

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	13 January 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Update on Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee – Annual Report 2019 / 2020
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/20/240.
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Reilly
REPORT AUTHOR	Doug Ritchie
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

At its meeting on 28 August 2020, the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee approved an annual report and recommended that each of the partners take that report back to the relevant Committee within their Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee

- 2.1 Consider the annual report from the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee as attached at appendix 1; and
- 2.2. Note the continued role of Aberdeen City Council in the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to make members aware of the work being undertaken by the Northern Roads Collaboration of which Aberdeen City Council is a partner. The terms of the Minute of Agreement among the member

Authorities provide that an annual report will be submitted to each authority on the work of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee.

3.2 On 30 July 2016 (Item 9) Aberdeen City Council approved a report on the formation of a Joint Committee for Roads Collaboration. Since its first formal meeting on 18 May 2018, the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee has now met on a total of 10 occasions with a range of activities having been taken forward on a joint basis. Four of these meetings took place in financial year 2019 / 20 which is the period covered by the attached Annual Report.

3.3 At the most recent meeting on 28 August 2020, the Joint Committee approved an annual report and recommended that each of the partners take that annual report back to the most relevant Committee within their Authority. The annual report of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee for 2019 / 20 is attached at **Appendix 1** for consideration.

3.4 At the same meeting it was confirmed that Aberdeenshire Council would retain the role of Lead Authority supporting the Joint Committee until a review of the governance arrangements is completed.

3.5 The Joint Committee will continue to consider a range of joint working and procurement opportunities and the potential for inter-authority commissions and for shared contracts.

3.6

	Members	Substitute Members	Lead Officer
Aberdeen City Council	Cllr M. Hutchison Cllr S. Macdonald	Cllr R. Grant Cllr Alex. Nicoll	Doug Ritchie

4. UPDATED INFORMATION SINCE THE ANNUAL REPORT WAS ISSUED

4.1 Colleagues at Argyll and Bute Council have informed officers of the sad passing of Councillor Ellen Morton, the chair of the Northern Roads Collaboration Committee. Councillor Morton was instrumental in getting the north collaboration to where it is and her drive and passion will be missed.

4.2 The new appointments are as follows:

Chair – Councillor Brenda. Durno – Angus Council
Vice Chair – Councillor Uisdean. Robertson – Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

4.3 The Roads Collaboration Programme Board are currently considering the future of the national programme beyond the current funding end date of December 2020. Although work will continue, it was always intended that the role and

activities currently supported through the RCP Board will move to the members of the Northern Roads Collaboration Committee.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are staffing and financial implications associated with participation in the Joint Committee. The costs are shared across the 7 partners and our share for 2019 / 2020 was £3060.
- 5.2 Whilst there are no cost savings directly achieved by Aberdeen City Council's involvement in this partnership it provides officers with contacts in other local authorities, strong and direct links with the National Roads Collaboration Programme and Transport Scotland and also the wider opportunity for knowledge sharing e.g. recent discussions on how to implement the Spaces for People projects. This participation within this collaboration is therefore considered value for money.
- 5.3 It also provides the platform for future collaboration for example on delivering design services, the scale to reduce costs in the implementation and purchase of alternative fuel technologies and possible shared working practices with Trunk Road Operators. In previous years we have seen income from providing services to other partners and it is hoped that in future years there will be further opportunities for this approach.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	<p>The additional road lengths and structures returned to the Council create additional demand for limited financial resources and may therefore impact on other maintenance budgets in the future.</p> <p>The staffing implications are low given the advantages received from more joint working with other Local Authorities</p>	M	<p>This will be minimised by prioritising works across the city, by using high-quality design and materials to ensure longevity of renewed infrastructure.</p> <p>The costs are shared across all 7 partners as part of the Northern Roads Collaboration Group</p>

