

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 12 MARCH 2020

- Present:** Councillors P Argyle (Chair), J Cox (Vice Chair), W Agnew, D Aitchison, G Carr, J Ingram, P Johnston, J Latham, I Mollison, C Pike, G Reid, M Roy (substitute for R Withey), S Smith and I Taylor.
- Apologies:** Councillor Withey.
- Officers:** Head of Service (Transportation), Head of Service (Planning & Environment), Head of Service (Roads, Landscape and Waste Services), Strategic Transportation Manager (Transportation), Strategy Manager (Transportation), Parking Officer (Transportation), Gordon Buchanan, Service Manager, (Economic Development & Protective Services), Matt Lockley, Service Manager (Economic Development & Protective Services), John Bell, Team Manager (Economic Development & Protective Services), Martin Brebner, Team Manager, (Economic Development & Protective Services), John Bell, Team Manager (Economic Development & Protective Services), Corporate Finance Manager (S Donald), Principal Solicitor, Legal and Governance (R O'Hare) and Committee Officer (F Brown).

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the following interests were intimated: –

- (1) Councillors Argyle, Cox and Pike, (as substantive members) and Councillor Mollison, (as a substitute member) of NESTR ANS, declared an interest in agenda **Item 7**. That interest had a specific exclusion, therefore, those members concluded that they would remain and participate when that item was being considered.
- (2) Councillor Cox, declared an interest in agenda **Item 17** as he had links to the service for other work that he was involved in. Councillor Cox concluded that having applied the objective test, the interest was remote and insignificant, and he would remain and participate when that item was being considered.
- (3) Councillor Johnston declared an interest in agenda **Item 8** as a Director of Community Resources Network Scotland (CRNS) and as a signatory of the Deposit Return Scheme. Councillor Johnston concluded, having applied the objective test, the interest was remote and insignificant, therefore, he would remain and participate when the item was being considered.

2. RESOLUTIONS

A. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the following items of business, the 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.
- (2) where an Equality Impact Assessment is provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching a decision.

B. EXEMPT INFORMATION.

The Committee **agreed** in terms of Sections 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item shown below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in undernoted paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Item No	Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
22	8
23	8
24	4

3. MINUTE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 23 JANUARY 2020

The Committee had before them, and **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 3 October 2019 which was thereafter signed by the Chair.

PRESENTATION

4. BUS ALLIANCE – GEORGE MAIR, DEVELOPMENT MANAGER – SCOTLAND, CONFEDERATION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT UK – SCOTLAND

The Chair welcomed George Mair, Development Manager for the Scotland Confederation of Passenger Transport, UK – Scotland, who addressed the Committee, providing an overview of the work of the North East Bus Alliance, which he explained was a voluntary Quality Partnership Agreement between Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, First Bus in Aberdeen, Stagecoach

and Bains Coaches, which sought to reinvigorate bus use in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire and whose primary objective was to arrest the decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022 and to achieve a year on year growth in bus patronage by 2025.

Mr Mair, explained the objectives of the Alliance; how Aberdeenshire Council could support those objectives; the value of local bus services; the issues faced (trends and the impact of congestion on bus passengers); the changes drivers were facing; low emissions zones in Scotland; prioritising sustainable transport and how partnership working and an holistic approach to transport infrastructure/planning was critical.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr Mair for attending, and for providing an extremely informative presentation.

It was noted that Mr Mair would provide links to the two reports he had referred to in his presentation (KPMG Trends in Scottish Bus Patronage and the Impact of Congestion on Bus Passenger by Professor David Begg) and those would be emailed to members after the meeting.

POLICY, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

5. ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 – DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 2020

There had been circulated a report, dated 4 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration of the draft Development Plan Scheme, which would support the preparation of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021, as presented in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report explained that the “Development Plan Scheme” must be prepared and published each year, to inform stakeholders at what stage the development plan was currently at, and to identify the nature of the consultation being undertaken and to inform its content. The Development Plan Scheme 2020 had continued to present the principles established in the 2019 scheme and they had been discussed at Area Committees on 14, 21 and 28 January 2020, with their comments, Policy Officer comments and subsequent actions being presented as Appendix 2 to the report.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed** to **approve** the draft Development Plan Scheme 2020.

TRANSPORTATION

6. DECRIMINALISED PARKING ENFORCEMENT IN ABERDEENSHIRE

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 20 June 2019 (Item 9), where the Committee had agreed to revisit the feasibility of introducing Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in Aberdeenshire, there had been circulated a report, dated 2 March 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought the Committees consideration of whether to progress with an application to Scottish Ministers, under Section 43 and Schedule 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1991, to allow Aberdeenshire Council to implement Decriminalised

Parking Enforcement in Aberdeenshire, as part of a phased approach, as detailed in Section 4.11 and 4.12 to the report.

During discussion, the Committee welcomed the report, but queried how long it would take to implement decriminalised parking enforcement throughout Aberdeenshire towns. The Parking Officer (Transportation) advised the Committee that parking enforcement currently sits with Police Scotland and the scheme could not be implemented until their powers had been transferred to Aberdeenshire Council, which would take approximately 18-24 months.

The Strategy Manager (Transportation) advised the Committee that Officers were working directly with Police Scotland, and through the Member/Officer Working Group, were looking closely at good examples as seen at Highland Council who were already rolling out their scheme.

The Committee sought assurances that as part of the phased approach, decriminalised parking enforcement should be rolled out as soon as possible within Aberdeenshire towns.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **confirm** support for the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) in Aberdeenshire;
- (2) to **confirm** support to progress with an application to Scottish Ministers, under Section 43 and Schedule 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1991, to allow Aberdeenshire Council to implement DPE in a phased approach as described in the report, with an assurance that the phased approach would be rolled out as soon as possible; and
- (3) to **thank** Officers for the huge amount of work, undertaken, in preparation of the report.

6A. RECOVERY OF COSTS FOR OPERATION OF EV CHARGE POINTS

The Chair advised the Committee, that the report had been taken as an urgent item of business, on the grounds that the decision which the Committee were required to take, was necessary, prior to the full implementation of charges for EV charge points within Aberdeenshire from 1 April 2020.

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 28 November 2019 (Item 11), where the Committee had agreed the recommendations as detailed in the report, and thereafter, Option B, there had been circulated a report dated 10 March 2020, which sought clarification from the Committee as to which option they had agreed, based on the Officer's recommendation being Option C as contained within Section 4.6 to that report.

The Strategy Manger, Transportation introduced the report and advised the Committee that the Minute of the meeting had been recorded correctly, however, it was clear that Officers had, within the content of the report, recommended Option C, as the preferred option, which was costs only, with customers being charged per unit of electricity used, £0.21 per kWh.

The Committee were advised, that if they were minded to alter their previous decision, they would have to suspend Standing Order 7.2 in order to alter that decision, as it had been taken within the last six months.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the issue which had arisen from the decision taken by Committee, at their meeting of 28 November 2019, in relation to Item 11 – Recovery of Costs for the Operation of EV Charge Points; and
- (2) to **suspend** Standing Order 7.2, in order to alter the Committee's decision of 28 November 2019 to reflect Option C as the preferred option.

7. PUBLICATION OF NATIONAL STRATEGY AND UPDATE ON REGIONAL AND LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGIES

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 3 October 2019 (Item 11), where the Committee had considered a report on the consultative draft National Transport Strategy and Aberdeenshire Council's response to Transport Scotland, there had been circulated a report, dated 28 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided confirmation that the new National Transport Strategy had been published, and which provide a summary of the key implications for Aberdeenshire Council, and which also provided an update on the progression of Regional Transport Strategies.

