Board note the content of the report and homologate the response to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Proposed Plan.

Rab Dickson spoke to the report and highlighted that the proposed refresh of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan had been published and reminded members that the Nestrans Board had been consulted at the main issues report stage on 16 December 2013. Mr Dickson further advised that the Strategic Plan for the Tayplan area had been published on 11 May 2015 and included proposed upgrades to the A90 around Dundee and junction development at Laurencekirk. He also explained that the Aberdeen Harbour Board had proposed a major new harbour at Nigg Bay and following stakeholder engagement events, consultants had now produced the Nigg Bay Development Framework which was available to view on the Aberdeen City Council website.

Thereafter there were questions on track capacity and journey times between Glasgow and Aberdeen; the proposed inclusion of single track rail at Montrose within the City Deal; and the development of transport infrastructure that would link Nigg Bay with Balmoral, Altens and Cove.

The Board resolved:-

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to agree Appendix A as Nestrans response to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Proposed Plan.

BUDGET MATTERS

14. With reference to article 13 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Treasurer that provided an update on the partnership's 2015/16 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;
- (b) approve the budget virements as detailed in Appendix 2; and
- (c) agree to the additional projects identified in appendix 2 to be progressed and funded from balance of partner contributions.

Tom Buchan summarised the report and advised that budget virements as detailed in Appendix 2 had to be approved by the Board.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note the monitoring position and forecast presented in Appendix 1;
- (ii) to approve the budget virements as detailed in Appendix 2; and
- (iii) to agree to the additional projects identified in appendix 2 to be progressed and funded from balance of partner contributions.

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS 2014/15

15. With reference to article 13 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015, the Board had before it a report by the Treasurer which noted that the Board was required to consider the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2014/15.

The report recommended –

that the Board consider the unaudited Financial Statements for 2014/15 and approve their issue to the external Auditor and the Controller of Audit.

Tom Buchan summarised the report and advised that this year's format was slightly different and included a narrative and commentary on performance. Mr Buchan explained that the full statement was significantly longer to satisfy Audit Scotland requirements and the statement attached had been distilled and refined for the Nestrans Board.

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The Board resolved:-

to approve the unaudited Financial Statements for 2014/15 and their issue to the external Auditor and the Controller of Audit.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

16. With reference to article 14 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 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.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to welcome the layout of Appendix 1; and
- (ii) otherwise note the information bulletin.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

17. With reference to article 15 of the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 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

18. With reference to article 16 of the minute of its previous meeting of 1 April 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.

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19. The Director informed the Board that Scottish Government were preparing to announce the orders for the Haudigan Roundabout development and invites for the public exhibition would be sent to local representatives on 17 June. The Director also advised that the Airport Consultative Committee had confirmed that the new owners of Aberdeen Airport had committed to carrying out the improvements which had been agreed to before the transfer in ownership. The Director also informed members that for training and licensing purposes helicopters would be operating over the city after 10:30pm to ensure that they were flying the requisite number of hours in the dark.

-RAMSAY MILNE, Chairperson.