



Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 10 February 2021

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

In Attendance: Clive Robinson (Department for Infrastructure, Northern Ireland – for article 3 only); Councillors Douglas Lumsden, Jenny Laing and Marie Boulton, (Aberdeen City Council – for article 3 only); Councillor Andy Kille, (Aberdeenshire Council – for article 3 only); Gale Beattie, Joanna Murray, Alan Thomson and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council); Councillor Ian Mollison, Ewan Wallace and Chris Smith (Aberdeenshire Council); Rab Dickson, Kirsty Chalmers, Jenny Anderson, Paul Finch, Nicky Laird, Kelly Wiltshire, Jon Barron, Lucy Johnston and Tricia Howden (Nestrans)

Apologies: Alan Wood (Aberdeenshire Council)

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.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING, 9 DECEMBER 2020

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 9 December 2020, for approval.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

PRESENTATION: CLIVE ROBINSON, TRANSPORT PROJECTS PROGRAMME MANAGER, DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE NORTHERN IRELAND

3. The Board received a presentation from Mr Clive Robinson in relation to the Glider public transport project in Belfast.

During the presentation, Mr Robinson provided information on the project spend which included a £50m infrastructure investment. He indicated that the Glider vehicles were of a tram like appearance and were constructed as diesel/electric hybrids. He made reference to

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the Service Centre for the vehicles and also the halts/stops which had a platform feel. He outlined the performance data and the key success factors. He provided details on the branding and marketing initiatives, the public engagement process and also the priority and benefit measures of the bus lanes which had increased reliability and punctuality between the hours of 7am to 7pm.

Mr Robinson responded to a number of questions from members of the Board and the following information was noted:-

- that the use of diesel/electric hybrids was a decision based on Belfast's geometry at the time, but they would also investigate the possibility of using other energy efficient vehicles, such as hydrogen in the future;
- that officers in Belfast worked with Sustrans and created five cycle storage facilities along the routes and that bus lanes were available for cycle usage; they were also looking at additional active travel solutions going forward; and
- that network improvements, energy efficient lighting and improved footpaths to the halts/stops were essential to the project's success.

The Board resolved:-

to thank Clive Robinson for his insightful presentation.

2020/21 BUDGET MATTERS

4. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Partnership's 2020/21 monitoring and forecast outturn position and sought consideration of 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 virements set out in Appendix 2;
- (c) approve the continuation of funding to next financial year to complete approved projects presented in Appendix 3;
- (d) note the updates on projects for which Nestrans will receive external grant funding and timescales for claiming each grant; and
- (e) note the Strategic Transport Fund position.

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

In response to a question from Councillor Carr, the Director provided breakdown information relating to the partnership's office costs.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2019

5. The Board had before it a report which sought approval to implement an amended funding mechanism and operation of the Strategic Investment Programme in conjunction with

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the Constituent Authorities of NESTRANS, namely Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) agree to implement the amended Strategic Investment funding mechanism of full capital funding to NESTRANS from the two constituent authorities from financial year 2021/22 onwards, as recommended in section 4 of the report;
- (b) formally review the mechanism on an annual basis; and
- (c) instruct officers to prepare a Strategic Investment programme for NESTRANS on a 3 to 5 year basis to enable budget implications to be factored into the partner authorities' medium-term financial strategies.

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

The Director advised that in relation to (c) above, that a report would be submitted to Nestrans later this year or early 2022.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

2021/22 BUDGET PROPOSALS

6. The Board had before it a report which sought approval of the budget for 2021/22, subject to funding being confirmed by Council Partners and the Scottish Government.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) approve the 2021/22 Budgets of £1,113,620 and £7,438,846 with programmes as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2, subject to anticipated funding levels being confirmed and making any appropriate adjustments following the Board's consideration;
- (b) note the potential for additional funding for cycle schemes by Sustrans; and
- (c) note the reserve list of projects detailed in Appendix 3.

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

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on liaison with other RTPs, the 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.

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The Director advised that despite the coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions, an almost normal schedule of meetings had been held online during this period. He made reference to the following meetings of relevance:-

- The Health & Transport Action Plan Steering Group held on 17 December 2020, (minute attached as Appendix 1 to the report); and
- Bus Alliance Board held on 13 January 2021, (minute attached as Appendix 2 to the report).

