Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday 18 April 2018

Present: Councillor Peter Argyle (Chairperson); Dr Margaret Bochel (Vice Chairperson, for items 7 to 18), Councillor Sandra Macdonald (Vice Chairperson); and Councillors David Aitchison, Gillian Owen (as substitute for Councillor John Cox) and Colin Pike; and Eddie Anderson, Gerry Donald and Ian Ross.

In attendance: Lucy Johnson, Ruth Taylor and Ewan Wallace (Aberdeenshire Council), Gale Beattie, Iain Robertson and Robert Templeton (Aberdeen City Council), Derick Murray, Rab Dickson and Jenny Anderson (Nestrans), Andrew Stewart (Health and Transport Action Plan), Derek Glasgow and Scott Prentice (Abellio Scotrail) and Stacey McDonald and Sarah Thomson (Network Rail).

Apologies: Councillors Bell, Cox, Nicoll and Jennifer Stewart; and George Mair.

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Ian Ross to his first meeting and requested that today's agenda be re-ordered to consider items 7a-7d following approval of the previous minute and to hear the scheduled presentation from Abellio thereafter.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to welcome Ian Ross onto the Board; and
(ii) to approve the Chair's proposals to reorder today's agenda.

MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING, 14 FEBRUARY 2018

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14 February, 2018 for approval.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the minute as a correct record.

2017-18 BUDGET MATTERS

3. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Partnership's 2017-18 monitoring and forecast outturn position and asked the Board to consider any budget or monitoring issue that had arisen.

The report recommended:-
That the Board –
(a) Note the monitoring position and forecast presented in Appendix 1;
(b) Approve the virements presented in Appendix 2;
(c) Approve the delay in drawdown in Appendix 3; and

(d) Note the projects for which Nestrans will receive funding from Sustrans for delivery by May 2018.

Ruth Taylor (Finance, Aberdeenshire Council) provided an overview of the financial position and asked members to approve the virements in Appendix 2 and the delay in drawdown in Appendix 3 which would make these monies available during the next financial year.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

2018-19 BUDGET PROPOSALS

4. The Board had before it a report which asked it to note the funding allocations to Nestrans and agree the 2018-19 Strategic Investment Programme budget proposals, subject to any emerging details of funding through the City Region Deal.

The report recommended:-
That the Board –
(a) Note the funding awards to Nestrans that had been confirmed for 2018-19;
(b) Approve the revisions to the 2018-19 Co-ordination and project development budget as detailed in Appendix 1;
(c) Approve the 2018-19 Strategic Investment Programme budget proposals as detailed in Appendix 2, subject to any appropriate adjustments being made following the Board's consideration;
(d) Note the reserve list of projects detailed in Appendix 3; and
(e) Note the potential for up to £193,500 for cycle schemes from Sustrans in 2018-19 and the indicative usage proposals for agreement with Sustrans.

Ruth Taylor confirmed that Nestrans' budget had been confirmed by its partners and highlighted the downward revision made to the Bridge of Dee Study. The Director confirmed that the reduction in funding was to align with completion of the AWPR and would likely delay the study but not stop it.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

REVISED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

5. The Board had before it a report which sought approval of the Partnership's revised Financial Regulations.

The report recommended:-
That the Board approve the Partnership's revised Financial Regulations as set out in the report and Appendix 1.

Ruth Taylor advised that the regulations underpinned Nestrans' financial framework and were periodically reviewed. She noted that minor amendments had been made to procurement regulations to reflect new legislative requirements and best practice and added that external audit would review the regulations to ensure they remained robust and were being applied appropriately.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STATEGY STATEMENT 2018-19

6. The Board had before it a report which sought agreement of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2018-19.

The report recommended:-
that the Board approve the revised Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendices A and B of the report.

Ruth Taylor advised that Nestrans had adopted a risk appetite that was largely risk averse so investment returns were relatively low although these were slightly above than the Bank of England baseline rate of 0.5%.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

PRESENTATION - SCOTT PRENTICE, HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, ABELLIO SCOTRAIL AND DEREK GLASGOW, ABELLIO SCOTRAIL

7. The Board received a presentation from Scott Prentice and Derek Glasgow (Abellio Scotrail) on planned rail improvements in the North East of Scotland. An overview was provided of work at Forres Station and future work that would take place over consecutive summers to improve the Inverurie-Aberdeen route. Mr Prentice and Mr Glasgow also advised members of (1) the proposed peak timetable; (2) contingency plans, including replacement bus services; and (3) Abellio Scotrail's communication plan to provide up to date information to rail users, and to promote bus, rather than car use while work was ongoing on the Dyce-Aberdeen route, which will result in a 14-week blockade from May supported by a replacement bus service. Similar plans will be necessary between Inverurie-Dyce in summer 2019.