The report explained that the new National Transport Strategy would be material, in guiding the Strategic Transport Projects Review and it would significantly influence decisions and the policy approach relating to regional and local transport provision, including the interface with land use planning, economic development and social inclusion.

Section 4 to the report provided an overview of the National Transport Strategy and Section 4.5 explored the key themes and challenges that would arise from the strategy and the proposed response to those challenges.

During discussion the Committee referred to Section 4.6 to the report, Key Theme 1, Tackling Climate Change and noted that while tackling climate change was a key principle, extra "capacity" would be required to resources the challenges faced and to achieve the targets set.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the publication of the finalised National Transport Strategy by Transport Scotland on 5 February 2020;
- (2) to **note** the progression of Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy, which was being supported by the City Region Deal funded Strategic Transport Appraisal;
- (3) to **confirm** ongoing support for the key principles embedded into Aberdeenshire's Local Transport Strategy; and

- (4) to **note** that while tacking climate change was a key principle, extra “capacity” would be required, to resource the challenges faced and to achieve targets.

ROADS, LANDSCAPE AND WASTE SERVICES

8. TRADE WASTE CHARGES 2020/2021

There had been circulated a report, dated 25 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services which sought approval, to amend the charges for the Trade Waste and Recycling Service for the financial year 2020/21, in line with statutory requirements, to cover the costs incurred for operating the service.

The report explained that Local Authorities had a statutory duty placed upon them, in relation to waste, and the three main aspects included (1) Litter Authority, (2) Waste Collection Authority (WCA) and (3) Waste Disposal Authority (WDA). Guidance for WCA and WDA were set out in sections 45-49 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) and with regard to the collection of commercial waste, there was no duty on the authority, to collect, until the owner of the waste had requested that the authority to do so, and it was then up to the authority to make a reasonable charge for the collection and disposal of waste collected, unless they considered it inappropriate to do so. Section 4.5 to the report presented the comparison charges for 2019/20, along with the proposed charges for 2020/21.

The Committee were also asked to consider the implications of a Deposit Return Scheme(DRS) for Scotland, which was due to come into effect in 2021, and which may result in a further increase in processing costs for mixed recycling due to the reduction of glass bottles collected from Trade Customers which was currently being collected separately, with the income generated currently subsidising the current collection costs.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** the increase in Trade Waste charges for 2020-21, to allow full cost recovery, in line with Council policy:
- (2) to **note** the potential future impacts of Deposit Return Scheme; and
- (3) to **request** that third sector bodies, and voluntary organisations, should be encouraged to consider the costs of mixed recycling, in advance of the implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme coming into effect.

9. PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE, DESIGNATED PERSON, ANNUAL REPORT

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 14 March 2019 (Item 10), there was circulated a report, dated 25 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided the Committee with an annual summary of Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) matters, across the seven Aberdeenshire Council owned harbours, and which included an annual report by the Port Marine Safety Code Designated Person.

Section 4.1 to the report, summarised all incidents, accidents and occurrences that had been recorded, monitored and actioned as required by the Code from 1 January to 31 December 2019.

The Head of Service (Roads Landscape and Waste Services) advised the Committee that there were 2 minor inaccuracies in the recommendations to the report, namely, 2.3 should refer to Appendix A and 2.5 should refer to discussion Item 5.5.

The Designated Person (Mr Chris Spencer) then presented his report, as provided in Appendix A to the report.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **acknowledge** all incidents, accidents and occurrences which had been recorded, monitored and actioned as required by the Code for the period 1 January to 31 December 2019;
- (2) to **acknowledge** that all seven of Aberdeenshire Council Harbours had met the criteria for management of the outages on the Navigation Aids Authority under the instruction of the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) for the three-year period ending 31 December 2019;
- (3) to **acknowledge** the Annual Report submitted by Aberdeenshire Council's Harbours Designated Person, Chris Spencer, as presented as Appendix A, to the report; and
- (4) to **acknowledge** the allocation of funding from the Harbours Revenue Budget for 2020/21 for professional services from the Designated Person, estimated to be approximately £10,000 per annum.

10. PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE ESTABLISHMENT OF HARBOURS SUB-COMMITTEE

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 28 November 2019 (Item 12), and the subsequent Minute of Aberdeenshire Council of 16 January 2020 (Item 7), there had been circulated a report, dated 25 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration, as Duty Holder, under the Marine Safety Code, for the Committee to formally establish a Harbours Sub-Committee; to agree the terms of reference, (as proposed in Appendix 1 to the report) and to agree the membership of that Sub Committee.

The report explained that the Committee, at their meeting of 14 March 2019 (Item 17) had considered a report by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Health check and agreed at that time to establish a Harbours Steering Group to improve communication between Officers and the Committee as Duty Holder, with the Steering Group being formally established on 20 June 2019 (Item 13). On the establishment of the Harbours Sub-Committee, the Harbours Steering Group would be formally disestablished.

Section 4.1 to the report provided the governance arrangements for establishing the Sub-Committee, and the specific delegations, the membership (based on political proportionality) and how often it would meet.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **establish** a sub-committee to be known as the Harbours Sub-Committee;
- (2) to **approve** the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee at Appendix 1;
- (3) to **appoint** three members from the Administration (Councillors Agnew, Cox and Findlater) and 2 members from the Partnership (Councillors Cassie and Robertson); and
- (4) to **approve** to the disestablishment of the Harbours Steering Group.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

11. RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMMES 2021-27

There had been circulated a report, dated 29 January 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration of the Committee's approval for an Aberdeenshire Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the European Territorial Co-operation Programmes for 2021-27.

The report explained that the UK (at that time, pre Brexit), had participated in a number of EU-funded programmes, including European Territorial Co-operation programmes, known as INTERREG which supported co-operation projects between different organisations in different countries on themes such as innovation, climate change and transport, with grants of typically 50% to each consortia to deliver such projects. As the UK would no longer have automatic participation in INTERREG programmes, the UK was currently considering whether there may be an option to participate as a Third Country, provided that they agreed to fund the cost of UK project partners. As a decision had not been made by the UK Government, the Scottish Government, being supportive of an opt-in, were consulting to see if they could develop the Government's negotiating position, in the event that programmes were co-designed by the EU and third countries.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**, to **approve** the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the design of future European Territorial Co-operation projects, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

12. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS DISTRICTS – POLICY REVIEW

With reference to the Minute of the Meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 15 May 2013 (Item 13), there had been circulated a report, dated 6 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services,

which sought to update the Committee, following a review of the policy and to reaffirm the Council's approach to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), which was required under the Council's Policy Development and Review Framework, under Part 4 of the Scheme of Governance, which provides that Council policies should be reviewed after five years.

The report explained that following approval of the BIDs policy on 26 November 2015 (Item 14), where Committee approved Officer support for two initiated Business Improvement Districts (We Are Inverurie and Rediscover Peterhead), Section 4.5 of the report explained that following a review of the policy, no changes were recommended to the policy or guidelines as there had been no changes to the legislation or the BID model itself.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**, to **approve** the reviewed policy on Business Improvement Districts, as presented as Appendix 1 to the report.

