NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 26 October 2022

Present: Councillor John Crawley (Chairperson); Councillor Michael Hutchison (Vice Chair); Councillor Isobel Davidson, Councillor Glen Reid, Councillor Sandra Macdonald, Councillor Miranda Radley, Councillor Ian Yuill and Councillor Doreen Mair (as substitute for Councillor John Cox); and Colin Allanach and Gerry Donald.

In Attendance: Rab Dickson, Paul Finch, Kirsty Chalmers, Jenny Anderson, Kelly Wiltshire, Jon Barron and Adam Kench (Nestrans); Alan Wood, Ella Stott and Councillor Trevor Mason (Aberdeenshire Council); and David Dunne, Joanna Murray, Claire McArthur, Fiona Closs, Karen Allan and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council).

Apologies: Dr Maggie Bochel (Vice Chair), Councillor Cox, Ian Ross and Ewan Wallace.

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, 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 7 September 2022 for approval.

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

BOARD MEETING DATES – 2022 AND 2023

3. The Board had before it a report which alerted members to a change to the timing of the December meeting and sought approval of the new dates for the Board meetings in 2023.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) consider and agree the proposed dates outlined within the report; and

(b) request that appointments be sent out to members following the meeting.

The Board resolved:-
(i) that the next meeting be held in the City Council Chamber on 8 December 2022 at 2pm; and
(ii) to agree that the meetings in 2023 be held at 2pm, as follows:-
- Thursday, 16 February;
- Wednesday, 12 April;
- Wednesday, 21 June;
- Wednesday, 20 September;
- Wednesday, 1 November; and
- Wednesday, 6 December.

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 update 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.

The Board heard Ella Stott provide an overview of 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 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 meeting of the Aberdeen to Central Belt Rail Stakeholder Group held on 25 October 2002, noting that it was the first time that the Boards of both Nestrans and Tactran had attended a joint meeting together.

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The Board resolved:-
(i) to request that David Dunne circulate to members, the email that had been previously sent to Aberdeen City Councillors providing details in relation to the ACC/Big Issue Sharebike scheme; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

6. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the responsibilities being placed on Nestrans as a public body in respect of their duties in relation to the Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009 and Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and outlined details in relation to annual emissions.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the report and the requirement for Nestrans to report on its activities and policies in respect of Climate Change Duties; and
(b) approve the proposed targets for Nestrans to reduce its emissions and work towards Net Zero emissions.

The Board heard Kelly Wiltshire provide a summary of the report, noting that this was the eighth year that Nestrans had reported on its emissions under Climate Change duties and the deadline for reporting to the Scottish Government on emissions for the financial year to end March 2022 was 30 November 2022.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

FREIGHT ISSUES UPDATE

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on a variety of current issues relating to the movement of freight and recommended holding an in-person regional freight forum meeting as a means to re-engage with regional stakeholders on this important topic.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the updates to freight policy, rail freight, low carbon road logistics and cargo bikes presented in the report;
(b) note the submission in response to Department for Transport's call for evidence on rail freight growth targets presented in Appendix A; and
(c) approve proposals for the hosting of a freight forum event for regional stakeholders.

The Board heard from Paul Finch who provided an overview of the report, making reference to:-

- the Regional Transport Strategy, Nestrans2040, which included the actions for freight;
- the Department for Transport's published white paper "Future of Freight: a long-term plan", billed as the first ever cross-modal and cross-government plan for the UK Freight Sector;
- Nestrans officers recently contributing to the Department for Transport's call for evidence on future Rail Freight Growth Targets and related issues;
- Low Carbon Road Freight Vehicles and the significant interest at a UK, Scottish and regional level on accelerating the decarbonisation of road freight;
- Nestrans currently managing a small fleet of six e-cargo bikes, facilitated by a grant award linked to City Centre air quality; and
- Nestrans having previously hosted "Freight Forum" events (typically on an annual basis), providing an opportunity to engage with regional and national economic, freight and logistics interests.

Mr Finch responded to questions from members regarding Action FR 3 - Freight opportunities and facilities to enable a mode shift from road-based freight to sea or rail, acknowledging that there was a requirement to improve access and the road system; and the importance of keeping in touch with Peterhead and Fraserburgh ports.

It was suggested that a plan/map be provided to better understand at strategic level, the constraints around the existing rail freight terminals including land use allocations and track layouts.

The Board resolved:-
(i) that a plan/map be provided to better understand at strategic level, the constraints around the rail freight terminals including land use allocations and track layouts where possible; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

STRATEGIC ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES

8. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the previous meeting of 7 September 2022, the Board had before it a report which provided an update on progress in the development and implementation of strategic cycle/active travel routes linking Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the current policy, and delivery responsibilities for strategic cycle routes in the Nestrans area;
(b) note the current status, progress, next steps and timelines for the five identified strategic routes, and future development proposals for the Formartine and Buchan Way and Deeside Line;

(c) note future opportunities arising for the delivery of the strategic routes with increased funding, a national review of delivery mechanisms, and regional work on action travel planning;
(d) approve the implementation of improved regional governance arrangements for the Active Travel Action Plan, with the Director reporting back on firm proposals following consultation with partner Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.

