

NET ZERO, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 27 March 2024. Minute of Meeting of the NET ZERO, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Yuill, Convener; Councillor Radley, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Ali, Blake, Henrickson, Hutchison, Massey, Nicoll and van Sweeden.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Convener began the meeting by welcoming Councillor Nicoll to his first meeting of the Committee. He went on to advise Members of a number of good news stories relating to the Committee.

The Transport Strategies and Programmes team was a finalist in the following categories of the Scottish Transport Awards, to be announced in June 2024:-

- Transport Authority of the Year;
- Most effective road safety, traffic management and enforcement category for the city centre bus priority measures;
- Contribution to sustainable transport for the city centre bus priority measures; and
- Transport Team Partnership of the Year for the North East Bus Alliance and Bus Partnership Fund

Finally the Convener advised that Net Zero Aberdeen had also been a finalist in the recent Scottish Innovation in Planning Awards.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. Members were requested to intimate any declarations of interest or transparency statements in respect of the items on the agenda, thereafter the following was intimated:-

- In relation to item 11.6 (South College Street Phase 2 – Options Appraisal), the Convener advised that he was a member of Cycling UK, however he did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would require him to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of this item.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 16 January 2024 for approval.

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In relation to article 3 (Committee Business Planner), Councillor Blake asked when the service update on the Den Burn could be expected.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers were finalising the service update on the Den Burn and this would be circulated to Members shortly; and
- (ii) to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

4. The Committee had before it the business planner as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to item 16 (Local Transport Strategy), to note that officers would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on the number of responses received;
- (ii) to agree to remove item 22 (Net Zero Aberdeen Partnership Leadership Board / Delivery Unit Structure);
- (iii) to note that officers would add the regular Bus Lane Enforcement report into the planner for a future meeting; and
- (iv) to otherwise note the updates to the planner.

NET ZERO, ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT PERFORMANCE REPORT - COM/24/088

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Corporate Services which presented the status of appropriate key performance measures relating to the services falling within its remit.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report Appendix A.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the report and agree that the report indicated Sickness Absence at Environmental, Roads and Waste to be well above average and of concern to officers; and
- (ii) in light of the high sickness absence within these services, agree to instruct the Chief Officers – Operations and People and Citizen Services to bring back a report to the June Staff Governance Committee on why sickness absence was so high within those services and what the Council was doing to reduce such absence; and for future updates to be incorporated into the relevant sickness absence report to Staff Governance Committee.

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CLUSTER RISK REGISTER REPORTING - FLEET / ROADS / WASTE / ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - RES/24/090

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which presented the Cluster Risk Registers and Assurance Maps in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference to provide assurance that risks were being managed effectively within each Cluster.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Cluster Risk Register and Assurance Map set out in Appendices A and B.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Environmental Manager would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on whether any elm trees would be part of replanting schemes, or whether this would not be possible due to Dutch Elm disease;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer – Operations had undertaken to discuss with colleagues in People and Citizen Services as to whether training could be made available for staff on the Substance Misuse Policy;
- (iii) in relation to the target completion date for the Substance Misuse risk of 30 May 2025, to note that the Chief Officer – Operations had advised that work was ongoing in this area and he would ascertain whether it was possible to change the target completion date to make this clearer;
- (iv) to otherwise note the report.

NET ZERO ABERDEEN & ABERDEEN ADAPTS: ANNUAL REPORT - COM/24/091

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update on the progress of city collaborative place-based climate change work, in line with the objectives of the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Aberdeen Adapts: Climate Adaptation Framework.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the summary of key collaborative actions progressed in 2023/24; and
- (b) endorse the content of the Appendix A - Net Zero Aberdeen and Aberdeen Adapts Summary of Progress 2023/24.