13. ELECTED MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT EVENTS AND CONFERENCES 2020-21

There had been circulated a report, dated 12 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which set out a number of important events and conferences which elected members may wish to attend, where there would be an opportunity to promote economic development and growth within Aberdeenshire during 2020-21. The report sought approval of the outline plan and the associated budget expenditure for those events, as presented in Appendix 1 to the report.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the key economic development related events, conferences and exhibitions for the next financial year as set out in the report;
- (2) to **approve** Elected Member attendance as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the associated budget requirements from Economic Development budgets; and
- (3) to **agree** to delegate authority to amend the agreed attendance and nominate substitutes, if required, to the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson for Infrastructure Services Committee.

14. FOOD AND DRINK ACTIVITY BUDGET

There had been circulated a report, dated 6 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which presented a review of the work undertaken to support the food and drink sector within Aberdeenshire and which sought approval of a financial contribution of £47,000, by Aberdeenshire Council, towards total project costs for Food and Drink Activity, as presented in Section 4.1 to report, undertaken by Opportunity North East (ONE) during 2020-21.

The report explained that ONE's focus was on investment and action, to stimulate economic growth, to safeguard jobs and create new employment opportunities over the medium to long term.

During discussion, the Committee highlighted sustainability within the food and drink sector and sought assurances that the work being undertaken by ONE would involve an emphasis on sustainability and circular economy when considering issues such as packaging, excess packaging and non-recyclable packaging. The Committee noted that there was a large emphasis on educating people through waste services, however, having access to key industries at such a high level should also allow industry and particularly new starts to focus on circular economy and sustainability.

Matt Lockley, Service Manager (Economic Development) advised the Committee that ONE were focused on climate change and circular economy, with waste being embedded within business development and they were specifically focusing on sustainability and circular economy which underpinned the work of the service and their ongoing investment within ONE.

The Committee requested, that at an appropriate time in the projects, a report should be presented to the Committee, which would consider how climate change and the circular economy had impacted those projects and what had been achieved.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **endorse** the work undertaken to support the food and drink sector within Aberdeenshire;
- (2) to **approve** a contribution of up to £47,000 by Aberdeenshire Council, towards the total project costs for Food and Drink Activity of £213,000, undertaken by Opportunity North East (ONE); and
- (3) to **request** that a report should be presented to future meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee, which would consider how changes related to sustainability within the food and drink industry, were being achieved, taking into account climate change and the circular economy.

15. AMENDMENT TO SUPPORT FOR ABERDEENSHIRE BUSINESS SCHEME

There had been circulated a report, dated 6 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration and approval for the amendment to the Support for Aberdeenshire Business (SAB) scheme, to allow for the inclusion of the Town Centre Retail Support project and for a contribution of £22,500 from Aberdeenshire Council for grant funding for projects completing the Town Centre Retail Support project.

The report explained that the South Aberdeenshire Local Action Group (SALAG) had awarded a contract for specialist consultancy services, to "the Retailer", to deliver bespoke, one to one support and advice to town centre businesses in Huntly, Banchory and Stonehaven, with up to 15 businesses in each of those towns. Section 4.6 to the report proposed grant funding of up to £500 per retailer, which

would be provided once a business had received consultancy support to allow them to implement actions raised from their development plan.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** an amendment, to the Support for Aberdeenshire Business Scheme (SAB), to allow the inclusion of the Town Centre Retail Support project;
- 2.2 to **approve** a contribution of £22,500 from Aberdeenshire Council for grant funding of businesses completing the Town Centre Retail Support project; and
- 2.3 to **instruct** the Head of Economic Development and Protective Services, to submit an evaluation report to the relevant Area Committee, on the outcomes of each of the town projects and a summary to the Infrastructure Services Committee, as a bulletin report.

16. PARTNERSHIP REVIEW EMPLOYMENT CONNECT: ABERDEENSHIRE EMPLOYABILITY PARTNERSHIP

There was circulated a report, dated 3 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought consideration of a review of the Council's participation in the Employment CONNECT Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership (EC), in line with the Council's Partnership Policy, which required that a short partnership assessment must be undertaken before joining a partnership and every two years thereafter.

The report explained that the Council participation in Employment CONNECT was important to facilitate the alignment of employability activity in Aberdeenshire and ensuring alignment with the Child Poverty agenda and for the exploration of cross-border working and joint funding applications. The report sought consideration and endorsement of the partnership assessment and risk assessment as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **endorse** the partnership review, of Employment CONNECT, as presented in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report; and
- (2) to **agree** that the Council would continue to participate in the partnership for a further three years.

17. FOOD AND FEED LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN 2019-2021, SERVICE PLAN REVIEW 2018-2019

There had been circulated a report, dated 10 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which sought Committee approval for the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Plan 2019-2021 as presented as Appendix 1 to the report, and which sought the endorsement of the 2018-2019 Service Plan Performance Review as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

During discussion, the Committee referred to the Eat Safe Award Scheme and queried whether that could be promoted more widely within the community as a symbol of excellence.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **approve** the Food and Feed Law Enforcement Service Plan 2019-2021, as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, for implementation by the Council as a Food Authority;
- (2) to **endorse** the Service Plan Performance Review for 2018-2019, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (3) to **thank** John Bell and to wish him a long and happy retirement; and
- (4) to **request** that Officers promote the Eat Safe Award Scheme within Aberdeenshire, as a symbol of excellence.

BUSINESS SERVICES

18. FINANCIAL REPORTING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2020

There was circulated a report, dated 6 February 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which provided the Committee with the revenue and capital budget monitoring information, for budgets within their remit to 31 January 2020.

The report explained that the planned budget expenditure on service delivery to the end of January 2020 was £56.608 million, and the actual expenditure incurred within that period was £56.645 million, with the breakdown in those figures being presented as Appendix 1A and 1B to the report. Section 4.3 to the report highlighted several emerging issues which would be monitored throughout the financial year, with an update being reported to the next Committee.

It was also reported that the Infrastructure Services revenue budget for 2019/20 had been agreed on 14 February 2019 at £66.711 million, that had increased to £68.212 million as a result of virements, Scottish Government funding and transfers from reserves as presented in Appendix 2 to the report, with an explanation of the virements and transfers from reserves being included in Appendix 3 to the report.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed**:

- (1) to **note** the revenue and capital budget monitoring to 31 January 2020; and
- (2) to **approve** the budget movements as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, with further details as presented in Appendix 3 to the report;

19. SCOTLAND'S LOW EMISSION ZONES: CONSULTATION ON REGULATION AND GUIDANCE

There had been circulated a report, dated 24 February 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which detailed the Aberdeenshire Council response to the consultation on regulations and guidance for Scotland's Low Emission Zones (LEZ) as presented in Appendix 1 to the report, which had been submitted by the closing date of 24 February 2020.

The report explained that due to the timelines for Infrastructure Committee meetings, the draft response had been approved by the Head of Service (Transportation), along with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Opposition spokesperson for the Infrastructure Services Committee for review and approval and thereafter the was approved for submission by both the Vice Chair and Director of Business Services via delegated powers as specified in the Scheme of Governance by the deadline.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed to acknowledge** the Aberdeenshire Council response, submitted under delegated powers and following consultation.

20. NOMINATION TO THE NORTH SEA COMMISSION, MARINE RESOURCES WORKING GROUP

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 29 November 2018 (Item 13), there had been circulated a report, dated 28 January 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which sought consideration of a nomination to the North Sea Commission, Marine Resources Working Group, following the resignation of Aberdeenshire Council's representative, Councillor Richard Thomson.