Paul Finch highlighted the key information from the report, making reference to policy and delivery responsibilities, future development opportunities and progress on the following five identified strategic routes:-
(1) Westhill to Aberdeen City Centre;
(2) Inverurie to Aberdeen City Centre;
(3) Stonehaven to Aberdeen City Centre via Chapelton, Portlethen, Cove, Altens, Torry and the South Harbour;
(4) Ellon to Aberdeen City Centre; and
(5) Banchory to Aberdeen City Centre.

David Dunne, Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, Aberdeen City Council responded to questions from members in relation to progress with a number of active travel route projects associated with the Bus Partnership Fund, noting that shared use paths had fallen out of favour, therefore there was a requirement to revisit the plans of some routes which may include the widening of paths and the possibility of purchasing land.

Jon Barron responded to questions from members in relation to resurfacing work on the Formartine and Buchan Way path and the Scottish Government's investment in the North East for active travel.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that a future report providing an update on the timeline and design options, particularly relating to the Stonehaven to Aberdeen City Centre and Ellon to Aberdeen routes would be submitted to the Board early next year; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained within the report.

BUS ACTION PLAN UPDATE

9. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), the development of the Bus Action Plan and a proposal for a financial contribution to a new Rural Transport Officer post within Aberdeenshire Council.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the intention to bring a report on the Bus Action Plan to the December meeting in support of a presentation by Robert Andrew, Chair of the North East Bus Alliance;
(b) note the progress on Aberdeen Rapid Transit; and
(c) agree to commit funding from future revenue budgets to contribute to a two-year Rural Transport Officer post.

Kirsty Chalmers provided an overview of the report making reference to:-

- the first Bus Action Plan under the North East Bus Alliance which was published in April 2020 and drew on the findings of the state of the Network Report;
- a virtual briefing session for all Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councillors relating to the ART, which will now be held on Monday, 31 October 2022, which would be followed by further engagement activities;
- a visit of a delegation of Board members to Belfast to learn more about the Glider Bus Rapid Transit system on 21/22 November 2022; and
- the proposal by Aberdeenshire Council to recruit a Rural Transport Officer.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

HEALTH & TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN: UPDATE AND ANNUAL REPORT

10. The Board had before it a report which outlined proposals for a review of the current Grampian-wide Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) and provided a wider update on progress.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –

(a) approve the proposals set out in the report for the review and update of the Grampian-wide Health and Transport Action Plan; and
(b) note the progression of the preparation of the 2021-22 Annual Report, and Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards.

Paul Finch highlighted the key issues from the report and responded to questions from members in relation to rural bus service pressures and concerns following cuts to services and particularly, those experienced by elderly people visiting GP's and other healthcare facilities.

Gerry Donald, Nestrans' representative on the HTAP Steering Group advised that there were current challenges facing commercial bus operators and the Group was working very closely with voluntary organisations, including the preparation of a volunteer drivers award to attract more people to support local communities that currently don't have bus services.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

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.

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During the discussion, David Dunne provided an update on the relationship and progress of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO2) consultation in the City Centre and the Union Street urban improvements.

Colin Allanach advised that the Getabout Festival held in the City Centre the day before the Tour of Britain event had been nominated for the Scottish Cycling's event of the year award.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note the information provided;
(ii) that in terms of the action relating to the Ellon to Aberdeen City Centre: A90 (Ellon/Foveran/Newburgh), to note that the Director would seek to determine whether the meetings with landowners scheduled for w/c 17 October 2022, had taken place and would advise the Chair accordingly; and
(ii) to otherwise note the content of the progress report.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

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

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the publication of the draft Cycling Framework and Delivery Plan for Active Travel in Scotland 2022-2030;
(b) note the publication of the Spaces for People Programme Evaluation, Lessons Learned and Equalities reports;
(c) note the publication of Tactran draft Regional Transport Strategy and approve the draft response contained as Appendix A to this report;
(d) note the publication of Swestrans draft Regional Transport Strategy and approve the draft response contained as Appendix B to this report; and
(e) note the publication of Community Transport Association's Scotland Mapping Project, and More than a Mini-Bus Report.

Jon Barron and Paul Finch 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 Kelly Wiltshire and Jon Barron provide a summary of the following items within the report:-

- Getabout Overview, including Modal Shift, Air Quality, and Carbon Reduction and Zero Fatalities on the Road Network;
- Community Sustainable Travel Grant;
- Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections; and
- A947 Multi-Modal Transport Corridor Study – (Bucksburn – Dyce).

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

The Director advised that Nestrans would be represented at this year's Scottish Transport Research (STAR) conference on 2 November 2022 in Glasgow, and that Kirsty Chalmers would be presenting.

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 (1) advised that there would be a presentation by Robert Andrew, Chair of North East Bus Alliance at the next meeting in December; and (2) in response to a question from Councillor Davidson, the Director provided an update in relation to the Campaign for North East Rail (CNER) project.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that an update report in relation CNER would be submitted to a future meeting of the Board in due course; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendation.

- COUNCILLOR JOHN CRAWLEY, Chairperson.