nestrans

Minute of Meeting of the North East Scotland Transport Partnership Board

Aberdeen, Wednesday, 27 November 2024

Present: Councillor Alan Turner (Chairperson); Councillor Michael Hutchison (Vice Chair); Councillor Dawn Black, Councillor John Cox, Councillor Isobel Davidson, Councillor Sandra Macdonald, Councillor Miranda Radley and Councillor Ian Yuill; and Colin Allanach, Gerry Donald and Ian Ross.

In Attendance: Rab Dickson, Paul Finch, Jon Barron, Jenny Anderson, Adam Kench, Lucy Johnston, Caroline Hood and Claudia Stuerck (Nestrans); Martin Hall and Tina Wight (Aberdeenshire Council); Kirsty Chalmers, Lisa Christie and Mark Masson (Aberdeen City Council).

Apologies: Maggie Bochel, Alan Wood, Ewan Wallace, David Dunne and Angela Pieri.

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) Councillor Radley advised that she had a connection in relation to item 4.1 (Director's Report) by virtue of her being a Council appointed Chair of the Aberdeen Net Zero and Adaptation Board. She considered that the nature of her interest would not require her to leave the meeting prior to consideration of the items; and

(2) Councillor Yuill advised that he had a connection in relation to item 4.1 (Director's Report), item 4.4 (Draft Annual Report 2023/24), item 5.1 (Active Travel Update – People & Place Programme), item 7 (Progress Report) and item 8 (Information Bulletin) by virtue of him being a Council appointed member of the NHS Grampian Board. He considered that the nature of his interest would not require him to leave the meeting prior to consideration of these items.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

2. The Board had before it for consideration, the following matters relating to Board Membership:-

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
27 November 2024

(A) Non Councillor Members

The Board had before them a report which provided an update regarding the reappointment of Non-Councillor Members.

The report recommended:-
That the Board note the re-appointment of its Non-Councillor Board Members for a period of up to five years.

(B) Change of Membership – Aberdeenshire Council

The Chair advised that Councillor Dawn Black had replaced Councillor Glen Reid as an Aberdeenshire Council member on the Board.

On behalf of the members, the Chair wished to thank Councillor Reid for his contribution as a Board Member and to welcome Councillor Black to her first meeting.

(C) Appointment of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The Chair advised that there was a mutual agreement in place between the two local authorities in terms of the position of Chair and Vice Chair for the Nestrans Board. He explained that both these positions would normally rotate at the mid-point between local government elections, however following recent discussions relating to availability and continuity, in this instance, the changes would come into effect from 1 January 2025.

The Clerk then sought nominations for the position of Chair and Vice Chair.

Councillor Hutchison was nominated as Chair by Councillor Turner, which was seconded by Councillor Radley.

Councillor Turner was nominated as Vice Chair by Councillor Hutchison, which was seconded by Councillor Davidson.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note the re-appointment of the four Non Councillor Board Members for a period of up to five years (until November 2029), namely Margaret Bochel, Gerry Donald, Ian Ross and Colin Allanach;
(ii) to concur with the Chairperson in relation to Councillor Reid; and
(iii) to agree that from 1 January 2025, Councillor Hutchison would be Chair and Councillor Turner would be Vice Chair of Nestrans Board.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
27 November 2024

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2024

3. The Board had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 25 September 2024, for approval, which was circulated under separate notice.

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

BOARD MEETING DATES 2025

4. The Board had before it a report which provided dates for Nestrans Board meetings in 2025.

The meetings were proposed to be held in the Council Chamber, Town House, on the following dates at 2pm:-

- Wednesday, 19 February 2025;
- Wednesday, 23 April 2025;
- Wednesday, 25 June 2025;
- Wednesday, 17 September 2025; and
- Wednesday, 12 November 2025

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) consider the above and agrees the proposed dates; and
(b) request that appointments be issued to members following this meeting.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

2024/25 BUDGET MATTERS

5. The Board had before it a report which provided an update on the Partnership's 2024/25 budget monitoring and forecast outturn position and which 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) note the monitoring position and forecast for the People & Place projects presented in Appendix 2;
(c) approve the virement of STF monies set out in Appendix 3; and
(d) approve the virements set out in Appendix 4.

The Board heard from Jenny Anderson who provided an overview of the report.

The Board resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained within the report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

6. 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:-

- Health & Transport Action Plan Steering Group held on 25 September 2024; and
- North East Bus Alliance Board held on 26 September 2024.