The report explained that Councillor Thomson had attended his final meeting on 18 February 2020 and Aberdeenshire Council would not be represented on that group until his replacement was appointed.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **note** Councillor Thomson's resignation from the North Sea Commission, Marine Resources Working Group;
- (2) to **nominate** Councillor D Aitchison as substantive member to the North Sea Commission, Marine Resources Working Group; and
- (3) to **note** that the Councillor Aitchison will also sit on the European Member/Officer Working Group.

21. POLICY REGISTER, ANNUAL REPORTING

There had been circulated a report, dated 26 February 2020, by the Director of Business Services, which detailed the current position of policies that were delegated to the Infrastructure Services Committee, as presented in Appendix 1 to

the report, with policies being categorised using a traffic light system to indicate readiness for review

During discussion, the Committee requested that ISS-009-TPT, Unauthorised Signs Policy, due for review in the medium term (2021-2023) should be brought forward.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **acknowledge** the current position of the policies delegated to Infrastructure Services Committee;
- (2) to **note** the timescales for policies that were due for review, as well as those that are approaching their review date, to be considered at future committees; and
- (3) to **agree** that ISS-009-TPT, Unauthorised Signs Policy should be brought forward as part of the agreed annual overview of the Council's Policy Framework, as per section 3.5 of the Policy Development and Review Framework in Part 4B of the Scheme of Governance.

TRANSPORTATION

22. PASSENGER TRANSPORT NETWORK REVIEW UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting of 16 May 2019 (Item 11), there had been circulated a report, dated 28 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided the Committee with an update on the work of the Passenger Transport Network Review, Member/Officer Working Group and sought approval to extend the North Aberdeenshire passenger transport contracts.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **acknowledge** the work undertaken by the Passenger Transport Network Review Member Officer Working Group to date;
- (2) to **agree** a one-year extension to North Aberdeenshire local bus and dial-a-bus service contracts; and
- (3) to **note** that the Committee will be asked to approve the contract extension for inclusion in the Infrastructure Services Procurement Plan 2020-2021.

GENERAL

23. INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIRECTORATE ANNUAL PROCUREMENT PLAN - 2020/21

There had been circulated a report, dated 25 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which presented the Infrastructure Services Directorate

Procurement Plan for 2020/21 as presented in Appendix 1 to the report for expenditure of £50,000 or more on the purchase of goods, works and services from external suppliers.

During discussion, the Committee agreed that that a report should be brought back to the Committee on the Purchase of Refuse Trucks, Hooklifts and Tippers and the approach taken to waste vehicle provision; that a report should be brought back on Quarry Equipment and the contract value for the next 3 years and that in terms of scrutiny, there should be an informal discussion with members to consider how information would be presented to give more context in terms of trends and efficiencies.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **approve** the items on the Procurement Plan as presented in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) to **approve** the Purchase of Refuse Trucks, Hooklifts and Tippers as presented in Appendix 4 to the report, and note that a report would be presented to the next Committee on the approach being taken for waste vehicle provision;
- (3) to **approve** the Procurement Approval Forms in Appendices 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7;
- (4) **not** to reserve the award of the contract for the one item (Quarry Materials – Bitumen) as it has a contract value that exceeds £1,000,000;
- (5) to **acknowledge** that the Heads of Roads, Landscape Services & Waste Management, Transportation, Planning and Environment and Economic Development & Protective Services have the delegated authority to award the final contracts of the tendered contracts and call-offs with a contract value up to £1,000,000 and those items with a contract value that exceeds £1,000,000 where the Committee has not reserved the right to award the final contract; and
- (6) to **delegate** authority to the Head of Transportation to award contract extensions for the Combined Local/School Bus Transport Services in North Aberdeenshire up to the value detailed in the Procurement Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

24. EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF) PAYMENTS

There had been circulated a report, dated 12 February 2020, by the Director of Infrastructure Services, which provided an update to the Committee on developments following the suspension of the European Social Fund programme and to review the Committee's decision regarding withholding payments to local organisations.

Having considered the content of the report, the Committee **agreed:**

- (1) to **note** developments in resolving the suspension of the Scottish ESF Programme;
- 2.2 to **endorse** the updated Council position on ESF payments to project sponsors as set out in Section 4 to the report; and
- 2.3 to **agree** that an update would be provided to the Committee after the end of the 2019-20 financial year, with further recommendations to close any outstanding ESF projects.

ITEMS FOR NOTING

- (a) Minute of the Strategic Development Planning Authority Meeting of 25 September 2019 (**APPENDIX A**).
- (b) Minute of the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee Meeting of 8 November 2019 (**APPENDIX B**).
- (c) Minute of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee of 29 November 2019 (**APPENDIX C**).

ABERDEEN, 25 September 2019. Minute of Meeting of the STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY.

Present: Councillor Marie Boulton, Chairperson; Councillor John Cox, Vice-Chairperson; and Councillors David Aitchison, Bell, Copland (as a substitute for Councillor Cooke), Graham, Mair, Mollison (as a substitute for Councillor Latham), Topping and Yuill.

Apologies: Councillors Cooke and Latham; Mr R Gray, Head of Service, Planning and Building Standards, Aberdeenshire Council; and Mairi Stewart, Planning Manager, Aberdeenshire Council.

Officers: **Strategic Planning Authority:** Ms S Lamont and Mr T Walsh, Senior Planners;

Aberdeen City Council: Ms G Beattie, Chief Officer, Strategic Place Planning; Ms L Christie, Solicitor, Governance, Mr D Dunne, Policy and Strategy Manager, Strategic Place Planning; Ms K Gatherum, Trainee Solicitor, Governance; Mr A Thomson, Solicitor, Governance; Mr M Orchard, Committee Lead, Governance, and Ms E Robertson, Committee Assistant, Governance;

Aberdeenshire Council: Chris Smith, Accountant

In Attendance: Ms A MacDonald, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland; and Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager, NESTRANS.

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

1. There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 14 JUNE 2019 - FOR APPROVAL

2. The Authority had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 14 June 2019.

The Authority resolved:
to approve the minute.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY
25 September 2019

2018/19 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

3. The Authority had before it the external auditor's 2018/19 Annual Audit Report of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority's (SDPA) annual accounts.

The Authority received an overview of the report from Ms Anne MacDonald, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland. She explained that Audit Scotland had provided an unqualified opinions on the annual accounts; and the audited part of the remuneration report, management commentary and the annual governance statement were all consistent with the financial statements and prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority consider and note the auditor's report.

The Authority resolved:

to note the auditor's report.

AUDITED ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2018/19

4. The Authority had before it the independent auditor's, Audited Annual Accounts in respect of 2018/19 for approval.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority -

- (i) acknowledge the Audit Scotland's unmodified opinion on the Annual Accounts for 2018/19; and
- (ii) approve for signature the audited Annual Accounts for 2018/19.

The Authority resolved:

to approve the recommendations.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

5. The Authority had before it a report by Alan Wood, Treasurer, proposing the adoption of revised Financial Regulations.

The report recommended:-

that the Authority note the revision to the Strategic Development Planning Authority's Financial Regulations.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY
25 September 2019

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

QUARTER END BUDGET

6. The Authority had before it a report by the Treasurer on the budget monitoring position for 2019/20 as at 31 August 2019.

The report recommended:

that the Authority

note the budget monitoring position as at 31 August 2019.

