

**Strategy -**

**3a Director's report on liaison between RTPs, and with the Scottish Government and Others**

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**o Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update the Board on liaison with other RTPs, with the Scottish Government and other organisations.

**o Background**

This report details meetings with other RTPs across Scotland, Transport Scotland and other national transport bodies highlighting issues of interest across Scotland. It also notes meetings of the Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) Steering Group and the Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF).

**o Recent Developments**

The last full Board meeting was held on 26 June 2017, since which the following updates are available from meetings:

❖ **Aberdeen to Inverness Stakeholders Group, Forres, 27 June 2017**

Rab Dickson attended this meeting along with colleagues from Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council and Hitrans to receive an update from Network Rail and their contractors, BAM Nuttall on the rail enhancement project between Aberdeen and Inverness. A site visit around the new Forres station, which is scheduled to open in October 2017 followed the meeting.

❖ **Transport Scotland/ Network Rail Quarterly meeting, Aberdeen, 28 June 2017**

This meeting discussed the following:

- Aberdeen to Inverness (A2I) and Kintore Station
  - Progress on the A2I works at both west (Inverness) and East (Aberdeen) end.
  - Progress on the Compulsory Purchase Order public local inquiry and planning issues re Kintore.
- Inch station
  - This is the subject of a report to this Board at Item 3a
- Aberdeen to Central Belt/ Aberdeen City Region Deal
  - An update on the oversight group that has been set up
- Fraserburgh/ Peterhead to Aberdeen study
  - An update on progress with the road and rail studies
- Caledonian sleeper services
  - An update on progress with the introduction of the new trains

- Dyce Airport/ Dyce station bus link
  - An update on the withdrawal of the service

❖ **Minister for Transport – Public Sector bidder for Rail, Edinburgh, 29 June 2017**

This meeting was attended by a number of RTP's, Passenger Focus, Trades Unions and Parliamentary transport spokespersons. The Minister brought the group up-to-date on considerations into what a public sector bidder might look like. There are options using existing public bodies, perhaps with broadened remits, and the possibility of creating a new public body.

There have been discussions on the criteria that would be applied in assessing these options. These include issues such as Remit, Operational, Financial & Legal compatibility, Risk appetite and Policy alignment.

Consideration has also been given to Ministerial and Departmental behaviours during the setting up of a franchise bidder and bid process to ensure a level playing field for all bidders.

The Minister is hoping to make progress towards decision-making towards the autumn of this year. This fits with the necessary timeframe required should the halt point in the existing contract be exercised.

❖ **High Speed Rail Scotland Group, Edinburgh, 18 July 2017**

The high speed rail stakeholder group includes representatives from Transport Scotland, RTP's, Network Rail, passenger groups and the central belt cities, and assists in examining and promoting the case for extending high speed rail from Southern England to Scotland. There is a joint commitment between the UK and Scottish Government to:

“...in this control period the DfT and TS will take forward work with NR to identify any and all options with strong business cases, for consideration in CP6 and 7, (2019 to 2029) that can improve journey times, capacity, resilience and reliability on routes between England and Scotland. This will include consideration of how these improvements can be future-proofed to allow further progress towards 3 hour journeys.”

The commitment between both governments includes officials from DfT, TS and HS2 Ltd working together as part of a the “North of HS2 to Scotland Working Group” which includes a programme for identifying options for new high speed routes between Manchester and Glasgow/ Edinburgh along with options for upgrading existing track between Manchester to Glasgow and Leeds to Edinburgh. There has been significant progress in developing these options, with further meetings of the working group continuing throughout summer, with a decision on final infrastructure options likely to be confirmed by Winter 2017.

Current DfT proposals would see high speed trains running on the London to Birmingham section from 2026. One train per hour would continue through to Glasgow with a London-Glasgow journey time of 3 hours 56 minutes representing a reduction of 35 minutes compared with today. When the section through to Crewe is completed in 2027, there will be a further journey time reduction to 3 hours 43 minutes. When Phase 2b is complete in 2033 to Manchester and Leeds, the frequency of trains between London and Scotland will be increased to two per hour

and an additional hourly service alternating between Birmingham and alternatively to Glasgow and Edinburgh will also be introduced. These meetings also include discussions on how such improvements would be funded.