During discussion, the Director (a) provided an overview of the work and membership of the Road Safety North East Scotland Group and advised that its next meeting would be held on 13 February 2025; (b) provided details on the meeting of the RTP Lead Officers Group held on 6 November 2024, specifically relating to carbon reduction pertaining to Freight and Just Transition matters; and (c) advised that efforts would continue to be made to encourage Transport Scotland officials to attend future meetings of the Board.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

NESTRANS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24

7. The Board had before it a report which provided an understanding of Nestrans travel during the previous financial year, including information on a number of key indicators which had been reported annually and used to inform Nestrans return as part of its Climate Change Reporting Duties.

The report recommended:-
that the Board notes the contents of the report.

The Director provided a summary of the report, highlighting in particular Nestrans' Staff Travel to Work (number of trips and distance) and Business Travel (number of trips by mode) during 2023/24.

The Board resolved:-
(i) that the Director make arrangements to include details of Board members travelling to meetings during 2025 in a future report; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
27 November 2024

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORTING

8. The Board had before it a report which informed members about the responsibilities being placed on Nestrans as a public body in respect of their duties in relation to the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015, as amended by the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020, which took effect for all reporting periods commencing on or after 1st April 2021.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the contents of the report; and
(b) instruct officers to send the report to the Sustainable Scotland Network by 30 November 2024, to meet Nestrans' statutory duty.

The Board heard from Caroline Hood, who highlighted the key information from the report advising that this was the tenth year that Nestrans had reported on their emissions under Climate Change duties.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

9. The Board had before it a report which sought consideration of the draft Nestrans Annual Report for 2023/24 and Business Plan for 2024/25.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) consider the attached draft 2023/24 Annual Report and Business Plan 2024/25;
(b) approve publication of this report on the Nestrans website once the design has been completed; and
(c) instruct a link to the published report to be sent to Scottish Ministers and the Chief Executives at Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council.

Jenny Anderson provided an overview of the report.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations, subject to amending the draft Annual Report and Business Plan on pages 105 and 106 to read 'Liberal Democrats'.

ACTIVE TRAVEL UPDATE - PEOPLE & PLACE PROGRAMME

10. The Board had before it a report which presented the up-to-date position on the People and Place Programme.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
27 November 2024

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the ongoing work that has taken place, and is still ongoing, around building the People and Place Programme 2024-25;
(b) note the progress made in the Q2 Report;
(c) approve the allocation of funds to Sport Aberdeen (£70,000) and Live Life Aberdeenshire (£52,000) to allow them to purchase equipment that will enable increased support to be provided for more children across the north east;
(d) note the intention to host a Nestrans People and Place Programme in-person event in Huntly on Wednesday 12th March 2025; and
(e) approve the recommended process for seeking expressions of interest from partners, including as many potential partner organisations, from those with national remits through to local community-based organisations, for funding to deliver projects as part of the 2025-26 People and Place Programme.

Jon Barron summarised the report by providing background information and developments on the Programme. He also made reference to the Programme delivery and the way forward.

In response to questions, Jon provided information on participation and anecdotal evidence and efforts to tighten governance arrangements to avoid duplication.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL - STRATEGIC TRANSPORT APPRAISAL UPDATE

11. With reference to article 9 of the minute of meeting of 14 February 2024, the Board had before it a report which (1) provided an update on the Transport elements of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, which principally focussed on the Strategic Transport Appraisal programme; and (2) complemented an update report submitted to the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee on 15 November 2024.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) approve an additional £30,000 allocation to the current ART Strategic Business Case commission being undertaken by Stantec to enable designs to be developed to a consistent standard across the lengths of both identified route alignments;
(b) note the publication of recent papers relating to Baseline Analysis from the ASAM regional model; feasibility study for Hydrogen Refuellers; and work on the development of Mobility Hubs on the Strategic Transport Appraisal pages of the Nestrans website; and
(c) note the wider progress being made on the Transport elements of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal.

Paul Finch, summarised the report making reference to the progress of the seven projects funded by the Strategic Transport Appraisal, which were as follows:-

- ASAM Transport Model and Strategic Testing;
- A90/A952 Appraisal;
- A956 Wellington Road Junctions;
- Rail Freight Terminals Review;
- Regional Hydrogen Refuellers;
- Mobility Hubs;
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit; and
- Risk Allocation for External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendations.