The Authority resolved:

to approve the recommendation.

BULLETIN REPORT

7. The Authority had before it a bulletin report which provided a brief overview of strategic planning matters involving or relating to the work undertaken by the Authority.

Sheena Lamont, Senior Planner, spoke to the report and provided updates on:

- Examination of the Proposed Strategic Development Plan;
- Planning Act;
- Other Relevant Decision from Scottish Ministers;
- Local Development Plan; and
- Strategic Infrastructure.

The Authority resolved:

to note the bulletin report.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

8. The Authority had before it proposed dates of future meetings as follows:

- 13 December 2019, 2pm at Woodhill House
- 18 March 2020, 2pm at Aberdeen Town House
- 26 June 2020, 2pm at Woodhill House
- 23 September 2020, 2pm at Aberdeen Town House
- 11 December 2020, 2pm at Woodhill House

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AUTHORITY
25 September 2019

The Authority resolved:-

to approve the future meeting dates.

- **Councillor Marie Boulton, Chairperson.**

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World



ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

8 NOVEMBER, 2019

- Present:** Councillors Gifford (Chair), Cox (as substitute for Councillor Argyle); and Thomson, Aberdeenshire Council; Councillors Laing (Vice-Chair), Boulton, and Lumsden, Aberdeen City Council; and Ms J Craw (as substitute for Sir Ian Wood), and Mr P Machray, ONE.
- Apologies:** Councillor Argyle, (Aberdeenshire Council); Prof S Logan and Sir Ian Wood, ONE.
- Officers:** Mr J Savage, Chief Executive, Aberdeenshire Council; Mrs A Scott, Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council; Ms B Millar, Head of Economic Development and Protective Services, Aberdeenshire Council; Mr A Wood, Head of Finance, Aberdeenshire Council; MS R O'Hare, Principal Solicitor, Aberdeenshire Council; Ms J Richards-Wood, Programme Manager, Aberdeen City Council; W Robertson, Digital Programme Manager, Aberdeen City Council; Ms S Rochester, Service Manager, Customer Communications and Improvement, Aberdeenshire Council; Mr P Finch, Strategic Transport Manager, Aberdeenshire Council; Mr R McGregor, Strategic Transport Officer, Aberdeenshire Council; Mr R Dickson, Director, NESTRANS; and Ms J McRobbie, Committee Officer, Aberdeenshire Council.
- In attendance:** Mr D Rennie, Head of Partnerships/Oil and Gas, Scottish Enterprise; Ms A Philip, Head of Development and Regional Transport Planning, Transport Scotland; and Mr D Briody, Commercial and Regulatory Manager, Rail.

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Apologies were intimated from Councillor Argyle, Aberdeenshire Council and Professor S Logan and Sir Ian Wood, ONE.

No interests were intimated.

2. RESOLUTIONS

(A) Public Sector Equality Duty

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 content and take this into account when reaching a decision.

(B) Exempt Information

The Joint Committee **agreed**, in terms of Sections 50A (4) and (5) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of Item 9, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in paragraph 6.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE OF 28 AUGUST, 2019

There had been circulated, and was **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 28 August, 2019.

In respect of the proposed equalities training for members, it was **agreed** that a training session be scheduled for the conclusion of the next meeting, of 7 February, 2020.

4. ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATE

There had been circulated a report dated 8 November, 2019 by Programme Manager providing an update on the City Region Deal *(CRD) and its constituent workstreams, and the Joint Committee heard from the Programme Manager as to specific projects.

It was noted that the annual conversation with the Scottish Government had gone well , with the City Region Deal's progress noted and an encouragement to capture, report, and monitor projects.

There was discussion of the additional work to be carried out by the Oil and Gas Technology Centre, outwith the City Region Deal funding; the timetable for the development of the national sub-sea centre;

The Joint Committee heard further from Mr Machray, ONE detailed progress on the Food hub for Innovation, to be launched at Deans of Huntly in January 2020, with the appointment of a design team and architect expected by the end of January, and a target completion date of August 2022 anticipated.

Ms Crow provided an update on the work for the bio-hub and the challenges of designing its location on a tight corner site, the announcement of a preferred contractor imminent; continuing positive relationships with life sciences and NHS Grampian on the data set. There was discussion of the timescale for planning permission and SEPA's comments on the site, and also the interrelationship between the site and the adjacent planning applications for a new mortuary and new green space to the south of the proposed bio-hub.

The Joint Committee heard from Ms Robertson, Digital Programme Manager that by the end of December it was expected that 21 out of the 58 identified suites would be completed, with others scheduled for 2020; that the Private Investment for Digital anticipated £15m investment had been realised /spent in the City to date. A further £25m has been committed by CityFibre as per their £40m announcement.and that the tender for full fibre in the Shire and NHS closed on 18 November, with an appointment hoped for mid-December. In respect of the duct network contracts, one was due to complete by the end of the year and a workshop to be held on 25 November to explore opportunities and inform business cases.

Mr Finch spoke of a very successful checkpoint review which had just taken place with Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government and other partners, on the Strategic Transport. The two main issues had been the updating of the Strategic Transport model, informed by user interviews as well as an analysis of on the ground infrastructure, to be coordinated with data already collected by Transport Scotland on the A96 consultation. In terms of the external road linkages to Aberdeen south harbour, useful workshops had been held with the Harbour Board and consultants, which would lead to an economic appraisal early in 2020.

There was discussion of the A90 challenges through and to Ellon , which was beginning to impact negatively on local land use development projects, and the Joint Committee were advised of ongoing micro-surveys focussed on Ellon which would be shared with Aberdeenshire Council's Formartine Area Committee when completed.

In respect of the well-publicised delays in the harbour expansion, the Programme Manager advised that a phased outcome was now in place and that there would be no negative impact on either the cash draw down or expected benefits. There was discussion on the impact of this delay in the support available for cruise ships which would have nowhere to berth.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that an update presentation by Michelle Handforth, Chief Executive, on the mitigations which were proposed to facilitate the advent of cruise ships, be made to the Spring meeting;
- (2) to note that the transport surveys on the A90 would be reported to Aberdeenshire's Council's Formartine Area Committee in due course;
- (3) that an update on net zero solution be provided within 6 months; and
- (4) in all other respects to note the terms of the updates provided.

5. BENEFITS REALISATION WORKING GROUP

There had been circulated a report by the Programme Manager, advising of the creation of a Benefits Realisation Working Group to support the assessment of outcomes of the City Region Deal. This would support the monitoring and evaluation framework which had been agreed with input from both the Scottish and UK Governments and partner organisations to support all projects in fully maximising the benefits arising from the Aberdeen City Region Deal Investment as well as making recommendations and providing assurance to Aberdeen City Region Deal Programme Board through a monitoring and evaluation framework which will be agreed with input from.

There was discussion of the potential challenges in trying to retro-fit benefits measurements to projects that were already in place and, and also assessing the economic benefit of works which would not necessarily impact within the 10 years of the City Region Deal; the need to be aware where impacts are established, proportional to the timescale set out the original approved business cases; and the inability to measure what was not intended to be delivered in terms of the innovation projects; of the valid opportunities to link benefits realisation to new procurements, especially for physical developments and employment; the governance route for the reporting back to the working group; and the potential measures against which progress might be assessed.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the establishment of a Benefits Realisation Working Group, and its Terms of Reference;
- (2) that officers consider and report, prior to any gathering of data, the proposed scope of the application of the benefits realisation.

6. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – TRANSPORTATION PROGRESS REPORT

There had been circulated a report dated 29 October, 2019 by Transport Scotland providing an update on the progress of additional projects being taken forward through the additional Scottish Government investment, including progress on the A90 Laurencekirk junction improvement scheme and the investment in the rail network to improve services between Aberdeen and the Central Belt.

The Chair, on behalf of the Joint Committee, welcomed Amy Phillips and Damien Briody of Transport Scotland to the meeting which heard from the officers further details of the progression of the schemes additional to those set out in the accompanying agenda report.

During his presentation Mr Briody confirmed the following:-

- a) The Aberdeen to Central Belt Reference Group met on 12 September, 2019 in Dundee, and heard proposals for investment in a route signalling upgrade between Aberdeen and Dundee, complementing other planned investment on the rail network. These investments would work together to deliver journey time goals, within the CRD timescale of 2026;
- b) The journey time improvement vision presented to the Reference Group was for a 2hr10min journey time Aberdeen to Edinburgh, 2hr30min Aberdeen to Glasgow, and 1hr10min Aberdeen to Dundee. These would be improvements to average journey times;
- c) The project was now recognised as a rail enhancement project, moving from the rail policy team to the rail delivery team within Transport Scotland. Network Rail had been remitted to develop the scheme to GRIP4 (single preferred option and outline business case).
- d) The reference group was now being wound up, to be replaced by a rail industry project delivery group. Representatives of the City Region Deals and Regional Transport Partnerships would be kept closely informed of progress and actions.
- e) It was expected that the total cost of investment between Aberdeen and Dundee would exceed £200m. The precise set of benefits, and mixture of interventions would only be confirmed when Network Rail had produced their single design option and outline business case. The interventions would likely involve signalling, targeted line-speed improvement, freight loops, timetabling, and rolling stock improvements.
- f) The programme and associated milestones for the project would be available in January 2020.
- g) Future plans to electrify the rail network by 2035 would be considered within the development of the proposed signalling improvements.
- h) The scheme would be required to take full account of the current and proposed mix of rail services on the route (inter-city, local, freight), as well as future regional aspirations for development of the local rail service.
- i) The signalling improvements may provide greater flexibility to facilitate any required improvements to connections between trains to the Central Belt, and trains north of Aberdeen, with the aim of developing fully connected communities.

In response to the presentation, Members spoke of their concerns that the journey time improvements set out in the previously presented Arup report (around 2 minutes) had seemed a very small return for the £200M, and that there were other infrastructure projects being considered within the region which potential had a greater economic impact on the region as a whole to which the funds might have been more competently directed. Members considered that there seemed little of substance and detail in the update provided to give full assurance on delivery and benefits. Mr Briody indicated that more detail would be available in January, 2020, following Network Rail's response to the development remit. It was also noted that meetings had still to be held with the Cabinet Secretary and that this might provide additional assurance.

In respect of the road improvements to the A90 at Laurencekirk, the Joint Committee heard from Ms Phillips that draft Orders arising from the preferred option announcement of July.

2018 were expected to be published by the end of the year. This work was being supported by an ongoing programme of survey, design, and assessment work. However it was not yet possible to set a timetable for construction or completion, as it was currently unknown whether there would be any objections to the scheme following publication of draft Orders, and whether or not these would then lead to a requirement for Public Local Inquiry.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that Mr Briody be requested to attend future meetings to provide updates on the options chosen and provide feedback requested in letter to committee when received;
- (2) to note the updates provided and request a further report to the next committee on breakdown of costs against each intervention and milestone; and
- (3) to thank Ms Phillips and Mr Briody for their informative presentation.

7. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - HOUSING PROJECTS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 2 May, 2018, (Item 7), there had been circulated a report dated 8 November, 2020 by the Senior Housing Strategy Officer, Aberdeen City Council, providing an update on progress in relation to the housing workstream, where the additional investment of £20M Infrastructure funds was to unlock sites of strategic importance and provide 5 year certainty on £130M of affordable housing supply grant.

The report indicated that five sites had been identified, with expressions of interest submitted to the Scottish Government on which decisions were expected at the scheduled meeting on 20 December.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that a further update report on the 5 bid sites be reported to the Joint Committee in February, 2020; and
- (2) to note in all other respects the terms of the report.

8. PROPOSED MEETING DATES.

The Joint Committee noted the proposed dates for meetings in 2020 and, having heard that confirmation was awaited from ONE as to the suitability of the dates, **agreed:-**

- (1) to approve in principle the undernoted dates of meeting for 2020:
 - 7 February, 2020 (already in diary);
 - 5 June, 2020;
 - 4 September, 2020; and
 - 13 November, 2020;
- (2) to delegate to the Programme Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, final confirmation of these dates; and
- (3) to note that from April 2020, meetings would be supported by, and hosted by Aberdeen City Council.

9. FINANCIAL UPDATES - QUARTER 2 2019/2020

There had been circulated a report dated 8 November, 2019 by the Head of Finance, Aberdeenshire Council and the Programme Manager, Aberdeen City Council, providing an update on the finances of the City Region Deal for actual expenditure to quarter 2 in 2019/20, and updating the forecast for 2019/20.

The meeting heard from the Head of Finance of the figures represented in the report, that each project streams were progressing well, with expenditure in line with what was expected at this stage of the financial year; of positive discussions with the Scottish Government which

looked to provide assurance against the implications for cash flow of the payments being made quarterly in arrears; and of a report which would be considered by Aberdeenshire Council on 21 November which would allow him greater authority as a Section 95 officer, in regard to cash flow for projects, should the timing of release of funding from the government become an issue.

Mr Wood also spoke of his intent to maximise the transparency of reporting of financial updates in the public domain and sought guidance as to the level of detail required by the Joint Committee to provide them with assurances in terms of scrutiny of the financial management and progress of the City Region Deal.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to welcome the positive discussions with the Scottish Government to facilitate the express release of funds when required;
- (2) to note that Aberdeenshire Council would consider a system to mitigate in cases of any delayed drawdown of funding from the Scottish Government;
- (3) that officers consider and report the proposed future split of the financial update reports between public and exempt documents; and
- (4) to note, in all other respects, the terms of the report.

Councillor Jim Gifford, Chair

NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE**WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 29 NOVEMBER, 2019**

Councillors: Councillor Brenda Durno, (Vice Chair), Angus Council; Councillor Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council (by Skype); Councillors Peter Argyle and David Aitchison, Aberdeenshire Council; Councillors Gordon Cowie and Theresa Coull, Moray Council (by Skype); and Councillor Allan Henderson, The Highland Council (by Skype).

Officers: Paul Finch, Ruth O'Hare, Robert McGregor, Philip McKay, Jan McRobbie, and Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council; Douglas Hill, Angus Council; Jim Smith, Argyll and Bute Council (via Skype); Calum Mackenzie, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (via Skype); Mark Atherton, Moray Council; Robin Pope and Tracey Urry, The Highland Council (via Skype); and Shaun Millar and Angus Bodie, The Improvement Service.

Apologies: Councillor Ellen Morton, Argyll and Bute Council; Councillors Michael Hutchison and Ross Grant, Aberdeen City Council; Councillor Ron Sturrock, Angus Council; Councillor Trish Robertson, The Highland Council; and Councillors Uisdean Robertson and Kenneth MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

In the absence of Councillor Morton, for whom apologies had been submitted on the grounds of ill health, Councillor Durno took the Chair and welcomed Members to Woodhill House, Aberdeen.