The Board resolved:-
to thank Mr Prentice and Mr Glasgow for their informative presentation.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

8. The Board had before it a report by the Director of Nestrans which provided an update on liaison activity with other RTPs, with the Scottish Government and other organisations.

The report recommended:-
that the Board note the progress on liaison arrangements with other RTPs, the Scottish Government and others and arrangements for future meetings.

The Director highlighted the following areas for members' attention:-

(1) With regards to the A90 Laurencekirk Partnership, he anticipated that a preferred option would be made available in the summer of 2018

(2) With regards to the Aberdeen-Central Belt rail enhancement project, he was pleased that Nestrans' representations to the Minister for Transport and the Islands about pace and connectivity had been taken into account;

(3) With regards to the East Coast Mainline, he advised that the proposed development of a high speed route from Leeds to Newcastle did not benefit the North East of Scotland and that Nestrans intended to review its position on this group next year;

(4) With regards to the Councillors Code of Conduct, he explained that Chairs of regional transport authorities had received a letter from the Local Government Division at the Scottish Government which noted that the Government would consider making a change to the code of conduct to allow councillors to fully participate at Nestrans and Council meetings when considering transport issues without having to declare and leave a meeting due to a conflict of interest;

(5) With regards to Aberdeen International Airport, he advised that overall passenger numbers had increased but helicopter use had reduced. He noted that there was mixed news on flight routes as the airport had gained a number of holiday destinations but lost business locations such as Frankfurt and Reykjavik which was disappointing;

(6) With regards to Kintore Station, he highlighted that the exhibition on 14 March 2018 had been well received by attendees;

(7) With regards to Transport Governance, he explained that the Scottish Government had commissioned an external consultant to conduct a root and branch review which was due to be published within the next three months. He informed the Board that he was satisfied that the review process had been fairly conducted; and

(8) With regards to the Strategic Transport Assessment Client Group, he advised that a meeting had been held on 26 March 2018 to discuss the findings of various workshops, events and interviews with a view to developing themes and defining outcomes. He added that a provisional date of 1 June 2018 had been set for the next workshop before a report was presented to the Nestrans Board, both Councils and the City Region Deal Joint Committee.

The Board resolved:-
to note the report.

HEALTH AND TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN: UPDATE

9. The Board had before it a report which advised the Board on progress on the Health and Transport Action Plan.

The report recommended:-
That the Board note the report on the progress made in relation to delivering the Health and Transport Action Plan.

Andrew Stewart (Health and Transport Action Plan) provided an update on progress against the Plan's two themes of (1) Access to health and social care; and (2) Transport and Public health. He also provided an overview of the Travel to Health and Social Care Information Centre (THInC) project and work towards addressing the recommendations of the audit review of health and social care transport. Thereafter Gerry Donald

highlighted the HTAP networking event on 1 May 2018 and extended an open invitation to Board members.

The Committee resolved:-
(i) to instruct Andrew Stewart to circulate a save the date appointment to members and stakeholders for the Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards on 9 November 2018; and
(ii) otherwise note the report.

FREIGHT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

10. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the progress of the Civitas Portis Freight projects and presented the findings of the recent baseline studies.

The report recommended:-
That the Board –
(a) Note the progress made on Civitas Portis Work Package 4 to date; and
(b) Note the findings of the Baseline Reports and Survey Report.

Rab Dickson (Nestrans) updated the Board on the Civitas Portis project and noted that relevant documentation had been uploaded to the Partnership's website. He then provided an overview of Freight Gateway Interconnectivity that aimed to take account of the opening of the AWPR and Aberdeen City Council's road hierarchy review. Mr Dickson also highlighted a recent survey of hauliers which found that North East companies had a good understanding of freight efficiency and was encouraged that 97% of freight vehicles had Euro 5 or Euro 6 engines which were very efficient in terms of emissions.

The Board resolved:-
to note the report.

BUS ACTION PLAN: PASSENGER SATISFACTION

11. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the recently published Transport Focus Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey and presented the key findings from the report. The report also made reference to the recent publication of a report by Citizens Advice Scotland on bus travel.

The report recommended:-
That the Board note the findings of the Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey and Creating Better Journeys reports.

