Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 7 September 2022

Present: Councillor John Crawley (Chairperson); Councillor Michael Hutchison and Dr Margaret Bochel (Vice Chairs); Councillor John Cox, Councillor Isobel Davidson, Councillor Glen Reid, Councillor Sandra Macdonald, Councillor Miranda Radley and Councillor Ian Yuill; and Colin Allanach and Ian Ross.

In Attendance: Rab Dickson, Paul Finch, Kirsty Chalmers, Jenny Anderson, Kelly Wiltshire, Jon Barron and Lucy Johnston (Nestrans); Alan Wood, Ewan Wallace and Kenny Oxton (Aberdeenshire Council); David Dunne, Elena Plews, Karen Allan and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council); Anne MacDonald (Audit Scotland); and Chris Clark (Transport Scotland)

Apologies: Gerry Donald and Moira Beverley.

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 AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements intimated.

MINUTE OF BOARD MEETING, 22 JUNE 2022

2. The Board heard from Councillor Reid who sought an update on a request he made at the last meeting, that a report be submitted which would provide details of overarching Strategic Cycle Routes covering Aberdeen City to Aberdeenshire, to include information on what had been completed and what was being progressed. In response, the Director indicated that he would endeavour to bring a report back to a future meeting of the Board in this regard.

The Board resolved:-

(i) to note that the Director would arrange to submit a report on Strategic Cycle Routes, as detailed above, to a future meeting of the Board; and

(ii) to otherwise approve the minute.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND: NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON RAIL

3. The Committee were advised that Mr Chris Clark, Rail Policy Team Leader, Transport Scotland would be providing the presentation today on behalf of Mr Chris Towers.

The Committee received a presentation from Mr Clark on Transport Scotland's plans for a National Conversation on Rail with the aim being to get the views of the public on what the future of ScotRail should look like.

Mr Clark provided information on the following topics:-

- Push and pull factors;
- Serving the needs of businesses;
- Passenger and staff safety;
- Passenger journey;
- Disruption management; and
- ScotRail staff views.

He indicated that Transport Scotland would be seeking help from Nestrans on facilitating engagement and the promotion of the National Rail Conversation (NRC) with appropriate local stakeholders, for the submission of suggestions by early 2023 and a report detailing what the people of Scotland want from ScotRail going forward, being submitted to the Transport Minister in Spring 2023. He concluded by advising that an announcement on the details of the NRC, including how to get involved would be issued in due course.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to thank Mr Chris Clark for his presentation; and
(ii) to note that the powerpoint presentation would be circulated to members.

2022/23 BUDGET MATTERS

4. The Board had before it a report which provided information on the Partnership's 2022/23 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) note the updates on projects for which Nestrans receives external grant funding;
(d) note the update on the Pensions Discretions Policy; and
(e) note the Strategic Transport Fund position.

Kenny Oxton provided an overview of the report.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2021/22 AND THE REPORT ON THE 2021/22 AUDIT BY THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

5. The Board had before it the audited Annual Accounts for 2021/22 to be approved by the Partnership Board for signature and for the information of the Board, the external auditor's report on the audit.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) approve for signature the audited Annual Accounts for 2021/22;
(b) consider the External Auditor's Report;
(c) note that the Accounts can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from the Nestrans website.

The Board heard from Kenny Oxton and Anne Macdonald on the key information from the report, making particular reference to the change in the accounts relating to Kintore Station and pension liability estimates.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

6. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on liaison with other Regional Transport Partnerships, with 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.

The Director made reference to the following meetings held recently:-

- Introduction to Nestrans event held in Aberdeen Art Gallery on 18 August 2022; and
- RTP Chairs meeting held in person in Dundee on 31 August 2022, attended by the Director and the Chair.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

ABERDEEN RAPID TRANSIT UPDATE

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) project and associated marketing and communications workstream, and in particular information on the public and stakeholder engagement tasks being planned for the next few months.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the progress on the ART options appraisal; and
(b) note the progress being made on the engagement, marketing and communications workstream and the activities planned between now and November 2022.

Kirsty Chalmers highlighted the key information from the report and responded to questions from members, specifically in relation to the Strapline; the engagement and timeline for the consultation; and details relating to the wider work of the Bus Alliance including the multi modal corridor studies as well as the one funded by Nestrans which was still ongoing between Banchory and Aberdeen, and which would be reported to the Board in due course.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that the Director would liaise with colleagues at Transport Scotland to determine when a report on the data and analysis including any benefits following the opening of the AWPR would likely be produced;
(ii) to note that the Director would submit an update report on the progress of the A93 Corridor to a future meeting; and
(iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

BPF GOVERNANCE

8. The Committee had before it a report which presented considerations for the future development of Governance arrangements for the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). Following Nestrans' Board consideration, it would be anticipated that these proposals would be further considered and developed with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, and the North East Bus Alliance (including bus operators).

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the current Governance arrangements for the Bus Partnership Fund, and future requirements for political decision making related to bus operational issues on a regional basis;
(b) note emerging proposals for the appointment of a Bus Partnership Fund manager, and establishment of a Programme Board; and
(c) provide comments on potential options for future political decision making related to strategic bus operational issues.

