

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Remote/Virtual Meeting of the
North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 24 June 2020

Present: Councillor Sandra Macdonald (Chairperson); Dr Margaret Bochel (Vice Chair); Councillors Philip Bell, George Carr, John Cox, Michael Hutchison, Avril MacKenzie, Martin Ford (as substitute for Councillor David Aitchison) and Ian Mollison (as substitute for Councillor Peter Argyle); and Colin Allanach, Gerry Donald and Ian Ross.

In Attendance: George Mair; Stephen Archer, Ewan Wallace, Lucy Johnston and Chris Smith (Aberdeenshire Council); Gale Beattie, Lisa Christie and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council); Rab Dickson, Paul Finch, Jenny Anderson, Kirsty Chalmers, Nicky Laird, Kelly Wiltshire and Tricia Howden (Nestrans Office); and Anne Macdonald (Audit Scotland)

Apologies: Councillors Peter Argyle (Vice Chair) and David Aitchison.

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES AND ROLL CALL BY COMMITTEE CLERK

1. The Board had before it details which identified changes to the membership of the Nestrans Board as follows:-

Aberdeen City Council

Councillor Michael Hutchison replaced Councillor Alex Nicoll as a substantive member.

Councillor David Cameron replaced Councillor Michael Hutchison as a substitute member.

Aberdeenshire Council

Councillor George Carr replaced Councillor Colin Pike as a substantive member.

The Board resolved:-

to note the changes and to thank Councillors Nicoll and Pike for their contribution as Board members.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

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MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

3. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 12 February 2020, for approval.

With reference to article 5 (2020/21 Budget Proposals), the Director advised that the Scottish Council for Development and Industry lunch with the Cabinet Secretary in attendance had been postponed due to the pandemic situation but had now been rescheduled to be held on Wednesday, 28 October 2020.

The Board resolved:-

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

DIRECTOR DELEGATED POWERS

4. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the powers delegated to the Director and sought ratification of the previously agreed schedule of delegated powers.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) approve the Director’s delegated powers, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) approve that during any period of prolonged absence of the Director, that the Director may sub-delegate the following powers and appointment temporarily to the Transport Strategy Manager, subject to authorisation of the Chair and Vice Chairs:-
 - (1) the delegation of powers granted to the Director as set out in Appendix 1; and
 - (2) the appointment as Nestrans’ proper officer; all subject to the following conditions:-
 - (i) the period of likely absence of the Director is greater than three weeks;
 - (ii) the date of commencement and planned end of that absence is notified to the Board; and
 - (iii) that where an extension of the sub-delegation contained in Recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 is required for a period greater than that so notified, the sub-delegation will be extended following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Board.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations, subject to amending the following delegated powers in Appendix 1 of the report (1) item 1 to read “To authorise spend on items up to a maximum of £10,000; and (2) item 11 to read “To accept gifts as appropriate on behalf of Nestrans, subject to these being recorded and available for inspection.”

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ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20

5. The Board had before it a report by Audit Scotland which sets out the audit work to be undertaken to provide an opinion on the Partnership's financial statements.

The report recommended:-

That the Board note the audit plan provided by Audit Scotland.

The Board heard Anne MacDonald provide an overview of the Annual Audit Plan and answered questions from members thereafter.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

UNAUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2019/20

6. The Board had before it a report which outlined details of the unaudited annual accounts for 2019/20 and sought approval of the final delay in drawdown.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) consider the Unaudited Annual Accounts for 2019/20 and approve their issue to the external Auditor and the Controller of Audit as per Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (b) approve the final delay in drawdown for 2019/20 as per Appendix 3 of the report.

The Board heard Chris Smith provide an overview of the Unaudited Annual Accounts and answered questions from members thereafter.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

2020/21 BUDGET MATTERS

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Partnership's 2020/21 monitoring and forecast outturn position.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the funding awards to Nestrans that have been confirmed for 2020/21;
- (b) note the monitoring position and forecast presented in Appendix 1;
- (c) note the additional grant funding awarded in 2020/21 from Paths for All for travel behaviour surveys, Local Rail Development Fund additional contribution to Inch Accessibility Study and through the Regional Transport Partnership Active Travel grant for cycle schemes;

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- (d) note that the Commencement Order for Section 122 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 came into effect on 19 March 2020 and the intention to bring a future report back to the Board on the implications for Nestrans and the Councils; and
- (e) approve the requested virement.

The Board heard Chris Smith provide an overview of the report.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2020/21

8. The Board had before it a report which sought agreement to the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21.