Rab Dickson advised that a recent Transport Focus survey found that 86% of Aberdeen City and 87% of Aberdeenshire passengers were satisfied with bus services but noted that although overall satisfaction was high, there were lower levels of satisfaction in terms of value for money and weekday off –peak journeys. Mr Dickson also referred to a survey of passenger satisfaction conducted by Citizen Advice Scotland which found that 64% of passengers surveyed were dissatisfied with their bus service. He explained that the use of different methodologies may account for the large variances between the

level of satisfaction recorded in the surveys by Transport Focus and Citizen Advice Scotland.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to ask the Director to raise the issue of value for money with bus companies through the Bus Alliance Group; and
(ii) otherwise note the report.

RAIL MATTERS UPDATE

12. The Board had before it a report which provided an update of progress in regard to a number of matters regarding railways in the North East of Scotland.

The report recommended:-
That the Board –
(a) Note the report on the progress made in relation to delivering the new station at Kintore;
(b) Note the publication of Transport Scotland's Rail enhancement and Capital Investment Strategy; and
(c) Note the announcement of a Local Rail Development Fund and instruct officers to develop application(s) for submission to the fund, after consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

Rab Dickson provided an update on progress made towards the delivery of the proposed new railway station at Kintore and highlighted the success of the pre-application planning exhibition held on 14 March 2018. He noted that planning applications had been submitted to Aberdeenshire Council and were currently being validated before going live. Mr Dickson also provided an overview of the Rail Enhancement and Capital Investment Strategy published by Transport Scotland, and the Local Rail Development Fund which had been established by Transport Scotland to develop community led options to improve local rail connections with a closing date for applications of 18 May 2018.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

PROGRESS REPORT

13. The Board had before it a progress report which outlined the status of various activities in support of the Regional Transport Strategy.

The Board resolved:-
to note the content of the progress report.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

14. The Board had before it a report which provided information on the recent publications and consultation papers of interest and sought to agree a response where appropriate.

The report recommended:-

That the Board –
(a) Consider the draft response to the consultation on Section 19 and Section 22 Permits and approve the attached Appendix A as Nestrans' response; and
(b) Note the consultation on Tackling Social Isolation.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to approve Appendices A and B as Nestrans' response to the consultations; and
(ii) to note the consultation on Tackling Social Isolation.

ROAD CASUALTY REDUCTION: SAFETY CAMERAS

15. The Board had before it a report which sought support for a letter to be written to the Minister for Transport and the Islands requesting confirmation of the high priority for Casualty Reduction and applies flexibility in the deployment of safety cameras to ensure their effectiveness in helping to reduce casualties in the North East.

The report recommended:-
That the Board –
(a) Write to the Minister for Transport and the Islands outlining concerns regarding the deployment of safety cameras in the North East and the lack of flexibility to respond to changing circumstances;
(b) Seek the Minister's assurance that Casualty Reduction will be a high priority within the National Transport Strategy Review, Transport Bill and related documents;
(c) Seek the Minister's support for flexibility in the deployment of cameras within the North East, either as a pilot or reflecting the special circumstances of the area; and
(d) Continue the dialogue through the NESRCRS to address the issues in the report.

Ewan Wallace (Transportation, Aberdeenshire Council) advised that the Scottish Safety Camera Programme was responsible for determining the position of mobile, fixed and average safety cameras in Scotland and explained that the location of sites was based on Transport Scotland criteria that had been published 15 years ago, and as a result the number of new sites identified had been relatively low. He expressed his view that there was scope for adoption of a more flexible and contemporaneous approach. Thereafter Mr Wallace requested Board approval to write to the Minister for Transport and Islands to highlight concerns with the existing approach and recommend that the North East region pilot a new approach in the deployment of safety cameras.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to seek further information on cyclist and pedestrian behaviour in terms of road casualty reduction; and
(ii) otherwise approve the recommendations.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

16. The Board had before it a report which provided information and updates on a number of matters not requiring a decision.

The report recommended:-
that the Board note the content of the report.

Rab Dickson summarised the findings of a report by Sustrans which explored issues around gender and active travel and provided an overview of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan and Scotrail's Cycling Fund. He also updated the Board on progress made by the Getabout Partnership and its working group.

The Board recommended:-
To note the content of the report.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

17. The Board had before it a list of recent and forthcoming conferences of interest to Nestrans.

The Board resolved:-
to note the content of the list.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

18. The Board had before it a report which (1) advised of progress on pending business requested by the Board and major reports scheduled for forthcoming Board meetings; and (2) provided the opportunity for the Board 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 approve the recommendation.
COUNCILLOR PETER ARGYLE, Chairperson.