

NORTHERN ROADS COLLABORATION JOINT COMMITTEE

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MORAY COUNCIL, 1 MARCH, 2019

Councillors: Councillors Ellen Morton, Argyll and Bute Council, Chair; Michael Hutchison, Aberdeen City Council (by Skype); Peter Argyle, and Anouk Kloppert (by Skype) Aberdeenshire Council; Brenda Durno (Vice-Chair), Angus Council; Gordon Cowie and Theresa Coull (as substitute for Graham Leadbitter), Moray Council; and Allan Henderson and Trish Robertson, The Highland Council.

Officers: Vycki Ritson, Aberdeen City Council (via Skype); Ruth O'Hare, Philip Mckay, Jan McRobbie, and Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council; Douglas Hill, Angus Council; Jim Smith, Argyll and Bute Council (via Skype); Murdo MacRitchie, Cohairle nan Eilean Siar (via Skype); Mark Atherton and Stephen Couper, Moray Council; Robin Pope and Tracey Urry, Highland Council; and Angus Bodie, Megan Brown; Ailie Law, and Shaun Millar, The Improvement Service.

Apologies: Councillors Ross Grant, (Aberdeen City Council); David Aitchison, (Aberdeenshire Council); Ron Sturrock, (Angus Council); Roddy McCuish, (Argyll and Bute Council); Uisdean Robertson and Kenneth MacLeod, (Cohairle nan Eilean Siar); and Graham Leadbitter, (Moray Council).

1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

Councillor Morton, Chair of the Committee, welcomed Members, via remote access, or in person, to the Moray Council Chambers, Elgin.

Housekeeping details were provided by Mark Atherton.

2. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Morton asked Members for declarations of interest.

Councillor Durno declared an interest in Item 12 as a member of the Board of Tayside Contracts but indicated that, having applied the objective test, the interest was not substantive and accordingly she would remain and take part in the discussions.

3. RESOLUTIONS

3(a) 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.

3 (b) EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Joint Committee **agreed**, in terms of Sections 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and media representatives during consideration of Items 11 and 12, on the grounds that they involve likely disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 1A to the Act.

4. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 23 NOVEMBER, 2018

The Minute of Meeting of 23 November, 2018 had been circulated and the Joint Committee heard from the Chief Officer of an error in Item 12, which should read: "There was discussion of matters which the partner authorities might wish to have reported, and the Joint Committee heard from Stephen Cooper, Head of Direct Services, Moray Council, of progress in working to develop arrangements for a framework that would allow authorities to "call-off" the use of the Moray Dredger as per previous reports to the Joint Committee. Members were asked for confirmation that this was an acceptable approach. The Members from Argyll and Bute, Highland, Aberdeenshire and Angus Council confirmed that this was acceptable, and they would therefore wish to participate in the "call-off" arrangements on that basis.

Having also noted that Councillor David Aitchison, Aberdeenshire Council, was both listed as present and as having submitted apologies, and that clarification should be provided that the Strategic Transport Fund cited in Item (12) should refer to the Strategic Timber Transport funding, the Joint Committee **agreed** to approve the Minute, subject to (a) the removal of Councillor Aitchison from the recorded apologies; (b) the amendment of Item 12 as detailed above; and (c) the insertion of "Timber" between "Strategic" and "Fund" in Item 12. and (b).

Arising from consideration of the above, there was discussion of the timing of an update report on the use of recycled plastics in road resurfacing, (Item 6), and the Joint Committee heard from Mr Bodie of the Improvement Service that the report from the November meeting had been circulated amongst road authorities nationally and internationally, and that a meeting with the company was scheduled to be held on 21 March to afford them the opportunity to present the missing information and be able to justify their certification and verification. This would be reported to the June meeting of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee **noted** the update provided.

5. ROADS DESIGN FUNCTION

There had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019 by Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council, (a) providing information on extensive discussion at officer level on opportunities for collaboration across authorities in terms of roads design, which might assist with issues of capacity across the substantial Capital Plans for individual Councils and (b) requesting consideration of a draft Business Case of options for the delivery of road design functions across the 7 authorities.

The Joint Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to approve the further exploration of shared opportunities for roads design functions, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and

- (2) that officers progress a more developed Business Case, including a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to the June, 2019 meeting.

6. STRATEGIC ROADS ASSET MANAGEMENT – PROGRESS UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 23 November, 2018, (Item 10), there had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019 by Angus Bodie of the Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on ongoing discussions on collaborative options in the collection, management and reporting of asset data, whilst sharing best practice. The report detailed ongoing national work, via Atkins Consultants, by the Society of Chief Officers of Transport (SCOTS) which was developing a self- assessment tool in terms of individual councils in terms of their Roads Asset Management Plans (RAMPS), which might impact on the proposed collaborative options for the Northern authorities.

The Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the updates provided and on-going progress in considering opportunities for collaboration in road asset management planning;
- (2) subject to the outcome of the SCOTS work, to approve in principle the scope, methodology, and expected outcomes of the proposed Business Case as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report; and
- (3) that the final version of the Business Case be reported to the June, 2019 meeting of the Joint Committee.

7. NATIONAL ROADS COLLABORATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 23 November, 2018, (Item 7), there had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019 by Angus Bodie, the Roads Collaboration Programme, providing an update on national progress in terms of Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP). The report detailed developments in governance of joint working; progress made in terms of workforce development, including the expansion of mature apprenticeships with Universities; and other training which could be coordinated without necessitating recourse to a physical centre of learning, with the objective of an ultimate single, national training programme which would ensure consistency across all authorities.

There was discussion of the relative progress made in other areas towards collaborative working, the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the progress on the National Roads Collaboration Programme as detailed in the report; and
- (2) to commend officers supporting the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee for their work in progressing the Joint Committee's evolution and achievements to date.

8. REVISED SAFETY CAMERA OPERATIONS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 18 May, 2018, (Item 10), there had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019 by Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council, on concerns previously expressed regarding the site selection for safety camera operations. Having noted the recent Transport Scotland work to assess safety camera site prioritisation, intended to deliver casualty reduction and meet future demands, the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to note the proposed revised safety camera operation, as detailed in Paragraph 2.4 of the report, as being both more flexible and more locally accountable; and
- (2) to welcome the response to the joint lobbying on the matter.

9. FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AS AN AGENDA ITEM

The Joint Committee heard from the Lead Officer of the various matters which had already been agreed for future reports, including those added in the discussion recorded above, being as follows:

- Road Casualty Reduction and Road Safety (Spring 2019);
- An Annual Report on the activities of the Partnership (Spring 2019 for onward reporting to constituent authorities post June, 2019);
- Finance Monitoring report, detailing the resources needed for conducting the business of the Joint Committee;
- Joint Procurement intra-authority discussions;
- Scottish Roads Asset Management Plan; and
- Marine Code Update;
- The Strategic Timber Transport Fund (currently being discussed via CoSLA and the Scottish Minister);
- Cobble surface specialist repair issues (to be considered by Aberdeen City Council and of potential interest to other authorities, and the subject of a previous report to SCOTS);
- The potential security implications for Ports in the context of BREXIT;
- A formal report on the use of recycled plastics in road surfacing, following the 21 March meeting with the manufacturer (June, 2019); and
- Joint contractual agreements.

There was discussion of additional items and it was noted that reports reviewing the first year of operation would also require to be considered, to encompass issues such as the Chair and Vice-Chair appointment; the lead authority role; and governance and finance support provided. Having noted that the next meeting fell outwith the technical definition of a year, the Joint Committee unanimously **agreed** that Councillor Morton Chair the June, 2019, meeting of the Joint Committee.

10. FUTURE MEETINGS – TO APPROVE AND CONSIDER

The Joint Committee considered the requirement to set future meetings, and were advised that the June meeting had now been confirmed to take place in Angus, and **agreed:-**

- (1) that officers consider and report to the next meeting potential meeting dates, and suggested locations, in August/ September and November, 2019; and
- (2) to note that the next meeting would be hosted by Angus Council.

11. PORTS/HARBOUR AND MARINE OPPORTUNITIES

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 23 November, 2018, (Item 11), there had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019 by Jim Smith, Argyll and Bute Council, requesting the consideration of a joint procurement across authorities for the role of Designated Person, recommended as best practice, although not mandated, by the Port Marine Safety Code. After discussion of the potential relevance to different authorities, and the benefits of shared resources, the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to support the proposed joint procurement of Designated Person duties and recommend the initiative to member authorities for consideration; and
- (2) to acknowledge the potential for the future sharing of staff.

12. PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There had been circulated a report dated 22 February, 2019, by Ewan Wallace, Aberdeenshire Council, listing future contracts already shared across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Highland Councils, which shared a Commercial and Procurement Service, due for renewal which might offer opportunities for joint procurement with other member authorities.

There was discussion of the national contracts promoted by Scotland Excel which may not always be either appropriate, or resource effective, for northern authorities and the Joint Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) that constituent authorities consider potential opportunities the forthcoming contracts due for renewal, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) that, subject to the above consideration, that officers develop formal proposals to extend existing joint procurement contracts, reporting to the Committee as appropriate.

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