The group also discussed the wider economic benefits of bringing high speed rail to central Scotland. The initial consideration of these, which was undertaken as part of the HS2 Ltd study into the broad options for upgraded and high speed railways to the North of England and Scotland, was incomplete, and Transport Scotland commissioned a study to identify other areas that could be studied to provide a more accurate appraisal (Link to the initial study – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/broad-options-for-upgraded-and-high-speed-railways-to-the-north-of-england-and-scotland>). This new wider benefits study has now been completed and it is expected that the report will be published fairly soon, once the analysis of the findings are completed.

Nestrans has argued that the wider benefits should include the reduced need for air travel between central Scotland and Heathrow with the releasing of landing slots not only at Heathrow but also Edinburgh/ Glasgow. We have also argued that the role of the existing East and West coast mainlines changes with the need for fast trains to London on these routes reduced. This opens the options for increasing connectivity between Scottish and English regions.

The group has discussed the potential for regeneration in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, with each Council looking at what preparations could be made to maximise the potential benefits that could arise from the arrival of high speed rail services in 2026, and 2033 respectively. Advanced preparations are vital as exemplified by the considerable effort currently being undertaken by Birmingham City Council to capture all opportunities created when the new station opens in 2026 at Curzon Street.

#### ❖ **City Region Deal Transport Working Group, Aberdeen, 2 August 2017**

The meeting discussed progress across a range of City Region Deal projects with particular emphasis on the progress with the appointment of consultants to deliver the problems & opportunities, objectives and initial option generation and sifting for the Strategic Transport Appraisal agreed as part of the City Region Deal. Appointment is due at the end of August.

#### ❖ **RTP Lead Officers, Glasgow, 11 August 2017**

Nestrans, along with all other public bodies, is required to report on our emissions and on our plans and adaptations to reduce these. The RTP Lead Officers were given a presentation by Jennifer Kaczmariski of Keep Scotland Beautiful who has been examining the submissions from various public bodies on behalf of Scottish Government. Nestrans submission, as with all RTP's was classed as good but there were areas where the submissions could have been improved. This will be taken into account in the next round of submissions.

The RTP Leads also met with Paul White of the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT). Discussion centred on the significant numbers of reviews and consultations underway. These are causing some concern in the bus industry due to uncertainty of outcomes. Currently under review, specifically causing uncertainty for bus operators, are concessionary fares, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), and the possible introduction of Low Emissions Zones (LEZ). Each of these has the

potential to impact on bus operators' income and the uncertainty is causing a delay in investment decisions.

Discussion also included:

- National Transport Strategy
  - The RTP's have been asked to sit on a number of the NTS review groups
  - The RTP's as a group submitted a response to the call for evidence
  - Following considerable lobbying, the RTP Chairs have been asked to send a representative to the NTS review Board which advises the Minister. This is on the agenda for the RTP Chairs meeting on 23 August.
- Consultation response
  - The number of consultations currently underway was discussed. RTP's are variously preparing individual responses to some of these consultations but agreement was reached on submitting a combined RTP response to cover where individual responses weren't considered necessary by each RTP. These included:
    - Improving parking in Scotland
    - Places, People and Planning Position Statement
    - Socio-economic duty
    - Climate Change Bill
    - Low Emissions Zones
    - DfT Aviation Strategy
    - Roadworks consultation
- ❖ Other issues:
  - Transport Bill
  - TravelknowhowScotland website – further funding by RTP's
  - Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey 2017 – further continued contribution from RTP's
  - Thistlecard – Further development of a card for disabled people to show to bus drivers to let them know of a (sometimes hidden) disability. This is proposed to be extended to mobile app format and it is hoped to be extended to become the national norm. Some operators, including the main north east operators, already operate their own schemes.
  - Car-Free tourism guide
  - Agenda for the Chairs meeting on 23 August 2017.
- ❖ **SCDI dinner with the Minister for Transport & the Islands, Aberdeen, 17 August 2017**

This dinner was sponsored by Nestrans. Attending were the Chair, vice Chairs and Eddie Anderson who all sat with the Minister at dinner. The Leaders of both Councils were also at the table.

A number of issues were raised with the Minister during dinner and in the after dinner question and answer session. The Minister has been invited to attend a future Nestrans Board meeting.

❖ **Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce Transport Network, Aberdeen, 22 Aug 2017**

This meeting was attended by Kelly Wiltshire.

The meeting had two presentations, one from Stacey MacDonald of Network Rail updating the group on the Aberdeen to Inverness railway enhancement project and the other by Kelly Wiltshire on behalf of the Travel Know How Scotland website on travel planning [www.travelknowhowscotland.co.uk](http://www.travelknowhowscotland.co.uk) .

