



Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Present: Councillor Alan Turner (Chairperson); Councillor Michael Hutchison and Dr Margaret Bochel (Vice Chairs); Councillor John Cox, Councillor Isobel Davidson, Councillor Glen Reid, Councillor Sandra Macdonald (from article 9), Councillor Miranda Radley and Councillor Ian Yuill; and Colin Allanach, Gerry Donald and Ian Ross.

In Attendance: Rab Dickson, Paul Finch, Kirsty Chalmers, Jon Barron and Adam Kench (Nestrans); Ewan Wallace, Martin Hall, Ella Stott and Tina Wight (Aberdeenshire Council); David Dunne, Will Hekelaar, Lisa Christie and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council) and Agela Pieri (Grant Thornton UK).

Apologies: None.

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. Members were requested to intimate any declarations of interest or transparency statements in respect of the items on today's agenda, thereafter the following were intimated:-
 - (1) Colin Allanach declared an interest in item 4.3 (Active Travel Delivery) by virtue of him being a Board Member of Scottish Cycling. He considered that the nature of his interest would require him to leave the meeting prior to consideration of the item; and
 - (2) Councillor Yuill advised that he had a connection in relation to item 4.3 (Active Travel Delivery) by virtue of him being a member of Cycling UK. He considered that the nature of his interest would not require him to leave the meeting prior to consideration of the items.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING OF 6 DECEMBER 2023

2. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 6 December 2023 for approval.

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

2023/24 BUDGET MATTERS

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

3. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Partnership's 2023/24 budget 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; and
- (d) note the Strategic Transport Fund position.

The Board heard from Jenny Anderson who highlighted the key information from the report.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

2024/25 BUDGET PROPOSALS

4. The Board had before it a report which sought approval of the Nestrans budget proposals for 2024/25, subject to funding being confirmed.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) approve the 2024/25 Budgets of £1,094,446 and £3,685,080 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 active travel behaviour change to be awarded to Nestrans in association with changes as a result of the Scottish Government's Active Travel Transformation programme; and
- (c) instruct that a longer-term general 5-year programme of works be developed and reported to a future Board as a medium-term financial strategy and basis for future year annual budgets.

The Board heard from Jenny Anderson who highlighted the key information from the report.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

5. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on liaison with other Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs), 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:-

- (1) Presentation he undertook at the Aberdeenshire Full Council meeting on 18 January 2024, at which he explained the role of Nestrans, summarised the Regional Transport Strategy and provided an overview of the work of the Partnership, before taking a Question and Answer session of nearly an hour, with good engagement from the Councillors covering over a dozen topics; and
- (2) Bus Alliance Board Meeting on 14 December 2023, the minute of which was appended to the report.

The Chair wished to thank the Director for his presentation at Woodhill House, noting that it was well received by all the members in attendance.

The Director responded to questions relating to:-

- the frequency of bus timetable changes - advising that there was an agreement in place with bus operators that timetable changes would occur a maximum of twice per year; and
- travel issues experienced by young people who may wish to take the bus to City colleges but were taking the train instead, particularly those living along the Inverurie corridor - explaining that operators were keen to discuss opportunities with colleges for improving services and access for young people, noting that bus operators were being reimbursed for those travelling free in this regard.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendation; and
- (ii) to note that the Director would be willing to undertake a similar presentation for Aberdeen City Council to that outlined at (1) above.

DEVELOP TO DELIVER

6. The Board had before it a report which provided details of a policy document prepared by Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) on the opportunities to maximise the role of the partnerships in delivering strategic transport improvements and working with others.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

- (a) note the “Develop to Deliver – 2023 Refresh” document; and
- (b) endorse the principles of collaboration, opportunities for regional coordination and role of Regional Transport Partnerships in enabling liaison between national and local authorities.

The Director highlighted the key points from the report making reference to the RTPs’ aspirations including a series of recommendations and actions, focussed on the following ten priorities:-

- (1) co-ordinating action on reducing emissions;
- (2) delivering more effective and transparent, delivery-focused governance and roles and responsibilities;
- (3) transforming active travel;
- (4) helping make public transport more affordable;
- (5) seizing the opportunity to ensure the true alignment of strategic transport and landuse planning;
- (6) working in partnership to improve transport access to health and social care;
- (7) ensuring our islands are better connected;
- (8) delivering for the freight sector;
- (9) promoting and delivering Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service; and
- (10) sustaining air services.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

At this juncture, in accordance with Article 1 of this minute, Colin Allanach left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on a number of matters regarding the delivery of Active Travel.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the proposal to directly fund Regional Transport Partnerships to deliver Active Travel Behaviour Change within their areas;
- (b) homologate the appointment of Aecom consultants to provide short-term support to Nestrans, in the preparation of a bid for ATBC funding and developing a new Active Travel Action Plan for the region;
- (c) instruct officers to submit an application for the reimbursement of costs associated with the above;
- (d) agree the principles of the submission to Transport Scotland, discussed at a workshop for Board members earlier; and

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

- (e) seek a further report back to a future Board meeting once the funding is confirmed by Transport Scotland.

Paul Finch provided a summary of the key aspects within the report, he also advised that with support from Aecom, a comprehensive submission had been submitted to Transport Scotland and a response is awaited.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations, with the exception of (c), noting that due to time constraints, officers had already submitted an application for reimbursement of the costs associated with (b) above.