ABERDEEN TO LAURENCEKIRK MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR UPDATE

12. 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.

The report recommended:-
That the Board note the recent progress on the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi Modal Corridor Study, including the conclusion of the consultation exercise, and emerging outcomes.

Paul Finch summarised the report, making reference to the progress in relation to (1) the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG); (2) the modelling of the impact of the proposed packages of measures on the transport network; and (3) stakeholder, community and public consultation.

In response to a question regarding whether there were any changes proposed, structurally or otherwise near Stonehaven or Laurencekirk, Mr Finch provided some detail in terms of the lengthy process of the corridor study and the initial work undertaken at the STAG initial appraisal stage including the impacts and deliverability challenges of each proposal which sieved these from the study. He concluded by making reference to the ongoing progress of the Laurencekirk flyover and the opportunities that that may bring in terms of improving access and to the recent planning activity around Stonehaven access to AWPR which may also bring an opportunity for improvement in this location.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

ACTIVE TRAVEL ACTION PLAN

13. With reference to article 11 of the minute of the previous meeting of 25 September 2024, the Board had before it a report which presented a finalised regional Active Travel Action Plan (AcTrAP) and associated Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) for consideration and approval.

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP
27 November 2024

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) approve for publication the finalised AcTrAP document, forming one element of the regional active travel development framework; and
(b) approve for publication the AcTrAP Equalities Impact Assessment, noting the recommendation of this document to continue with the delivery of the plan, and the associated identified mitigating actions required for adoption when delivering AcTrAP.

The Board heard Paul Finch summarise the report, making reference to the seven mitigating actions set out in the EQIA.

In response to questions from members, Mr Finch advised (1) that the report following the Audit Scotland Review into the Delivery of Sustainable Travel in Scotland would likely be published in January 2025; and (2) that the project plan actions and timelines would be considered during the business planning and budget process.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to approve the recommendations; and
(ii) to instruct Nestrans officers to provide Councillor Black with access to the members area of the Nestrans Website.

RAIL MATTERS UPDATE

14. The Board had before it a report which provided an update across a range of aspects relating to the development of rail services and rail infrastructure across the region.

The report recommended:-
that the Board –
(a) note the announcement by ScotRail to implement changes to some ticket office opening hours, reflecting changing travel and ticket purchasing patterns. This follows a consultation on the proposed changes to ticket offices from January to April 2022;
(b) note the assessment framework applied by Department for Transport to assess the nominations under the Access for All Programme and the ranking of the stations in the Nestrans area; and
(c) note the outcomes of recent rail stakeholder meetings held in the region over the last month.

Claudia Stuerck summarised the report, which made reference to:-
- ScotRail Ticket Office Consultation;
- Access for All funding relating to Inverurie Station;
- Buchan Sustainable Transport Study – Campaign for North East Rail / Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce; and
- the ScotRail Regional Roundtable Meeting.

Councillor Black expressed concern in relation to the decision to reduce the ticket office hours at Stonehaven Railway Station and explained that there was no ticket machine on the platform for people travelling south. This was considered a particular issue for those with mobility issues who also have to leave the platform and use the ticket machine at the opposite northbound platform via a somewhat indirect route.

The Board resolved:-
(i) to note that arrangements would be made to prepare a letter to be sent to ScotRail regarding the ticket machine concerns at Stonehaven Railway Station; and
(ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations.

PROGRESS REPORT

15. 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

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

The report made reference to the following:-
- Physical Activity for Health: Scotland's National Framework;
- Transport to Health Delivery Plan;
- Scotland's Accessible Travel Framework – Delivery Plan 2024-2026;
- Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2023;
- The Pedestrian Pound.

The report recommended:-
that the Board note the publication of the documents outlined in the report.

Jon Barron and Paul Finch provided a summary of the report.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

INFORMATION BULLETIN

17. 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 summarised the report which made reference to the following:-

- Getabout; and
- Traveline Scotland.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

18. The Board had before it a report on recent and forthcoming conferences, training and presentations, which may be of interest and sought feedback on events which had been held, presented in an appendix.

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

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation.

PENDING BUSINESS AND REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

19. 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.

In response to a question regarding the decision at the previous meeting relating to site visits for members, the Director advised that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on proposals for Spring/Summer site visits.

The Board resolved:-
to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

- COUNCILLOR ALAN TURNER, Chairperson.