Kirsty Chalmers provided an overview of the report, making reference to existing governance arrangements, proposals for a Bus Partnership Manager, proposals for a Programme Board and the options for political decision making.

In terms of the options for future political decision making, it was suggested that a SWOT analysis be undertaken.

The Board resolved:-
to approve recommendations (a) and (b).

INVERURIE PILOT DIGITAL DRT STUDY EVALUATION

9. The Board had before it a report which provided details and key findings from the evaluation of the initial operation of the Ready2Go Around Inverurie Digital Demand Responsive Transport pilot project, and highlighted the next steps being taken by Aberdeenshire Council.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the outcomes of the initial evaluation of the Ready2Go Around Inverurie Digital Demand Responsive Transport Pilot project;
(b) note Aberdeenshire Council's intention to continue the operation of the pilot project for a further 12 months; and
(c) support Officers' attempts to attract additional funding streams for such innovative and beneficial pilot projects.

Paul Finch provided a summary of the report responding to questions from members in relation to additional funding schemes to maintain the project and whether there would be scope for expansion into other rural or urban areas including outlining the legislative constraints in this regard.

The Director highlighted to the Board that this initiative was an Aberdeenshire Council scheme, with Nestrans having only a supportive and facilitating role, particularly through liaison with Council colleagues but also Transport Scotland colleagues in terms of funding requirements.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that officers would liaise with colleagues from Aberdeenshire Council in relation to the possibility of producing a social media marketing/PR video on usage of the project;
(ii) to note that officers would liaise with colleagues from Aberdeenshire Council in relation to budget costs, benefits and legislative constraints in terms of the possible extension of the initiative into other rural community areas;
(iii) to note that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting once further information was obtained; and
(iv) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

LIVE LABS

10. The Board had before it a report which provided information on the final outcomes of Live Labs scoping work, which was commissioned as an element of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal. The aim of this work was to identify beneficial and deliverable small-scale demonstration projects for short term implementation within the remaining timescale and budget allocations of this element of the City Region Deal.

The report recommended:-
that the Board note the outcomes of the study on the Scoping of Potential Live Lab interventions.

Paul Finch highlighted the key information from the report, indicating that the following two streams of work would be continued to be developed:-

- Hydrogen re-fuelling facilities in a regional centre, such as Peterhead. The proposal rests well with options being considered as part of the North East Green Freeport Bid, and the regional development of hydrogen fuelled freight opportunities in both public and private sectors; and
- Mobility Hubs – Options for development in Aberdeenshire of a range of different hubs, and development work in Aberdeen City around existing transport hubs, but also the concept of a virtual "mobility hub" using the GoABZ application.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

PROGRESS REPORT

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

During the discussion, the following was raised:-

- Page 130, relating to A947 – narrative should be amended to take into account that there were two separate bids/projects;
- General status of arrows in the tables should be reviewed, particularly where there had been no progress (e.g. page 135, RS3);
- There had been no response received from Transport Scotland in relation to the A96 public consultation; and
- That officers were seeking assurances from Transport Scotland that continuing progress in relation to the production of the outline business case for the Central Belt to Aberdeen Rail option was still being maintained.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that the Director would progress the actions raised above; and
(ii) to otherwise note the content of the progress report.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

12. The Board had before it a report which outlined details of recent publications and consultation responses.

The report made reference to the following:-

- Transport Scotland Zero Emission Energy for Transport Forecasts; and
- Energy Savings Trust Survey.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the publication of Zero Emission Energy for Transport Forecasts; and
(b) instruct officers to complete the Energy Savings Trust Survey on mobility hubs on behalf of Nestrans.

Kelly Wiltshire provided an overview of the report.

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 Paul Finch provide a summary of the following items within the report:-

- North East Scotland Green Freeport Bid;
- Getabout Update; and
- Campaign for North East Rail – the group had presented proposals to a public meeting in Ellon.

In response to a question from Councillor Reid regarding evaluation of the Getabout Campaign, Kelly Wiltshire advised that anecdotal feedback/views were obtained from partners, namely Police Scotland and City Wardens, officers had also attended meetings of the Community Council and in terms of the Deeside Way, cycle/pedestrian counters had been installed to provide details of usage.

The Board resolved:-
(i) that an update report on the continued work around the Getabout Campaign, providing information on usage, awareness/PR for younger people and what more could be done, including the possible use of QR codes for evaluation be submitted to a future meeting; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
7 September 2022

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

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

The report recommended:-
that the Board note the contents of Appendix 1.

Councillor Macdonald made reference to a Bus Summit being held in Glasgow on 13 September 2022, which she thought may be of interest to the Director to consider whether it would be worth attending. She indicated that she would forward details of the summit to the Director.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

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.

The Director suggested that a future presentation be held on 'Bus Matters'.

In response to a question from Councillor Cox relating to a future report on Freight Transport, the Director suggested that if agreeable, Nestrans could facilitate a meeting of the Freight Forum, involving partners, namely Chamber of Commerce, Freight Hauliers and colleagues from Transport Scotland, following which a report would be submitted on the outcomes.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to agree that a presentation be held on Bus Matters;
(ii) to agree that the Director make arrangements to facilitate a meeting of the Freight Forum and that a report be submitted to the Board on the outcomes of the meeting thereafter; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

- COUNCILLOR JOHN CRAWLEY, Chairperson.