ABERDEEN - LAURENCEKIRK MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR UPDATE

8. With reference to article 10 of the minute of the meeting of the Board of 12 April 2023, the Board had before it a report which provided an update on the progress of work on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-Modal Corridor Study, and presented for approval the Preliminary Options Appraisal report.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the recent progress on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study including the publication of the Case for Change (appended to the report);
- (b) approve the key outcomes of the Preliminary Options Appraisal report, including the progression of the following packages to Detailed Options Appraisal Stage (as set out in table 3 of the appendix)
 - (1) Strategic Active Travel Network Package;
 - (2) Mobility Hub Package;
 - (3) Bus Priority Package;
 - (4) New Railway Station in Newtonhill Package; and
 - (5) New Railway Station in Cove Package;
- (c) approve the publication of the Preliminary Options Appraisal Report and Appendices on the Nestrans website.

The Board heard from Paul Finch who outlined the key information from the report.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL - STRATEGIC TRANSPORT APPRAISAL UPDATE

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

9. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the transport elements of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, focussing on the Strategic Transport Appraisal programme.

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the progress being made on the Transport elements of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal.

Paul Finch provided a summary of the report making reference to the progression of the following works:-

- Completion of ASAM19 Model;
- A90(N)/A952 Corridor;
- A956 Wellington Road;
- Rail Freight Demand and Options Study (South Aberdeen);
- Transport Mobility Hubs; and
- Regional Hydrogen Refueller Facility.

In addition, he provided an update on the report which was considered by the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee on 9 February 2024, including future funding options for the remaining three years of the Strategic Transport Appraisal Deal.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

BUS PASSENGER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2023

10. The Board had before it a report which provided an update regarding the recently completed Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey 2023.

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the results of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey 2023.

The Board heard from Kirsty Chalmers on the key information from the report and survey, as follows:-

- that AECOM collected responses from bus passengers from across the region between 30 October 2023 and the 4 December 2023;
- that in total 1,079 responses were received from bus users across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire
- 81% were satisfied with the overall bus service;
- that of those who bought a ticket, 50% were satisfied with the value for money of the bus fare;
- 65% were satisfied with the arrival time of the bus; and
- 86% were satisfied with the speed of their journey.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

During discussion, the following points were raised and noted:-

- that in terms of punctuality, 65% was relatively low compared to other regions; and
- that there were accuracy concerns in relation to real-time information being displayed on the bus stop boards.

Martin Hall provided information on the complexities of the real-time data which was displayed on the boards, explaining that it relied on data functioning and software factors.

The Board resolved:-

- (i) to note that Martin Hall would liaise with colleagues in Aberdeenshire Council's Public Transport Team regarding the concerns raised above; and
- (ii) to otherwise 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.

The Board resolved:-

to note the content of the progress report.

PUBLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS

12. The Board had before it a report which provided information on recent publications and consultation responses.

The report recommended:-

that the Board –

- (a) note the publication of the documents outlined in the report; and
- (b) approve the submission of the draft response to Aberdeen City Council's Local Transport Strategy Consultation, contained in Appendix 1.

The report made reference to the following:-

- Aberdeen City Council – Local Transport Strategy;
- National Transport Strategy (NTS): Third Annual Delivery Plan (2023-24);
- Fossil-Free Future: Accelerating Scotland to Zero-Carbon Public Transport;
- New Research: Would European-style zebra crossings work in Scotland?;
- South College Street Junction Improvements (Phase 1) Feedback;
- Disability Equality Scotland: Accessible Travel Framework: Evaluation Research Project Report;
- "Transport Poverty – a public health issue", Public Health Scotland;
- Addressing Child poverty through parental employment - report published; and
- Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme – Year 1 Evaluation.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
14 February 2024

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 the report.

The Director made reference to the following:-

- Getabout;
- Nestrans Annual Report 2022-23 and Business Plan 2023-24;
- South College Street Phase 2 Option Appraisal Consultation;
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit Update;
- Aberdeenshire Council Update; and
- AWPR Non-Motorised User Funding Allocations.

In addition, the Director reminded members of the forthcoming workshop covering Active Travel and Aberdeen Rapid Transport routing and options to be held in Woodhill House on 8 March 2024.

In response to a question, the Director advised that (1) he was unaware of any cycling data being obtained at present around the use of the cycling infrastructure of phase 1 at South College Street; and (2) funding options around phase 2 were being investigated by Aberdeen City Council and Nestrans.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

14. The Board had before it a report which provided information on conferences, training and presentations which may be of interest to Board members or for members to seek feedback on events which had been held.

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the contents of Appendix 1.

The Director highlighted the following three presentations undertaken by Nestrans:-

- Strategic Overview for Aberdeen Inspired held on 11 January 2024 presented by Rab Dickson;

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

14 February 2024

- The Work of Nestrans for Aberdeenshire Council held on 18 January 2024, presented by Rab Dickson; and
- Regional Transport Strategy and Active Travel Action Plan for the Cycling Delivery Forum held on 1 February 2024, presented by Jon Barron.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

15. The Board had before it a report which provided a progress update on pending business requested by the Board and major reports scheduled for forthcoming Board meetings and provided the opportunity for members to add to or amend the scheduling.

The report recommended:-

that the Board note the report on pending business.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

VALEDICTORY

16. The Chairperson on behalf of the Board wished to thank Kirsty Chalmers for the excellent work she has undertaken for Nestrans and wished her success in her future employment with Aberdeen City Council.

The Board resolved:-

to concur with the Chairperson.

- **COUNCILLOR ALAN TURNER, Chairperson.**