



## Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 15 September 2021

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

In Attendance: Rab Dickson, Jenny Anderson, Kirsty Chalmers, Paul Finch, Tricia Howden and Kelly Wiltshire (Nestrans); Councillor Ian Mollison, Alan Wood, Ewan Wallace, Chris Smith and Lucy Johnston (Aberdeenshire Council); Councillor David Cameron, David Dunne, Karen Allan, Alan Thomson, Joanna Murray and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council); and Anne Macdonald (Audit Scotland).

Apologies: Councillor Philip Bell

**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.**

**At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairperson intimated that she was currently having IT issues and that the Vice Chairperson, Councillor Peter Argyle would chair the meeting.**

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

### **MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING, 9 JUNE 2021**

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 9 June 2021, for approval.

#### **The Board resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**  
15 September 2021

**2021/22 BUDGET MATTERS**

3. The Board had before it a report which outlined the funding allocations to Nestrans and provided an update on the Partnership's 2021/22 monitoring and forecast outturn position. It also 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) note the updates on projects for which Nestrans receives external grant funding;  
and
- (d) note the Strategic Transport Fund position.

Chris Smith provided an overview of the report.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2020/21 AND THE REPORT ON THE 2020/21 AUDIT BY THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR**

4. The Board had before it a report which sought approval of the audited Annual Accounts for 2020/21 for signature and provided information on the External Auditor's report on the audit.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) approve for signature the audited Annual Accounts for 2020/21;
- (b) consider the External Auditor's Report; and
- (c) note that the Accounts can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from the Nestrans website.

Anne MacDonald, External Auditor was in attendance and highlighted the key information from the report.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

5. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on liaison with other RTPs, with the Scottish Government and other organisations.

**The report recommended:-**

## NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

15 September 2021

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

Reference was made to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 9 June 2021, wherein the Director was instructed to write to Mr Graeme Dey (MSP), the new Transport Minister inviting him to a future meeting of the Board. Rab Dickson (1) advised that in response to the request, the Minister in the short term had agreed to meet with him, the Chairperson and Paul Finch on 8 September 2021; and (2) intimated that during the amiable meeting, it was noted that Mr Dey was keen to work with the Board, and in particular, there had been positive discussions in terms of travel improvements and links to the Airport and the Railway Station and beyond.

Rab Dickson made reference to The Health and Transport Action Plan Steering Group meetings of 26 June and 27 August 2021; and the meeting of the Bus Alliance Board, 25 August 2021, all draft minutes were appended to the report.

Maggie Bochel provided an update in relation to the Aberdeen International Airport Consultative Committee meeting which she had attended on 3 September 2021, making reference to an increase in passenger volume figures, TUI now flying to Palma and possibly Tenerife, airside Retail openings and ongoing work with the Airport's Sustainability Strategy which was aiming to achieve Net Zero Emissions with operators.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendation.

### REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040 UPDATE

6. With reference to article 8 of the minute of the previous meeting of 9 June 2021, the Board had before it a report which (1) provided a progress update towards the adoption of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS); and (2) provided details on the Board Workshop held on 3 August 2021, at which RTS monitoring and targets were discussed (draft minute appended to report).

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the progress towards adopting the final RTS;
- (b) agree the new approach to monitoring and evaluation and proposed dates for the first monitoring reports to be produced; and
- (c) request that the proposed final list of indicators and targets be brought back to the Board in November, taking on board feedback from the workshop.

Kirsty Chalmers provided an overview of the report and intimated that initial feedback on the RTS had been received from Transport Scotland indicating that they were relatively satisfied with the content and that it was anticipated that there would not be any substantial changes required other than some minor factual updates arising from recent Scottish Government agreements. Final approval from the Minister is expected by the end of October 2021.

**The Board resolved:-**

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**  
15 September 2021

to approve the recommendations.

**STPR2 AND OTHER NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS**

7. The Board had before it a report provided an update on the progress being made with regards to the second national Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), and the north east transport implications of the deal agreed between the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the progress being made on the STPR2, including feedback on previous consultation responses; and
- (b) note the north-east transport implications arising from the Shared Policy Programme agreed by the Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party, including the proposals for reviews for the future of A96 dualling, and also the feasibility of a rail link between Dyce and Ellon.

The Board heard from Paul Finch who provided an overview of the report.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations subject to adding “and further north to Peterhead and Fraserburgh” to the end of (b) above.

**BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND UPDATE**

8. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the previous meeting of 9 June 2021, the Board had before it a report which (1) provided details on the success of the North East’s bid to Transport Scotland’s Bus Partnership Fund, including progress since the award was made; and (2) sought approval to appoint consultants to progress delivery of the Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) strand of work.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the success of the bid to the Bus Partnership Fund and award of £12,030,000 for the delivery of the measures outlined above;
- (b) note the progress to date in developing the project plan and establishing governance arrangements; and
- (c) agree the appointment of consultants to progress the ART options appraisal and business case development.

Kirsty Chalmers highlighted the key information from the report and indicating that a separate additional exempt report relating to the ART, had recently been circulated to members and would be considered at item 11 on the agenda (article 17 of this minute refers), therefore there was no requirement to consider recommendation (c) above until then.

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**  
15 September 2021

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) and (b) only; and
- (ii) to commend all those involved on the success of the Bus Partnership Fund bid.

**A944 ACTIVE TRAVEL STUDY**

9. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the completion of a commission of a study to develop options for an upgraded active route between Kingswells and Westhill.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the completion of the study and the options presented as its findings; and
- (b) note that these will form part of the commission for the A944/A9119 Multimodal Corridor Study - Completion of Detailed Appraisal and Preliminary Design of Options, which is now underway. This study area covers a wider area, predominantly the A944 and A9119 corridors between Westhill and Aberdeen City Centre.

The Director provided an overview of the report and responded to questions from members in relation to raised tables, public utilities and timelines.

During discussion, the following was acknowledged by all members:-

- that there was very little merit in progressing with the possibility of building an “iconic” bridge in Option 2 (Northern) and Option 3 (Southern), due to the high construction costs involved;
- that due to the requirement for constructing a crossing on the B9119 Tarland Road and the A944 via toucan crossings, members expressed caution with Option 3; and
- that Option 2 was considered to be very expensive.

**The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to approve the recommendations; and
- (ii) that the above points be communicated to the Consultants undertaking the A944/A9119 Multi-Modal Corridor Study.

**RAIL UPDATE**

10. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on a number of regional rail matters.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the progress on the Inch Accessibility Study and Executive Summary in Appendix 1;

## NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

15 September 2021

- (b) note the progress on the multi-modal study considering the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor including forthcoming community consultation;
- (c) direct officers to respond to the ScotRail timetable consultation based on the comments provided in this report;
- (d) note the update from LNER; and
- (e) note the update on the Aberdeen Railway Station Refurbishment.

Kelly Wiltshire highlighted the key information from the report and responded to questions from members on the monitoring of current passenger numbers and the timetabling concerns, and by way of an update, she advised:-

- that in relation to the multi-modal study considering the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor to a public consultation survey, which would include contacting elected representatives and community councils, the launch would commence on Monday (20 September 2021); and
- that in relation to the LNER Timetable Consultation, LNER had confirmed that the proposed May 2022 timetable would not go ahead in May 2022 but would now likely be December 2022.

Councillor Argyle made reference to the forthcoming first year anniversary of the opening of the hugely successful and popular new Kintore Railway Station (opened 15 October 2021).

### **The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

**11.** The Board had before it a report which provided details on specific progress on matters not otherwise covered on the Nestrans Board Agenda.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) note the format of the revised Progress Report presented in the Appendix; and
- (b) sought any amendment to this format, if necessary, for future Board meetings.

Paul Finch explained the change in the format to the progress report, which was a standing item on the agenda at each Board meeting.

In his report, Paul Finch made reference to the following:-

- Progression of Investment on Deeside Way and Formartine and Buchan Way: Successful completion of resurfacing and path improvement projects on Ellon Viaduct, and also in an around Milton of Crathes, building on previous improvement work;
- Community Sustainable Travel Grant: Grant scheme now up and running with first grant payment made to Strichen Community Park for Cycle Repair Station, and website redesign;

## NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

15 September 2021

- Core Paths Review in Aberdeen: Consultants Stantec successfully commissioned to undertake the review work, with initial surveys now being completed;
- Programme of multi-modal corridor studies: Considerable levels of activity considering problems, opportunities, option development, and stakeholder consultation, including A944/A9119 – Westhill to Aberdeen City Centre; A96 – Inverurie to Aberdeen; A90(N) – Ellon to Garthdee; A92 – Bridge of Don to Bridge of Dee; A947 – Dyce to Bucksburn; and A93 – Banchory to Aberdeen;
- Sustaining Choices, Peterhead: Nestrans have supported work in Peterhead, funded by Planning Aid Scotland, on a community led project to look at making walking, cycling and wheeling easier and safer. Draft Action Plan now finalised;
- Rail Decarbonisation: Series of meetings held with Network Rail and local roads authorities on prospective plans for the gauge clearance (adjustment of structures crossing the railway) that would be required to enable rail electrification to Aberdeen and Inverurie from the South;
- Aberdeen South Harbour – External Links: Updated business case approved by both City Region Deal Joint Committee, and Aberdeen City’s Strategic Growth and Resources committee. Now submitted to Scottish and UK Governments for approval to draw down funding for detailed design etc;
- Getabout, Tour of Britain – Getabout village: delivered to support Tour of Britain, 12 September 2021;
- Travel Planning support – Vaccination Centres: Support being provided to Health and Social Care Partnerships for the transition from TECA to the new Vaccination Centre located in the former John Lewis building;
- Health and Transport Action Plan – National Engagement: Successful engagement with Scottish Government, other RTPs. and Transport Scotland, on the experience with HTAP, and the agenda items that need to be progressed at a national level in this important area.

### **The Board resolved:-**

- (i) to approve recommendation (a);
- (ii) that future progress reports be restricted to those items which are new, updated or delayed significantly (reporting by exception); and
- (iii) that an acronym/glossary be provided with future progress reports.

## **PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS**

**12.** The Board had before it a report which provided details in relation to recent publications and consultation papers of interest, since the last meeting.

### **The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

- (a) notes the Publications and Consultations;
- (b) approve the submission of the Workplace Parking Licensing consultation response to Transport Scotland, provided in Appendix 2 (of the report);
- (c) note that if following partner discussions, a Nestrans response is deemed appropriate in response to the consultation on the Bus Provisions of the Transport

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**  
15 September 2021

(Scotland) Act 2019, that this will be approved in advance with the Chair and Vice Chairs.

The Director provided a summary of the report, making reference to the following documents:-

- Department for Transport: Decarbonising Transport;
- Aberdeen City Centre Low Emission Zone;
- Workplace Parking Licensing - Consultation on Regulations and Guidance;
- Implementing the Bus Provisions of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019;
- Tactran RTS Main Issues Report; and
- Aberdeenshire Road Safety Plan.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

**INFORMATION BULLETIN**

**13.** 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 Board heard from the Director, who made reference to (1) the success of the Tour of Britain cycle event and the Getabout Village, both held on 12 September 2021 at the Queens Links, Aberdeen Beach; (2) the Covid 19 Travel Behaviour and Attitude Surveys infographic illustration (appendix 2 of the report); and (3) the Grampian Cycle Partnership's Good Cycling Guide which was produced by cyclists for cyclists.

It was acknowledged that the Tour of Britain event was well received by the organisers, participants and the large numbers of spectators who gathered along the entire route. It was noted that the hugely successful event would be returning next year, starting in Aberdeen this time, and likely finishing in Stonehaven.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendation.

**CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS**

**14.** 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.

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**  
15 September 2021

**PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

15. 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 intimated that an invitation would be sent to be the Energy Savings Trust requesting that a representative provide a presentation on Electric Vehicles to a future meeting of the Board.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendation.

**DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS**

16. The Convener proposed that the Committee consider item 11 (Aberdeen Rapid Transit Options Appraisal and Business Case Tender Award) with the press and public excluded from the meeting.

**The Board resolved:-**

in terms of Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the above item so as to avoid disclosure of information of the classes described in paragraphs 6 and 10 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

**In accordance with the decision recorded under article 16 of this minute, the following item of business was considered with the press and public excluded.**

**ABERDEEN RAPID TRANSIT OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS CASE TENDER AWARD**

17. The Board had before it a report which sought permission to award the contract for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) Options Appraisal tender, following a competitive tendering exercise.

**The report recommended:-**

that the Board –

**NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**

15 September 2021

- (a) authorise the Director to award the ART Options Appraisal and Business Case Tender to the preferred supplier outlined within the report; and
- (b) report back to the Board on the final agreed tender price.

**The Board resolved:-**

to approve the recommendations.

- **COUNCILLOR PETER ARGYLE, Vice Chairperson**