

## Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

### REPORT TO NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE – 27 NOVEMBER 2020

#### NATIONAL ROADS COLLABORATION - UPDATE

##### 1 Recommendations

The Joint Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the current position on Roads Collaboration nationally; and
- 1.2 Formally thank the officers of the Improvement Service (Angus Bodie, Shaun Millar, Megan Brown, and Allie Law) for all of their support since 2018 and wish them well in their future endeavours.

##### 2 Background/Discussion

- 2.1 Members will recall previous reports on the activities of the Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP) at a national level. **Appendix 1** contains the most recent update in the form of a look back at what the National Roads Collaboration Programme has achieved.
- 2.2 Members may also recall that a review of the was commissioned by the RCP Board in 2019. That review identified potential areas for a refocus which the RCP Board accepted at a meeting in June of this year. The principle of continued collaborative working within the Roads sector was fully supported by all Board members. The ongoing support to the RCP by the Improvement Service was also part of that review and all organisations on the RCP Board expressed their views on potential future arrangements. These ranged from the status quo to a total cessation of the current arrangements.
- 2.3 Having considered the outcomes from the RCP review, the Improvement Service Board have taken a decision that they would stop hosting and providing officer support to the RCP as of 30 November 2020. The RCP Board has considered this decision and agreed that the hosting of the RCP will now move to The Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) under a Lead Authority model. Discussions are ongoing with potential host Local Authorities but there will be a period when most of the RCP national activities will be paused.
- 2.4 For this Joint Committee the implications are that we will not have Improvement Service support going forward and that will lead to a short-term pressure on the officers across the 7 Authorities until a new hosting arrangement is established. This is likely to be in the spring of 2021. The officer group should be able to absorb this pressure and the Lead Authority has also planned for this potential scenario by bringing in a small additional level of support as of summer this year. Once the arrangements for the new RCP are established, a more substantive report will be brought back to this Joint Committee.
- 2.5 The establishment of this Joint Committee and the subsequent collaborative work has drawn heavily on the abilities of the team at the Improvement

Service. Their work has been of a very high standard and provided excellent input and advice to the work of this Joint Committee and the officers who have supported it. Their input will be missed, and our collective thanks and good wishes go to all of them.

- 2.6 The Joint Committee's Legal Monitoring Officer within Aberdeenshire Council and Financial Monitoring Officer within the Highland Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report, their comments are incorporated within the report, and they are satisfied that the report complies relevant legislation.

### **3 Implications and Risk**

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment is not required because no decisions are being taken which have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 3.2 There may be future staffing and financial implications associated with the revised approach by the RCP at national level should the same level of support not be forthcoming. Should this be the case then it will be reported to this Joint Committee.

**Ewan Wallace**  
**Lead Officer**

Report prepared by Ewan Wallace, Head of Transportation, Aberdeenshire Council  
20 November 2020

## APPENDIX 1

### Roads Collaboration Programme Achievements (up to November 2020)



#### 1. Background

Established in late 2013, the Roads Collaboration Board (RCPB) was tasked to develop and oversee actions in response to the then (2012) Audit Scotland recommendations around collaboration, built around local leadership and local implementation. The Programme's aims from the start have been:

- 1) *To support the design and delivery of existing roads authority initiatives to share services/capacity within Roads Services;*
- 2) *To develop existing shared initiatives further, considering the potential to widen the scope of what could be shared, widen partnerships, remove/manage barriers to change, escalating the business case design stage to drive forward a faster pace of change;*
- 3) *To identify new opportunities for collaboration between the 33 roads authorities and to develop these;*
- 4) *To encourage and support communication cross-authority boundaries via a number of channels to promote the sharing of best practice, innovation and expertise and regular re-visiting of further opportunities for collaboration and shared services development;*
- 5) *To encourage the consistent use of roads-related data, maximizing the potential to use the data to drive improvement; and*
- 6) *To support local authorities and their partners to establish sound governance arrangements for shared initiatives that meet all EU procurement guidelines.*

The Board was initially formed of senior representatives from SCOTS, Transport Scotland, SOLACE, and COSLA, and was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Improvement Service. In 2019 the chair role moved to Transport Scotland and the Roadworks Commissioner joined the Board.

Following the 2012 Roads Maintenance Review, Audit Scotland undertook a follow-up Audit in 2016, which sought an increase in pace of development of collaboration. A joint response from all road authorities was prepared by the RCPB published in January 2018, providing commitment to a plan of future actions – which became the priorities for the Programme from then.

A dedicated resource of 2FTE was established in 2014, hosted by the Improvement Service, supplemented by ad hoc support from specialist consultants as required. Over time this changed to reflect the needs of the Programme, and in 2020 was 2.5FTE plus 3 days per week of a Programme Manager.

A Strategic Action Group was established in 2014, co-chaired by the Transport Minister and COSLA, which provided political scrutiny to the work of the Programme. This Group ceased in 2018.

Initially the annual programme budget was agreed at £150,000 split between all 33 Road Authorities. This was increased by 1% in 2017. This funding was confirmed by all road authorities in the autumn of each year.

## 2. Priorities and Workplan

Initially the focus of the Programme was to develop the Governance First project and a series of technical collaborative projects. Closer links between local and trunk road management were developed through the establishment of the Scottish Roads Network Management Forum. This work directly led to the RCPB taking the lead in January 2018 in responding to the 2016 Audit Scotland review.

