

## NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE

THE TOWN HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 23 NOVEMBER, 2018

**Councillors:** Councillors Ellen Morton, Argyll and Bute Council, Chair; Ross Grant, Aberdeen City Council; David Aitchison, Aberdeenshire Council; Brenda Durno (Vice-Chair) and Ron Sturrock, Angus Council; Gordon Cowie and Graham Leadbitter, Moray Council; and Trish Robertson, The Highland Council, (via Skype).

**Officers:** Neale Burrows, Aberdeen City Council; John Bruce, Ruth O'Hare, Bill Lennox, Jan McRobbie, and Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council; Douglas Hill, Angus Council; Jim Smith, Argyll and Bute Council (via Skype); Cohairle nan Eilean Siar (via Skype); Stephen Couper and Paul Connor, Moray Council (via Skype); Robin Pope and Tracey Urry, Highland Council (via Skype); and Angus Brodie and Shaun Millar, The Improvement Service.

**In attendance:** Trevor McIhatton, Area Manager, Transport Scotland (via Skype).

**Apologies:** Councillors Michael Hutchison, Aberdeen City Council; Peter Argyle, Aberdeenshire Council; Roddy McCuish, Argyll and Bute Council; and Uisdean Robertson and Kenneth MacLeod, Cohairle nan Eilean Siar.

### 1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Councillor Morton, Chair of the Committee, welcomed Members, via remote access, or in person, to the Aberdeen City Council Town House.

Housekeeping details were provided by Ewan Wallace, Chief Officer.

### 2. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Morton asked Members for declarations of interest.

No interests were declared.

### 3. RESOLUTION - STATEMENT OF EQUALITIES

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Joint Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
  - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (2) where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision.

#### 4. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 31 AUGUST, 2018

The Minute of Meeting of 31 August, 2018 was submitted and **approved** as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Item 10, the ultimate paragraph, third sentence, to remove the erroneous reference to Mr Hill and Angus Council and read, "Having heard that the plastics added would only replace 6/7% of the bitumen, equating to approximately 40kg of plastics per tonne of material....".

#### 5. UPDATE ON THE PROCUREMENT OF NETWORK MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS (NMCs) FOR THE SCOTTISH TRUNK ROAD NETWORK

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 31 August, 2018, (Item 10), there had been circulated a report dated 12 November, 2018 by Trevor McIlhatton, Transport Scotland, providing an update in the procurement of contracts for the Network Management Contracts (NMC) trunk roads maintenance contracts.

Having heard further from Mr McIlhatton on the key points, being a two phase procurement approach, with southern contracts (tranche 1) to commence 16 August, 2020, and northern units (tranche 2), to commence on 16 August, 2022; and that the criteria for assessing potential tenders had been amended to have increased weighting on quality versus price, and included an increased customer engagement requirement, the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to welcome the increased public engagement requirements of the NMCs; and
- (2) to note the update provided on the procurement of the NMCs.

#### 6. USE OF RECYCLED PLASTIC IN ROAD SURFACING

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 31 August, 2018, (Item 10), there had been circulated a report dated 13 November, 2018 by Angus Bodie, Programme Manager, Roads Collaboration Programme, providing a detailed update on the use of recycled plastic in road surfacing. The report set the context for the current exploration of the use of plastics in road surfacing, in the context of government policy on waste reduction and recycling; the lack of technical assessment of the durability and future maintenance requirements where plastics had been added to the surfacing; areas for which the materials might be appropriate, dependent on usage and speed of traffic; information on recent and current trials, including England's Cumbria and Durham County Councils, Dumfries & Galloway Council, and the Ayrshire Roads Alliance; the costs of using plastic based materials; and other new developments in road surfacing.

Having heard further from Mr Bodie, there was discussion of the low proportion of plastics which could be incorporated into surfacing; the types of route and usage best suited for the type of surfacing; the lack of independent evidence to date of how such surfaces wear; officers' continued awareness of the need to mitigate the environmental costs of roads; the public support of green road initiatives; and a potential gap between manufacturer's publicity and users' experiences.

The Joint Committee were also advised that Aberdeen City Council were to consider the matter and that the information provided in the report would contribute to inform their consideration. The Joint Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to note roads officers' expressed commitment to improving the environmental impact of road surfacing operations;
- (2) to note the recent developments exploring opportunities to incorporate recycled plastic waste into road-surfacing materials;
- (3) to note that further investigations and formal independent testing, verification, and certification required before recycled plastic could be used as an acceptable addition to bitumens road-surfacing materials; and
- (4) to note that officers would maintain a close interest in this development; and
- (5) that a further update on asphalt road surfaces be reported in due course.

## 7. NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 18 May, 2018 (Item 11), there had been circulated a report dated 13 November, 2018 by Angus Bodie, Programme Manager, Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on the local and national collaborations being undertaken through the Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP).

The report detailed the evolving governance arrangements being established across the country; and gave information on the various projects and activities being undertaken by the RCP; indicated that Audit Scotland, having published in 2017 their 2016 review of road maintenance, had taken an Impacts Report to the Accounts Commission and awaited further instruction; listed progress in workforce planning both with universities and through the National Foundation Apprenticeship Programme; continuing work towards a collaborative/training academy approach to operative and technical training; and that the Cabinet Secretary and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) were currently considering the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS) review of the future governance of trunk roads, which had concluded that a regional approach would be more sustainable than the current 33 roads authorities.