The meeting also discussed:

- Requiring more updates for local businesses and industry on the programme of opening the AWPR and getting more information on the changes to the roads hierarchy in Aberdeen once the AWPR opens.

❖ **RTP Chairs meeting, Dundee, 23 August 2017**

This was the first meeting of the new Chairs Group following the Local Authority elections this year. The Chairs discussed:

- The format and frequency of future RTP Chairs meetings. The Chairs also discussed a workplan going forward including various invitations to transport related bodies to discuss matters of mutual interest.
- The Chairs agreed on a representative to attend the National Transport Strategy Review Board to represent Regional Transport Strategies. This will be Sestrans Chair.
- The Chairs discussed the significant volume of consultations with a transport impact and agreed to submit a number of joint RTP responses to these.
- The Chairs received updates on current issue across the modes of transport

❖ **Transport Scotland, High Speed Rail presentation, Aberdeen, 30 Aug 2017**

Transport Scotland asked Nestrans to arrange for a local briefing session on progress with developing High Speed Rail in and to Scotland proposals. A presentation was made to officers from:

- Nestrans
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Aberdeen City Council
- Moray Council
- Hitrans
- SCDI
- Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce.

❖ **Transport Scotland – A96 dualling, Elgin, 31 August 2017**

Rab Dickson attended this meeting with affected Local Authorities and RTPs, as well as Transport Scotland and the various consultants working on the dualling programme. Initial contact was made with Amey Arup Joint Venture, who have been awarded the contract to consider the section between Huntly and Aberdeen.

#### ❖ **Aberdeen to Inverness Stakeholders Group, Elgin, 31 Aug 2017**

Rab Dickson attended this meeting, which outlined progress on the Aberdeen-Inverness rail upgrade. The works at the west end (including the new station at Forres and a replacement level-crossing at Elgin to facilitate extended platforms and longer crossing loop) are on schedule for completion in October.

Focus will then turn to works at the eastern end, including dualling most of the track between Inverurie and Aberdeen and the new station at Kintore. To reflect this changing emphasis, the next meeting is intended to be held in Inverurie.

#### ❖ **National Transport Strategy**

As mentioned in the RTP Chairs discussion above, the National Transport Strategy (NTS) review is now getting fully underway. As part of the review, there is an NTS Review Board overseeing development of the strategy. This group will provide advice to the Minister. Transport Scotland have agreed that this group should be expanded to include a number of stakeholders. One of these will be a representative from the RTP Chairs.

Under this Board there is a Strategic Framework Group which the RTP's are also represented on. Working to this framework are a number of thematic groups. RTP's also have representation on most of these groups. Nestrans will sit on the:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Safe and Resilient

Other groups providing input to the strategy's development include:

- Enabling economic growth
- Greener and Healthier
- Research and evidence
- Tackling inequalities

#### ❖ **City Region Deal**

Consultants have been appointed for the pre-appraisal assessment part of the Strategic Transport Appraisal agreed as part of the City Region Deal. This stage of assessment will cover the problems and opportunities, objective setting, option generation and high level sifting of options. This work will also form part of the background to setting the next Regional Transport Strategy. An inception meeting is scheduled for this month.

Work has been underway to develop the next generation of our regional transport model ASAM. This work has updated the model including using the latest census data, updated traffic flow information, the latest planning information and a new model framework. The base model and future traffic predictions are scheduled for completion in September 2017 although the formal writing up and model auditing will still have to be completed.

## **Future Programme of Meetings**

- ❖ **Transport Scotland & consultants re Laurencekirk junctions, Dundee, 8 Sep 2017**

- ❖ **Health & Transport Action Plan Steering Group, Aberdeen, 12 Sept 2017**

- ❖ **Civitas Portis Annual General meeting, Trieste, 13 – 15 Sept 2017**

Rab Dickson is attending this meeting.

- ❖ **City Region Deal Transport Working Group, Aberdeen, 14 Sept 2017**

- ❖ **Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group, TBC, 19 Sept 2017**

This meeting has been cancelled.

- ❖ **Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) Steering Group, Aberdeen, 21 Sept 2017**

- ❖ **East Coast Mainline Authorities, York, 03 October 2017**

Eric Guthrie of Tactran will be attending this meeting for the RTP's.

- ❖ **High Speed Rail Stakeholders Group, Motherwell, 05 October 2017**

## **Recommendation**

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

RD/RGM 1 September 2017