

NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE

BY TEAMS, 25 JUNE, 2021

Councillors: Councillors Rory Colville and Bobby Good, Argyll and Bute Council; Sandra Macdonald, Aberdeen City Council; Jim Gifford and Annouk Kloppert, Aberdeenshire Council; Brenda Durno, Angus Council; Theresa Coull, Moray Council; Allan Henderson and Trish Robertson, The Highland Council; and Uisdean Robertson, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Officers: Douglas Ritchie, Aberdeen City Council; Arlene Gibbs, Robert McGregor, Alison McLeod, Derek Murray, and Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council; Douglas Hill, Angus Council; Tom Murphy, Argyll & Bute; Mike Mitchell and Tracey Urry, Highland Council; Mark Atherton, Moray Council; Calum Mackenzie, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar; Rab Dickson, NESTRANS, Mark Speed, Tactran.

Apologies: Councillors Aitchison, Cowie, Hutchison, K MacLeod and Sturrock

Prior to the start of proceedings, the Chair asked Members to record their thanks to Jan McRobbie, Committee Officer, who had moved on to a new role within the Council and expressed her thanks to Jan for her work in ensuring the good governance of the Joint Committee since its inception. The Joint Committee also put on record their appreciation of the contribution to the work of the Committee by Mark Skilling of Aberdeenshire Council who had recently retired from the Council and wished him well for his retirement.

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interests. No interests were declared.

2. STATEMENT OF EQUALITIES

The Joint Committee **agreed** in line with its legal duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Joint Committee, in making decisions on the reports before it, shall have due regard to the need to:-

- (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- (ii) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (iii) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 5 MARCH, 2021

There had been circulated, and was **approved** as a correct record, the Minute of Meeting of 5 March, 2021.

Arising from discussions of the above, Mr Wallace advised, in respect of (1) item 5, that the issues raised at the previous meeting had been raised with Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and the briefing on gully cleaning had been recirculated to members; (2) item 6, there had been a session on Electric Vehicles and alternative energy on 21 June, 2021 and an outputs report would be brought back to a future meeting, to consider future options which could be developed on a collaborative basis; and it was suggested that a strategic approach be considered to identifying locations for charging points across authorities and consideration of charging points being made available on ferries.

4. HIGH RESOLUTION VIDEO SURVEYS AND POTENTIAL LOBBYING FOR ADDITIONAL MAINTENANCE FUNDING

There had been circulated a report dated 15 June, 2021 by the Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services, Argyll and Bute Council, on behalf of the Lead Officer, on a proposed pilot project to be undertaken by Argyle and Bute Council to survey approximately 500km of the road network by high definition video, in a bid to form a body of evidence to help put forward a case to Government for dedicated funding to support road strengthening to cope with the impacts that industrial processes can have on the local road network through necessary transportation and the use of heavy vehicles.

The Joint Committee heard further from Mr Murphy, Argyll and Bute Council, who highlighted the impacts and deterioration being seen on local road networks, noting that some 24% of the roads in Argyll and Bute were built on peat, and the road network was not subject to any weight or other vehicle restrictions, and noting that 44 tonne vehicles often traverse the roads. The specialist road condition surveys being proposed would provide additional information which may be used to influence future capital spend in terms of resurfacing or reconstruction of key sections of road. He confirmed that a procurement process was being initiated by Argyll and Bute Council to enable the specialist survey work to be carried out.

There was discussion of the use of such technology, and the potential options, in future, to consider the joint procurement of such equipment in a collaborative approach, to produce a reliable and consistent report of road conditions across Scotland.

After further consideration, the Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) Note that Argyll and Bute Council intend to take forward a pilot project which would provide data to:
 - (a) Provide evidence that can be used to lobby for additional funding for asset sustainable capital maintenance works; and
 - (b) Provide potential opportunities for making smart use of technology in relation to road safety inspections; and
- (2) Seek a future report on the outputs from the pilot project.

5. SCOTLAND'S ROAD SAFETY FRAMEWORK TO 2030

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Joint Committee of 6 September, 2019 (Item 9), there had been circulated a report dated 11 June, 2021 by the Lead Officer on the recently published document 'Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030'.