There was discussion of the approaches currently taken by partner authorities to recruit and retain staff, and participation in events such as careers fairs for schools and universities; the value of community surveys on local roads maintenance as an evidence base for the seeking of additional funding; and the potential impact of BREXIT on succession planning and recruitment. The Joint Committee **welcomed** the updates provided.

## 8. PROCUREMENT OF CORING SERVICES FOR THE NATIONAL CORING PROGRAMME

There had been circulated a report dated 13 November, 2018, by John Bruce, Aberdeenshire Council, requesting Members' consideration of whether a joint contract could be procured for those partner Councils as part for the North of Scotland Roads and Utilities Committee (NOSRAUC) area contract. The report indicated that this would apply to all partner councils except Angus and Argyll and Bute, and that work undertaken on Orkney, Shetland, and Transport Scotland networks could be part of any contract but would not be covered by the same governance structure. The proposal had been considered, and approved for onward consideration, by NOSRAUC at its meeting on 10 November, 2018.

The Joint Committee **agreed** to be the governance structure for the collective procurement of coring services for the National Coring Programme.

## 9. PROCUREMENT OF SCRIM (SIDEWAYS FORCE COEFFICIENT ROUTINE INVESTIGATION MACHINE) SURVEY SERVICES

There had been circulated a report dated 13 November, 2018, by John Bruce, Aberdeenshire Council, requesting Members' consideration of a proposed collaborative procurement of Sideways Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM), used to measure wet-road skidding resistance.

After discussion of the current costs of the procurement for a single authority, with costs in the reported in the region of £10 per kilometre, the Joint Committee **agreed** to approve, in principle, the case for collaboration in the procurement of SCRIM survey services.

## 10. STRATEGIC ROADS ASSET MANAGEMENT – UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 31 August, 2018, (Item 7), there had been circulated a report dated 13 November, 2018 by Angus Bodie, Programme Manager, Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on progress made, across all partner authorities, in considering how best to collaborate in the collection, management, and reporting of asset data and potential benefits in using the information holistically across the partnership area, whilst recognising the varying demographics and geography of the northern areas. The report indicated that use would be made of the National Roads Condition Survey Programme (Scottish Roads Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) and of the SCOTS (Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland) Asset Management Project, with the intention that a Business Case be prepared for consideration in Spring, 2019.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to commend the progress made to date in considering opportunities to collaborate in the collection, management, and reporting of asset data, whilst sharing best practice;
- (2) to note the proposed process to be undertaken in the development of a strategic business case; and
- (3) that officers report further to the Spring meeting, including a final business case.

## 11. PORTS/HARBOURS AND MARINE OPPORTUNITIES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 31 August, 2018, (Item 9), the Joint Committee heard from Jim Smith, Chief Officer, Argyll and Bute Council, of the potential consideration of a shared appointment of designated person as required in terms of the Port Marine Safety Code, as the first attainable option in terms of collaborative opportunities for ports and harbours across the Partnership. Although this appointment was not mandatory, it was strongly recommended as good practice, and as Argyll and Bute's contract was to be retendered in early 2019, it was appropriate to consider a collaborative procurement. After discussion, and having noted that a further report would be presented, if enough partners were interested, the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the oral update provided;
- (2) that officers consider how best to explore the opportunity afforded by Argyll and Bute's retendering timetable; and
- (3) that a report be circulated in early course confirming potential collaborative tendering options.

## 12. FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AS AGENDA ITEMS

There was discussion of matters which the partner authorities might wish to have reported, and the Joint Committee heard from Stephen Cooper, Head of Direct Services, Moray Council, of progress in working to develop arrangements for a framework which would allow authorities to “call-off” the use of the Moray Dredger as per previous reports to the Joint Committee. Members were asked for confirmation that this was an acceptable approach. The Members from Argyll and Bute, Highland, Aberdeenshire, and Angus Councils confirmed that this was acceptable, and they would therefore wish to participate in the “call-off” arrangements on that basis.

In respect of future items of business, it was reported that the future agendae already include consideration of Update on the A9; Joint Procurement via Scotland Excel; and Abandoned Vehicles.

After discussion, it was **agreed** that future meetings also consider:

- Road Casualty and Roads Safety (Spring 2019);
- An Annual Report on the activities of the Partnership (Spring 2019 for onward reporting to constituent authorities by June, 2019);
- Finance Monitoring report, detailing the resources needed for conducting the business of the Partnership;
- Joint Procurement intra-authority discussions;
- Scottish Roads Asset Management Plan; and
- Marine Code Update;
- The Strategic Timber Fund (currently being discussed via CoSLA and the Scottish Minister;
- Cobble surface specialist repair issues (to be considered by Aberdeen City Council and of potential interest to other authorities, and the subject of a previous report to SCOTS); and
- The potential security implications for Ports in the context of BREXIT.

## 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Joint Committee **noted** that the next meetings would be held on either Friday 1, or Friday 8 March, and either Friday 21, or Friday 28, June, 2019, at locations to be determined.

It was **agreed** that all Members be surveyed as to their preferred options, with the majority determining choice and thereafter officers identify appropriate venues.

Councillor Ellen Morton  
Chair

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