The Chairperson referred to the meeting of the National Transport Strategy (NTS2) Delivery Group held on 5 February 2021 and advised that the main topic of discussion was the monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040

8. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the meeting of 4 November 2020, the Board had before it a report which presented the final Regional Transport Strategy for consideration.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) approve the amended text for the Final RTS 2040, as contained in Appendix 1 to this report;
- (b) instruct officers to finalise the production of the strategy into a final format, including indicative plans and maps;
- (c) authorise the Chair and Vice Chairs to approve a final version, taking account of any comments and amendments sought by the Board;
- (d) instruct officers to submit the final strategy to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity as soon as practicable;
- (e) note the finalisation of the Strategic Transport Appraisal Report; and
- (f) share the Final RTS and Strategic Transport Appraisal with the team progressing the STPR2 process.

The Board heard Kirsty Chalmers explain the rationale behind the key track changes made to the final strategy at Appendix 1.

It was noted that the final version of the RTS would be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary by mid-March 2021.

Members considered the Strategy document and suggested that the following minor amendments be made:-

- wording to be amended on page 73 (9.2) – in relation to the rate of population change in Aberdeen;
- addition of wording “continue to” be seen as a priority.. on page 86 (11.13);
- numbering changes to be made throughout document; and
- addition of wording “it is” taking into consideration.. on page 149 (11.182).

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The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations, subject to the minor changes outlined above; and
- (ii) to thank the officers involved for the significant work undertaken in the preparation of the Regional Transport Strategy.

BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND

9. The Board had before it a report which sought endorsement of the submission of a bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) of up to £200 million on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance, of which Nestrans is a partner.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) endorse the submission of a bid to the Bus Partnership Fund in line with Appendix 1 on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance; and
- (b) seek further reports on the results of the bid, as it progresses.

The Board heard the Director provide a summary of the report.

Gale Beattie provided an update on the outcome of the Bus Partnership Fund bid report which was considered and approved by Aberdeen City Council's City Growth and Resources Committee on 3 February 2021.

It was noted that the bid would also be reported to Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee in March 2021.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

PROGRESS REPORT

10. 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

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

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan update in regard to Transport;
- (b) note the Climate Change – Net Zero Nation: Draft Public engagement strategy consultation;

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- (c) note the progress in the Accessible Travel Delivery Plan: Progress Report - 2019/2020;
- (d) note the content of National Transport Strategy Delivery Plan;
- (e) note the Rail Franchising Policy Statement and instruct the Director to write to Transport Scotland, requesting to be kept informed on the ongoing considerations for future delivery of the ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchises;
- (f) consider the City Council's consultation on Taxi Licensing and instruct a response, indicating that the requirement should be focussed less on "alternative fuelled vehicles", but on emissions, with a requirement to operate using ultra low emission vehicles, in a phased manner, to have a fully compliant taxi fleet by 2030 at the latest;
- (g) note Transport Scotland's proposals for dualling the A96 between East of Huntly and Aberdeen and agree that Nestrans submit a letter to the project team referencing the points contained in the report, subject to approval by the Chair and Vice Chairs;
- (h) note the publication of the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Policy Statement;
- (i) note the Department for Transport's consultation on Union Connectivity and the response submitted, as included as Appendix 1 to this report; and
- (j) note the progress of the Automated Vehicles: Consultation Paper 3 – A regulatory framework for automated vehicles.

The Board heard Paul Finch provide a summary of the ten individual publications and consultations outlined within the report, however, he made reference to a further two which had been received since publication of the agenda pack, as follows:-

- Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (Phase 1) report; and
- Scottish Government's National Planning Framework Statement.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations contained within the report; and
- (ii) that in relation to the National Planning Framework Statement, to note that a draft response would be prepared and circulated to the Chair and Vice Chairs for approval prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the contents of this report.

The Director made reference to the Active Travel Summit, indicating that it was proposed that the summit be held on 15 March 2021 and that invitations would be sent to Board members, all elected members from both local authorities, the Cycle Forum and the Grampian Cycle Partnership in due course.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

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CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

13. The Board had before it a list of recent and forthcoming conferences, training and presentations of interest to Nestrans.

The Board resolved:-

to note the information provided and the content of the list.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

14. The Board had before it a report which (1) provided information on the progress on pending business and major reports scheduled for forthcoming Board meetings; and (2) provided the opportunity for the Board to add to or amend the 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 Director made reference to the possibility of Professor David Gray, RGU providing a short presentation at the next meeting in April 2021. He intimated that the invitation intention was to receive feedback on the Regional Transport Strategy from an external/academic perspective.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation,

- **COUNCILLOR SANDRA MACDONALD, Chairperson**