The Joint Committee heard from Mr Wallace on the report, which set out the national approach being proposed to take forward the road safety framework to 2030 and setting out new targets for reducing the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the road network in Scotland. It would also bring forward a new approach in terms of seeking an overall safe system of the road network and how it was used, the vehicles that use it and how people behaved. There was also an opportunity through the new framework to look at funding opportunities to allow authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships to develop new pilot projects and support the work being carried out, and a wider opportunity to find an approach to collaborative work. Engagement had been carried out with Transport Scotland officials to make them aware of the work of the Joint Committee and other forums working on a regional basis in a collaborative manner.

There was discussion of the joint collaboration being undertaken by Police and Councils in relation to road safety issues, which was considered very beneficial; the need for additional funding to be made available to ensure that the aims of the framework could be achieved; the need for solutions to ensure driver education and awareness were addressed in a safe systems approach; the need to put an emphasis on local flexibility, and acknowledgement of differing needs of rural and urban areas, when considering the use of the safe system approach on the local road network; and the preference that Argyle and Bute be included in the proposed Local Partnership Forum to cover the northern part of Scotland.

Thereafter, the Joint Committee **agreed** to:

- (1) Note the recently published Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 document;
- (2) Note the details of the proposed Local Partnership Forums, and to ask officers to take back for further consideration the preference of the Joint Committee that Argyle and Bute should be included in the proposed North Forum;
- (3) Note the possible opportunities for collaboration across the Joint Committee members to access the available funding streams; and
- (4) Invite representatives from Sustrans to attend a future meeting to discuss active travel routes and officers from Transport Scotland, who lead on the Road Safety Framework, to a future meeting.

6. ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

There had been circulated a report dated 17 June, 2021 by the Lead Officer, providing an update on the activities of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee for 2020/21.

Mr Wallace introduced the report, which set out the range of work that had been brought before the Joint Committee, as well as identifying a number of the future issues for consideration. Highlights included the proposal to bring back further updates on work underway on the value of the local road network, including details of pilots in Aberdeenshire and Angus; the use of plastics and recycled plastics in road construction, which was currently under consideration by a standards group at a national level within Scotland, and would be brought back for further consideration in the autumn; the ongoing work of the supporting officer group which continued to work well.

The Joint Committee **agreed**:

- (1) To approve the Annual Report on Activities 2020/21, as appended to the report;
- (2) To commend officers on the work undertaken during the last year; and
- (3) That the report be submitted to each member authority for their consideration.

7. THE TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2019

There had been circulated a report dated 17 June, 2021 by the Lead Officer, which set out updates on the different elements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which was enacted in December 2019.

Mr Wallace introduced the report and provided further detail of aspects of the Act which were being enacted and noted that further work was ongoing on some of the statutory guidance around the legislation, and some elements which would be subject to further consultation. Examples given included Aberdeen City Council had recently set out their plans for a proposed low emission zone, which was being consulted on; the Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) funding changes and local authorities across the North had made successful bids to the Bus Partnership Fund; Transport Scotland had commenced a consultation on the Workplace Parking Licensing Schemes; possible future consultation on the Pavement and Double Parking elements within the Act; and he highlighted a number of issues which would be taken forward in the coming period.

There was discussion on Part 4: Pavement Parking and Double Parking, which had generated much interest for local authorities and the discussions within the Joint Committee allowed the opportunity to share on a regular basis the approach being taken by each authority.

After further discussion, the Joint Committee **agreed**:

- (1) To note that the new Transport (Scotland) Act was passed into statute in December 2019;
- (2) To note the current status of sections of that Bill as discussed in the report; and
- (3) That Officers be asked to provide regular updates on shared practice in relation to decriminalised parking and other relevant issues.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 10 SEPTEMBER, 2021

The Joint Committee **noted** that a report would be taken to the next meeting in relation to the Chair and Vice-Chair arrangements, notwithstanding the forthcoming Local Government elections in 2022. And it was also **agreed** to address the options for returning to face to face meetings in future.

Councillor Brenda Durno
Chair