At this juncture, Councillor Ali indicated that he had an amendment to the recommendations, however having heard from officers, he withdrew his amendment.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would arrange a workshop session for Members on the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service once the service was further developed; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE RECYCLING AND REUSE - RES/24/089

8. With reference to article 6 of the minute of the Council Budget meeting of 1 March 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update on current projects and future opportunities to increase household recycling and reuse.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the report for assurance; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to report the review of the waste strategy through this Committee starting in Autumn 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND UPDATE - COM/24/093

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update on developments with the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) and associated projects.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note Transport Scotland's intention to pause funding of the Bus Partnership Fund programme in 2024/25;
- (b) agree that positive progress had been achieved in the North East under the programme and that work should continue during 2024/25, with alternate methods of funding to be sought;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to continue with the programme of work described in section 3 of this report, as funding permits;
- (d) to note that, subject to appropriate change control processes, the City Region Deal Joint Committee had agreed an allocation of £1,740,000 between 2024/25 and 2026/27 for progressing work on Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) and the associated corridor studies, as an element of the Strategic Transport Appraisal workstream, and instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to pursue all other relevant external funding opportunities to support continued progression of the Bus Partnership Fund programme;

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- (e) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to continue to engage with Transport Scotland on future plans for the Bus Partnership Fund;
- (f) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to, as funding permits, undertake public and stakeholder consultation on the options established through the Inverurie to Aberdeen (A96) corridor study options appraisal, and to report the preferred option or options relevant to Aberdeen City Council back to this Committee once completed;
- (g) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to proceed with public and stakeholder consultation on the options established through the Dyce to Bucksburn (A947) corridor study options appraisal, and to report the preferred option or options relevant to Aberdeen City Council back to this Committee once completed;
- (h) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to proceed with public and stakeholder consultation on the options established through the Banchory to Aberdeen (A93) corridor study options appraisal, and to report the preferred option or options relevant to Aberdeen City Council back to this Committee once completed;
- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report the outcomes of the ART routing analysis to this Committee in June 2024;
- (j) to note that funding from Nestrans had been established to progress active travel connections between Westhill and Aberdeen city centre, and instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans to progress with public and stakeholder engagement on a preferred option and report the preferred option or options relevant to Aberdeen City Council to this Committee in September 2024;
- (k) to note the report provided to the Nestrans Board in February 2024 on progress on the Laurencekirk to Aberdeen study and the decision of the Nestrans Board to proceed with Detailed Options Appraisal; and
- (l) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to continue to provide quarterly Service Updates on Bus Partnership Fund progress.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Convener of the Net Zero, Environment & Transport Committee and consultation with the Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, to write to the Cabinet Secretary expressing concern about the pause to Bus Partnership funding for 2024/25 and asking for reassurance regarding future funding of sustainable transport initiatives, in particular for projects which were identified in Annex B of National Planning Framework as of national significance, such as the Aberdeen Rapid Transit;
- (ii) to agree that the Committee should see sight of Fiona Hyslop's response once received; and
- (iii) to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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STAFF TRAVEL POLICY AND COUNCIL TRAVEL PLAN - COM/24/094

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which sought approval to review and refresh the Council’s Staff Travel Policy alongside the Council Travel Plan.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, to set up an internal officer working group to review and refresh the Council’s Staff Travel Policy;
- (b) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to update the Council’s Travel Plan to align with any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy resulting from (a);
- (c) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services to thereafter undertake consultation with Council staff and trade unions on any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy and/or the Council Travel Plan; and
- (d) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, following analysis of the consultation and finalisation of the documents, to report both the updated Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan back to this Committee and / or other relevant Committees by Summer 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:

- (i) to replace recommendation (a) with “instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, in consultation with the Chief Officer- Finance, to set up an internal officer working group to review and refresh the Council’s Staff Travel Policy with the emphasis on walking and cycling”; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations outlined in the report.

A92 MURCAR NORTH – ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME DEVELOPMENT - COM/24/069

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update of the outcome of the Review of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Appraisal Report undertaken for the A92 Murcar North Active Travel scheme. The report contained a discussion on the findings, along with recommendations on the next steps for the option identified.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) to note the findings and outcomes of the A92 Murcar North Active Travel Infrastructure STAG-Based Appraisal (Appendix 1);
- (b) to agree that the Active Travel option on the East side as identified in the STAG report (Appendix 1) for A92 Murcar North is the preferred Active Travel option for the route; and

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- (c) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to progress the preferred option for the A92 Active Travel scheme to the completion of an Outline Business Case (OBC) and report this to the Finance and Resources Committee in May 2024.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