The Joint Committee **agreed** that best wishes be sent to Councillor Morton wishing her a speedy recovery.

The meeting heard from Mr Wallace, Chief Officer, of the housekeeping arrangements.

2. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Apologies were intimate from Councillors Morton, MacLeod, Uisdean Robertson, and Sturrock.

No interests were declared.

3. 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 6 SEPTEMBER, 2019

There had been circulated the draft Minute of Meeting of 6 September, 2019. Having noted that apologies had been recorded from Councillor Currie, instead of from Councillor McCuish, of Argyll and Bute, the Joint Committee **agreed** to approve the Minute as a correct record, subject to that amendment.

5. THE VALUE OF THE LOCAL ROADS NETWORK IN SCOTLAND – PRESENTATION

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 21 June, 2019 (Item 6), when it had been agreed that a presentation be made on the SCOTS “Value in Local Roads” project, the Joint Committee heard from Angus Bodie, of the Roads Collaboration Programme, an update on the work.

Whilst originally envisaged as a short, distinct piece of work, the focus of the research had expanded, including more detailed consideration of what was meant by “value”, in terms of the intrinsic impact of roads on rural economy, beyond a direct correlation made in 2010 of the £1 spend on roads translating to £1.50 impact on Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It was necessary to consider more than an economic value, by looking at journey time and reliability, and speculate as to what would happen to our country and our communities if the roads network did not exist.

Mr Bodie spoke of the research’s methodology, with the work shared across three individual experts rather than a single firm, and to begin with a desktop assessment of existing policy and literature, followed by interviews with 60 stakeholders and a survey of over two hundred community councils. From this, initial work had been undertaken on the information sets and values, linking activities in terms of outputs and outcomes in a greater detail than had previously been considered, including Councils’ work in community planning partnerships in developing Locality Outcome Improvement Plans.

It was reported that the research was already improving understanding of the linkages between investment in infrastructure and non-infrastructure outcomes, including social issues beyond the previous assumptions of roads safety and community safety. This would allow officers to consider how to better assess future investment priorities across their authority area. Mr Bodie stressed that there would be a need to consider these local impacts in the context of a wider national roads

system, and ultimately align this with national performance indicators and the policy framework for Scotland's roads.

The desired way forward was to develop a model that would ensure the capture of values, seen initially in the context of the local economy. This model would require to take cognisance of the differences in geography, both locally, regionally, and nationally. It would also need to be flexible to be able to absorb new data when known.

This might be expressed in a pyramid of values; from utility (evidence based); social value (reflective and evidence based); and future value (predictive and responsive to policy changes and future trends).

From the work done to date, it was possible to confirm that, a basic utility value, including personal, business, and social use, including public transport, had an estimate of £6.4 Billion per annum nationally. From a total level of spend across Scotland of about £1.8 Billion, this was a crude approximation of 1:3, but this would be clarified further when wider social values had been assessed and incorporated.

The next steps, Phase 2, would be the build up from utility values to identify and test social and future value components; the refinement and testing of the theoretical models, potentially in three different areas, (urban, rural, and island) and the inclusion of the trunk roads to inform a "whole network" approach. From this, a standardised approach, with guidance, would be developed and demonstrations made, including to the Joint Committee, of how the model works to embed local roads.

Mr Bodie reported that Transport Scotland were also interested in the holistic network approach, as this could alter the traditional reliance on journey time alone as the sole value focus.

There was discussion of the inclusion of an assessment of the impact of industrial transport on local roads, including that of distilleries on islands, impacting on both commercial ferries and roads built for horse and cart; the process through which a new model might interface with the established Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) assessments, currently subject to consultation, potentially allowing for additional funds to be allocated to rural areas which were not currently able to access Government funding; where tourism would sit in terms of the utility valuations; the role of Transport Scotland officers in advising Ministers of the work and its potential assistance in considering the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) processes, and the requirement for Partners to reference the ongoing work in any engagement events in which they participate.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note and welcome the update provided; and
- (2) to have a further detailed report on the project progress in due course.

6. NATIONAL ROADS COLLABORATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 6 September, 2019 (Item 6), there had been circulated a report dated 19 November, 2019, by Angus Bodie, Programme Manager, National Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on progress being made with collaboration, nationally and locally, through the Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP).

The report highlighted the various stages of governance partnership working across Scotland, with other joint working under early development; cited the updating of the 2017 National Workforce Improvement Plan, reflecting the staff survey which had identified, amongst other matters, a 20% reduction in roads staff across Scotland as well as increasing apprenticeship opportunities; the ongoing work with the Scottish Road Network Management Forum, including representatives from SCOTS (Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland) and Transport Scotland in delivering the shared action plan of opportunities to work across trunk and local road boundaries, with meetings held with BEAR Scotland in May and November; the progress of various technical projects, including the joint Asset Management Project, the initial stage of SCOTS' "Value of the Local Roads" project and its further development, and bids for Scottish Roads Research Board funding for (a) the use of recycled materials in road construction, (b) sustainability in the use of aggregates in roads construction and maintenance, (c) the impact of industrial transport on local roads, and (d) the Value of Local Roads (Phase 2); and spoke of other training events for staff and ongoing projects to develop sharing of information and best practice around gully maintenance, street lighting (LED) maintenance, and standard construction details.

The Joint Committee heard from Mr Bodie further of additional work with the Roads Work Commissioner to be done on roads management with the advent of a revised Transport Act; how the Northern Roads Collaboration was still the exemplar of good practice to other embryonic governance groups; that the Scottish Roads Training Programme was expected to be complete by January 2020 and would potentially be of benefit to over 2000 roadworkers; and that the research bid projects would all have a significance in the Collaboration area, including work on quarries where it was anticipated that slight amendments to specifications might impact positively on waste arisings and cost savings for each authority.

There was discussion of the impact of reduced or restricted gully cleaning on the roads and its potential impact on flooding and Members heard from officers that often water on roads was not a result of this or of failure of other drainage.

The scope of the assessment of industry on roads was raised, and its potential expansion to consider not only roads infrastructure but harbours and bridges was promoted, potentially as an area where additional funding might be achieved from government, from the taxation of operations such as the whisky industry.

In respect of the Joint Committee's previous consideration of the use of plastics in road works, Mr Bodie advised Members that a report by the Australian Environmental Agency, which paralleled the licensing and monitoring work of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, had concluded that there was still no

evidence base that the materials used made any difference, good or bad, when added to the aggregate: however it had made it clear that there was no domestic plastic or bags in the process, as the manufacturer had suggested, but rather that virgin plastic offcuts were being used. In the United Kingdom, testing on site had not yet been undertaken, and the results of a pilot in Ayrshire had not yet concluded to clarify what the short and long term outcome would be and its implications for future maintenance sustainability, cost, and regimes. Concerns had been raised on the issue of Health and Safety for roadworkers working with an unknown combination of materials and the end use question had still to be resolved, as, at some point in the future, the material would require to be disposed of to landfill. A sound evidence base was needed to be able to answer these questions.

Mr McKay spoke of additional research being undertaken by KIMO (Municipalities for Sustainable Seas) on the potential for off-run by micro-plastics into water courses and the marine environment; this information was to be shared with Mr Bodie to tie all the research together.

