

Projects

4b FPASTS Update

o Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress regarding the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study.

o Background

Members will be aware that Nestrans has been leading an all-modes study on strategic transport issues on the corridor between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Ellon and Aberdeen.

Results of an initial STAG 1 study were presented to Board at its meeting on 30 September 2016 and the board agreed that further detail was required on some aspects of the study. Specifically, two further more detailed pieces of work were to be commissioned:

- A Feasibility study looking at the costs, benefits and likely patronage for a reopened rail service between Aberdeen, Dyce and Ellon; and
- A more detailed appraisal of prospective road upgrades on the A90 and A952, providing indicative schemes, costs and benefits.

Two consultancies, Aecom and Systra, have been working with Nestrans and partners (Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and Transport Scotland, with help from Network Rail and ScotRail in regard to the rail study) and draft reports have recently been received for both pieces of work. Aecom have undertaken the rail study and Systra have been developing the road options.

o Findings

The two consultancy studies are at differing levels of readiness, with officer comments yet to be incorporated into the final draft of the roads report. Due to the nature of road and rail assessment methodologies being quite different, the reports are not directly comparable and the initial findings should not be taken out of context of the full reports. The reports are dependent on future projections which can be subject to uncertainty regarding all aspects of future demand, much of which is influenced by factors outwith the control of local bodies (e.g. fuel prices, economic performance, etc.).

The outcomes and conclusions are complex and it is suggested that it would be beneficial for members to have an opportunity to hear from the consultants in advance of receiving a report at the next Board meeting.

o Way Forward

It is intended that the outcomes from these studies are reported to the next Nestrans Board meeting on 1st November 2017. In the interim period, further discussions will be held with partner organisations mentioned above. However, given the complex and technical nature of the reports, it is suggested that it may be worthwhile providing a Members' Briefing in advance of the Board meeting and inviting the consultants to present their findings and be available to answer members' questions.

Members' views are sought as to whether such a briefing should be extended to other Councillors, MPs and MSPs and on the arrangements for the briefing.

The reports will be made available on the Members' section of the website in advance of the Briefing session.

o Recommendation

The Board is recommended to:

1. Note the progress in respect of the two studies, providing further detailed analysis on options for improving transport on the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen corridor;
2. Agree to a Members' Briefing being held prior to the next Board meeting;
3. Advise on appropriate invitations to such a briefing and the details for such.

RD/ 8 September 2017