FUTURE OPERATION OF CONTROLLED PARKING ZONES Y AND YY (GARTHDEE AND KAIMHILL) - RES/24/095

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which presented options on the future operation of the controlled parking zones (CPZ) within Garthdee and Kaimhill, following the conclusion of the Minute of Agreements that were in place with Robert Gordon University (RGU) as result of planning permissions for the site.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to carry out informal consultation with Garthdee and Kaimhill communities regarding the continuation of the CPZ;
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Operations to assess responses to the informal consultation and to report back to a future meeting of this Committee with the results and recommendations for the future of the CPZ.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the recommendations contained in the report; and
- (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Operations to engage with RGU on the basis of the undertaking given by the then Principal of RGU on 27 March 2015 that, before the end of the current arrangement, the University would engage with Council and community “to seek to agree on a framework for the period after the ten years that will be acceptable to all and will meet the needs of the Community”.

SOUTH COLLEGE STREET JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS (PHASE 1) PROJECT COMPLETION, MONITORING & EVALUATION - RES/24/099

13. With reference to article 24 of the minute of the meeting of Council of 14 June 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which provided an update on the South College Street Junction Improvements (Phase 1) project; set out information from early monitoring and evaluation activities; and highlighted lessons learned from the simultaneous undertaking of the King George VI bridge refurbishment works alongside the project works.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of the report on the full opening of the project and the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation;
- (b) note the Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund programme will be unable to fund project expenditure from 2024/25 onwards and that the Council had included budget provision in the recently approved General Fund Capital Programme to fund the remaining project close activities; and
- (c) note the circumstances considered when programming major roadworks and the steps taken to limit their impact on road users.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

SOUTH COLLEGE STREET PHASE 2 – OPTIONS APPRAISAL - COM/24/084

14. With reference to article 28 of the minute of the former Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of 8 November 2017, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – City Regeneration and Environment which advised of the outcomes of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) based appraisal of options for improvements to travel conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Bridge/North Esplanade West roundabout and the review of active travel provision on Riverside Drive, where this road passed underneath the Wellington Suspension Bridge. An outline of the findings from the technical report was provided, along with recommendations on the next steps for the preferred option that had been identified through the appraisal process.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the findings and outcomes of the South College Street Junction Improvements Project (Phase 2) - Option Appraisal Report (Appendix 1);
- (b) agree that Option 3 Signalised Junction (All movements permitted), described in paragraph 3.11 of the report, was the preferred option and should proceed to further development work, along with the wider active travel improvements on North Esplanade West identified in section 9 of Appendix 1;
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to seek external funding to allow the continued development of the option agreed in (b), including the development of an Outline Business Case, and report the Outline Business Case to the Finance and Resources Committee once completed; and
- (d) note the findings of the option testing for the Riverside Drive active travel improvements (as described in paragraph 3.12 of this report) and instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to seek external funding to allow for the continued development of wider active travel connectivity improvements adjacent to and across the River Dee at this location and report any findings to a future meeting of this Committee.

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The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Massey, seconded by Councillor Ali, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee:-

- (a) note the findings and outcomes of the South College Street Junction Improvements Project (Phase 2) - Option Appraisal Report (Appendix 1);
- (b) agree that Option 1 Pedestrian Crossing on Queen Elizabeth Bridge was the preferred option, noting that the public consultation indicated that minimum change was preferred.
- (c) note that this option required minimum capital spend.

However, if still considered necessary instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to seek external funding to allow the continued development of the option agreed in (b), including the development of an Outline Business Case, and report the Outline Business Case to the Finance and Resources Committee once completed.

- (d) note the findings of the option testing for the Riverside Drive active travel improvements (as described in paragraph 3.12 of the report) and instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to seek external funding to allow for the continued development of wider active travel connectivity improvements adjacent to and across the River Dee at this location and report any findings to a future meeting of this Committee.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (8) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; and Councillors Ali, Blake, Henrickson, Hutchison, Nicoll and van Sweeden; for the amendment (1) – Councillor Massey.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

- **COUNCILLOR IAN YUILL, Convener**