The RCPB annually reviewed the Programme Workplan to reflect all opportunities arising from time to time and to take advantage of any circumstances which could help to develop or support collaborative activity. Priorities were therefore kept under annual review.

## 3. Programme Achievements

The Programme has directly, and in some cases indirectly, led to a wide range of achievements and positive outcomes for authorities (and stakeholders):

### Advisory

- National cultural and behavioural change towards sharing with others, including the presumption that collaboration will be considered in all future road service review work.
- Joint response to Audit Scotland's 2016 review prepared and approved across partners – including detailed action plan.
- Reporting and support provided to all SCOTS Liaison, Executive and Business meetings.
- Reports provided to COSLA, SOLACE and the Strategic Action Group.
- Established various knowledge hub groups and their ongoing administration.
- Facilitation of, and reporting to, the Roads Stakeholder Group (until 2018).
- One-to-one support provided to individual Council corporate teams.
- Membership of Mineral Products Association Scotland Committee.
- Presentations given at Scotland Excel procurement events, local meetings, and UK-wide conferences.
- Established and chair national workforce development group.
- Membership of Scottish Public Sector Network (workforce).
- Engaged with APSE (who manage SCOTS performance data) and supported SCOTS to improve robustness of data and selection of key indicators.
- Assistance given to IS LGBF team around national annual roads Performance Indicators (PIs) and reporting data.
- Annual national staff demographic survey completed 2016-2019.
- Formal engagement established with national groups representing Council legal officers and HR officers (SPDS).
- Advice and technical input provided to national Trading Standards and Building Services associations around workforce strategies.
- Provided national strategic leadership, and direct support to SCOTS, during Covid pandemic and into recovery phase.

### Collaborative working and partnerships

- A formal Joint Committee has been established in the Northern area (7 Councils) supported by a senior officers' group and part time technical support.
- Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders, and Fife (ELBF) senior officers group established and active. Shadow Joint Committee formed in 2015 and temporarily stopped meeting in 2018.
- Elected members informal collaborative group formed in Forth Valley in 2017.
- Technical and advisory support given to officer-level collaborative work in Forth Valley, Glasgow city area, and in the south west.
- Led the development of the Scottish Roads Training Partnership, established in 2019 (13 initial partners with some 600 roads operatives).
- Advisory support given to development of shared service between Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire. Similar support provided to earlier. Renfrewshire/East Renfrewshire/Inverclyde shared service project, and Glasgow city region shared roads/transportation project – not taken forward.

### Workforce Planning

- Workforce demographic survey completed in 2016 and 2019 (in conjunction with SPDS).
- National Roads Workforce Strategy and Implementation Plan developed and endorsed by Transport Minister in 2017.
- Careers advice information developed and tips for local awareness events developed and tested. 980 young people directly engaged with the Programme in career events during 2019 – e.g. listened, took part in activity, asked a question, took away careers materials.
- Reached 6200 attendees at larger events where the RCP represented the roads sector: 22 school events arranged and managed - 9 large multiple school attendance (primary and secondary), 4 primary school events, and 9 individual secondary school events.
- Leadership Development Course developed and delivered in 2018,19, and 20 (64 aspiring managers have been involved, from 26 Councils).
- Scottish Roads Training Partnership (SRTP) developed and delivered in January 2020, with 13 initial partners and some 600 staff.
- RCP was a member of the national Graduate Apprenticeship development group and provided particular civil engineering advice and expert review.
- Employer information packs, job profiles etc developed for apprenticeships.
- Package of resources for employers to use at careers events.
- Video for Careers Information Advisers in schools developed. Road careers videos developed for graduates and technicians - featured on You Tube and MyJobScotland - 404 views at end of October 2020.
- Printed and online careers materials for schools, including detailed career route map.
- Arranged and facilitated specialist technical seminars on surfacing materials and asset management.
- Talent pool for retired officers established.
- Workforce development group has been regularly meeting since 2015, progressing a shared sector approach to roads careers.
- Working closely with SDS to develop construction careers materials.

- Providing support and advice to SDS Public Sector Steering Group/Covid-19 special meeting on behalf of Local Roads Authorities.
- 3 Knowledge Hub groups for training collaboration established and being managed.
- Wide network of contacts established, including colleges and universities, DYW, SDS, CITB, CECA etc.
- 240 participants have attended the most recent two monthly technical seminars for Graduates and Technicians being managed on behalf of SCOTS.

### Technical Projects

- National guidance on DPE implementation developed and shared. New shared back-office activity introduced in Glasgow and 3 partners. Further collaborative work started in 2020 reflecting pavement parking challenges expected to start in 2021.
- MoU developed for sharing of professional services.
- Collective procurement opportunities explored, and Minor Civil Works contract developed to business case stage. Improvements made to Scotland Excel national contracts.
- Template for rapid business case development produced and introduced.
- Completed guidance report on consistent surfacing materials and delivered 4 supporting technical seminars.
- Depot sharing project established and ongoing (4 Councils and 2 Operating Companies directly engaged so far).
- LED lighting maintenance arrangements explored and surveyed.
- Guidance on national Construction Details developed.
- National gully maintenance guidance issued.
- Business case for asset management hub in the North developed.
- 3 research projects managed and delivered for the SRRB in 2019/20 (Value of Local Roads phases 1 and 2, and Use of Recycled Materials in Road Surfacing). 4 bids prepared and submitted for 20/21.
- Options for sharing dredger (as a proxy/test case for other physical resources) explored, to provide robust legal documentation for future resource/property sharing.