The report recommended:-

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

The Board heard Chris Smith provide an overview of the report and answered questions from members thereafter.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) that officers circulate an update on the status of Clydesdale Bank's takeover by Virgin Money; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

COVID-19 AND NESTRANS RESPONSE

9. The Board had before it a report which provided information on the operational response to the ongoing Covid-19 global pandemic, and set out a strategic framework and some early actions for the journey from lockdown to adaptation and recovery.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the changes to the operation of the Nestrans' Executive due to restrictions imposed by Covid-19;
- (b) support the proposed five key principles to guide how Nestrans can work during the journey from lockdown to recovery; and
- (c) note the examples of how these principles have already been applied to the work of Nestrans during this period.

Paul Finch provided an overview of the report and answered questions from members thereafter.

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The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040

10. The Board had before it a report which presented the Draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), along with relevant supporting documents and appraisals and sought approval to publish these for a period of public and stakeholder consultation.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) approve the following documents for public and stakeholder consultation:-
 - (1) Draft RTS 2040; and
 - (2) Nestrans 2040 – At a Glance;
- (b) note that the following supporting documents, currently available in draft, will support the consultation:-
 - (1) Draft Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategy Transport Appraisal Preliminary Options Appraisal (Executive Summary and Full Report);
 - (2) Equalities Impact Assessment, including Health Impact Assessment; and
 - (3) Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment;
- (c) note that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environment Report will be available prior to consultation, as per the summary of findings presented in this report; and
- (d) note and approve the proposals for consultation and engagement on RTS 2040 and associated documents, as set out in Appendix D of the report.

The Director provided an overview of the report (a) advising that there had been a significant amount of consultation and engagement with Board Members, stakeholders and the public as well as additional supporting research; (b) making reference to various workshops held with Board Members and Substitute Board Members throughout 2019, which agreed the vision, pillars and six key priorities of the strategy as well as discussing in more detail options and priorities for mass transit, demand management, rural accessibility and active travel; (c) indicating that as well as the full strategy, an easy to read summary of the key priorities, schemes and measures contained within the strategy had been prepared and was attached to the report at Appendix B; (d) explaining that the Strategy 2040 was realistic, balanced and ambitious with the vision of it being *“To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and accessible transport system in the North East, which contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities”*; and (e) intimating that both local authorities, stakeholders and members of the public would be given the opportunity to feed-in to the strategy, following which, it would be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary by the end of 2020.

The Board then heard from Paul Finch in relation to the Strategic Transport Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Appraisal and the Fairer Scotland Duties Appraisal.

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Kirsty Chalmers provided information on the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, advising that consultation would commence around the end of July 2020 and last for at least ten weeks.

The Chair thanked officers for their considerable efforts in preparing the report.

Members considered the Draft Strategy and raised a number of questions for officers, thereafter, the following suggestions were intimated for consideration and possible inclusion:-

- Cycle path – include missing link between Speyside Way through Banffshire coast to Buchan Way;
- Electrification at new south Aberdeen Harbour – to reduce carbon emissions; and
- Bus Routes – less frequent changes to improve consistency and encourage usage.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations, subject to officers considering the suggestions intimated by members above, and any further suggestions which may be submitted to the Director by 8th July 2020.

NESTRANS ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

11. The Board had before it a report which outlined details of the Annual Monitoring Report in support of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the contents of this report and the trends against many of the RTS targets;
- (b) approve the Nestrans Monitoring report 2020, which will be uploaded to the Nestrans' website; and
- (c) instruct officers to develop a suite of suitable indicators and targets to reflect the developing Regional Transport Strategy to 2040 and report these to a future Board meeting.

The Board heard the Director highlight the key issues from the report and explained that significant changes, both new infrastructure being provided and also short-term implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, which were not reflected in this year's report, would likely to have a significant impact in future reporting.

He also made reference to the impact the downturn in the oil and gas industry had made on key economic indicators, particularly in relation to the decline of numbers through the Airport and Railway Station including line closures to enable upgrades and performance issues around Scotrail in terms of rail services last year.

Looking beyond the pandemic situation, the Director indicated that the new local Inverurie to Montrose rail service and the new station being built at Kintore would see a return to growth in this sector.

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The Director made reference to the many positives contained within the report including:-

- Car Share and Car Club increased figures;
- Electric Vehicle and EV charging usage figures across the region had increased significantly;
- Air Quality targets had met the World Health Organisation criteria; and
- Injury/Fatality resulting from road traffic collisions at lowest ever figure.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to revisit the wording of the report relating to Indicator 26 (the relative cost of parking to bus fares);
 - (ii) that Target 6 (to reduce the rate of growth of traffic to less than 5% for the decade to 2021) be reviewed in terms of the sustainable development model;
 - (iii) to note that officers would undertake a benchmarking exercise in terms of future reporting targets to ensure that they were appropriate; and
 - (iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations.
- **COUNCILLOR SANDRA MACDONALD, Convener**