The Joint Committee heard that The Highland Council Members had been keen to explore the options and, against officer recommendation, and in the awareness of potential concerns of Health and Safety issues, had approved a trial of the plastic material, not on a housing estate, but on an area of commercial road. This would be reported in due course to the Joint Committee.

In respect of the continued evolution of the Joint Committee itself, Mr Wallace spoke of additional engagement with the Western Isles to explore the reality of collaboration for them: this would be reported to a future meeting. In addition, Aberdeen City were currently exploring the implications for increased use of hydrogen as a fuel; this would also be reported to a future meeting.

There was discussion of the increasing availability of electric vehicle charging points and whether this might expand from current prominent sites in towns and cities to be more generally available close to roads. Officers advised that some charging sites were located outwith centres, some in transport interchanges, with others being promoted by private sector at petrol stations. Additional locations would continue to be considered, but at present sites were chosen to maximise access by the most people.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the ongoing progress being made with collaboration nationally and locally through the Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP); and
- (2) await further updates on the various projects cited in the report.

7. JOINT ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 21 June, 2019, (Item 8), there had been circulated a report dated 19 November, 2019, by the Programme Manager, Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on the joint project to consider opportunities for collaboration in the collection, management, and reporting of asset data.

The Joint Committee heard from Mr Bodie of progress on the initiative, with the project plan signed off and a SWOT (Strength/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat) analysis of the current situation, compared with SCOTS guidance and world-based best practices across each authority undertaken. Results varied across the partnership and an individual assessment had been shared with each authority, but the overall findings supported a clear case for collaboration in due course, with a shorter term option recommended to create a soft hub to share practice and opportunities to align both systems and the form in which data was gathered. Transport Scotland had been engaged in the process as they were currently developing a new asset management system, to be launched in autumn 2020 when new operating companies would be added. BEAR Scotland were aware of these proposals and were tracking developments.

There was discussion of the increasing ability to be able to prioritise works such as bridge management in the light of the joint working on asset management and sharing of good practice, and the requirement for some authorities to further consider the detail of what would be expected in the proposals, before submitting a formal response for ongoing support for the Phase 2 of the Business Case with the Asset Management Hub.

The Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) note the outputs from the completed first phase of this project, noting that each partner authority should now consider their individual responses to the recommendations;
- (2) seek from each authority, by 31 January, 2020, confirmation (or otherwise) of ongoing support for the project along with authority to take forward Phase 2 of the Strategic Business Case, i.e. to introduce an Asset Management Hub across the Northern area during early 2020, and to explore new funding opportunities and approaches; and
- (3) note that officers would continue to engage with Transport Scotland and BEAR Scotland around the potential to collaborate on asset management across the local and trunk network.

8. A9/A96 DUALLING PROGRAMMES

There had been circulated a report dated 19 November, 2019 by Robert McGregor, Strategic Transport Officer, Aberdeenshire Council, providing an update on the Scottish Government's progress in its commitment to completing the dualling of (a) the A9 between Perth and Inverness, to be undertaken at 11 sections of the route, and (b) the A96, in four sections, between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. The report detailed Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils' experiences of recent working with the Government on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and The Highland and Moray Councils' experience of the A9 dualling and the A96 programmes to date, where issues including impact on Council staff resources; communication with communities and Elected Members; and the knock-on impact on other travel routes and implications for additional future maintenance of de-trunked roads were highlighted.

Although previously identified as a common issue for partnership authorities, it was noted that, given the proximity to the General Election, Transport Scotland had been unable to attend the meeting, but would continue to be invited to future meetings.

There was discussion on how the sharing of experiences as detailed in the report was a very helpful tool for officers in preparing to support new road works. The Joint Committee heard that Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee had, the day before, heard a public petition that, on the basis of climate change, the A96 be not dualled in its entirety, and had referred the issue simpliciter to the Scottish Government for consideration.

The meeting heard from Mr McGregor that meaningful intervention for change in roads projects could only be achieved before a contract had been awarded, and also that there should be a clearer focus on the implications for de-trunking in terms of future maintenance, actual effectiveness, and drainage.

The Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) note the ongoing progress of the Transport Scotland Dualling programmes for the A9 and A96, within the overall commitment to completing the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025, and the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030; and
- (2) welcome the opportunities afforded for collaboration and information sharing to ensure the best outcomes for neighbouring communities, future maintenance, and traffic management of the existing road network.

9. NATIONAL GULLY MAINTENANCE PROJECT UPDATE

There had been circulated a report dated 19 November, 2019, by Shaun Millar, Project Officer, Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on the national gully maintenance project, from which relevant information for the northern roads' authorities had been extracted, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Joint Committee heard further from Mr Millar that some of the survey results were surprising; for example, there was only one "backup" vehicle across the seven authorities; of the move to single person machines, and the implications of this; and of the great potential for collaboration as gully work was generally undertaken across planned routes, with the exception of responsive works. There were challenges in so far as there were differences in the four mapping systems currently used across the authorities, but this could be an opportunity for change.

The Joint Committee heard from officers that the gully maintenance work was done in terms of road safety and dealing with flooding of properties, but there was a need to counter any perception that roads should be free from water during heavy rainfall: the systems were not designed that way and roads were designed to be used to channel that flow. This was an area where expectation and aspiration required to be managed, as sometimes when a gully was backing up, this did not indicate a system failure, but rather that the water could not get away. Gullies were expected to

surcharge once a year, with the system every five years, but could not cope in terms of flooding incidents recorded as 1:200 years.

The Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) note the results of the survey as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) welcome the establishment of a short life Officer Working Group to explore further collaborative opportunities;
- (3) that officers report to a future meeting on flood alleviation measures in terms of road surface safety; and
- (4) to receive an update on gully collaboration options at a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

10. DRAFT ACTIVITY PLAN AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE

There had been circulated a report dated 26 November, 2019, by Ewan Wallace, Head of Transportation, Aberdeenshire Council, reporting on the successful collaboration achieved as part of the Scottish Government/ Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) Joint Agreement 2018, resulting in the further development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) and seeking consideration of the potential for the Joint Committee to seek funding support across several areas of its Draft Collaboration Action Plan.

The Joint Committee heard from Mr Wallace as to the learning from the successful funding achieved for the collaboration in Education in North East Scotland, albeit that these had been in response to specific Scottish Government invitations for grant. The potential applications would be set in the context of the work undertaken across the northern collaboration to date, and had been extracted from the approved activity plan.

Having noted that the cumulative total of funding requested across all the potential collaborations across the seven authorities was £300,000, the Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) note the example of the positive collaboration achieved as part of the Scottish Government/COSLA Joint Agreement (2018) which resulted in the further development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs);
- (2) approve in principle the potential for Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee to seek funding support from Transport Scotland/Scottish Government as set out in the Draft Collaborative Activity Plan (Appendix 1); and
- (3) delegate to appropriate officers to fine tune the submissions prior to their being put to the Scottish Government.

11. FUTURE MEETINGS AND ARRANGEMENTS

The Joint Committee heard from officers that there had been no consensus returned on dates circulated on potential availability for the quarterly meetings for 2020.

It was **agreed** that the dates to be considered for each of the meetings be recirculated and locations identified as appropriate by officers.

In considering the agenda for future meetings, and noting the request that officers report further on technical considerations regarding road surface water issues, it was **agreed** that future meetings consider the undernoted topics as appropriate:

- Electric vehicles; and
- Signage on the network and interrelationship with linkages to trunk roads.

Councillor Brenda Durno

Vice Chair