Legal	Any lack of investment in roads is likely to contribute to an increase in claims against the Council	L	Continue to prioritise spend in order to repair higher used and higher damaged roads and footpaths
Employee	Staff resources	H	There is a need to ensure that there are sufficient adequately trained staff resources to deliver the proposed programmes / schemes / strategies approved by the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee and within the specified timescales.
Customer	Increased perception of poor-quality road infrastructure	H	The collaborative working between Local Authorities will assist to provide the necessary maintenance and improvements for the road network, thus increasing ease of travel whilst reducing the risk to all members of the travelling public
Environment	The risks of inaction (not improving maintaining and increasing pedestrian / vehicular and cycle infrastructure) are also significant in terms of a poor quality environment, poor reputation for Aberdeen and a decline in active travel which would have significant implications for the health and wellbeing of the citizens of Aberdeen	M	
Technology	Lack of Asset Management information to deliver annual work programme	M	Carry out a digital asset survey of the City Roads Infrastructure to manage the spend over several years and continue to optimise our use of resources to provide best value. Use the information obtained to update annually the Roads Asset Management Plan
Reputational	Lack of investment in Roads is likely to contribute to an increase in claims against the Council and adverse publicity	M	Continue to prioritise spend in order to repair higher used and higher damaged roads and footpaths. Works to be determined in line with Roads Asset Management Plan

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN

	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>5. Commit extra funding to resurface damaged roads and pavements throughout the city.</p>	<p>£10 million extra funding provided over a 4-year period. Currently we are in year 3 of the current capital spend.</p>

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan

	Impact of Report
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Investment and improvements to the road infrastructure will assist in maximising the economy of the city.</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Using the roads and footways, street lighting and traffic safety measures to assist in making Safe and Resilient Communities for people to live in.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, working with partners and volunteers to address safety, and infrastructure to assist in the increase of Active Travel.</p>

	Impact of Report
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	<p>The views of affected residents and road users are sought on our performance on specific schemes. Records held in the Confirm (Roads Maintenance Management) System and records of claims by road users against alleged defects can be analysed to indicate areas of concern. Specific surveys may be carried out from time to time to address specific areas of concern. Results of these various analyses can be used in conjunction with inspection data to establish customers' areas of concern and expectations of the maintenance of the roads network.</p>
<p>Organisational Design</p>	<p>Our organisational structure is such that it reflects our services and the statutory duties we must deliver.</p>
<p>Governance</p>	<p>The Chief Officers from Finance and Governance have been consulted in the preparation of this report and the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.</p>
<p>Workforce</p>	<p>Need to ensure that there are sufficient adequately trained staff resources to deliver the proposed programmes and reports approved by the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee.</p>

Process Design	Required Technical staff to understand improved innovative processes that will assist in an improved service delivery and best value.
Technology	There is a need to modify the reporting systems from paper to digital in order that we can measure outputs
Partnerships and Alliances	Continue to improve on customer information relating to works delivery. Also membership of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee provides officers with contacts in other local authorities, strong and direct links with the National Roads Collaboration Programme and Transport Scotland and also the wider opportunity for knowledge sharing e.g. recent discussions on how to implement the Spaces for People projects.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<i>Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment</i>	This report has no direct implications in relation to Equalities and Human Rights and as such a full EHRIA is not required. The Committee is being asked to consider the annual report for financial year 2019 / 2020 and the matter does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Impact Assessment	Not Required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N / A

11. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Appendix 1: Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee Annual Report 2019 /20

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Doug Ritchie
Title	Roads Infrastructure Manager
Email Address	dritchier@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224-522325

Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee Annual Report 2019/20



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Contents

	Page
Foreword by the Chair of Joint Committee	1
Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee	2
Collaborative Initiatives 2019/20	3
National Activity 2019/20	5
Planning for the Future	6
Costs and Funding	8
Appendix 1 – Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee and Officers as of 31 March 2020	9

Foreword

Local Government has a proud record of working across physical and professional boundaries for the benefit of our communities.

The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee is an excellent example of just such an approach with the added dimension of being able to bring other agencies and authorities to the table. The area covered by the 7 member authorities covers 58% of Scotland with 19% of the population and 38% of the road network that supports a diverse and successful range of economic activities.

With similar issues to deal with across our Authorities and the common purpose of ensuring we have a safe, sustainable and efficient transport network our formal collaboration is a first in Scotland. This last year has seen more steady progress and the Joint Committee is keen to see additional initiatives on our agenda that would enable joint working, increased resilience, knowledge transfer and reduced costs.

The period since the emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic has been especially difficult for all but I know that the networks established through collaborations such as ours have only assisted our response. Indeed, as our authorities take stock of future priorities and available resources the opportunity to collaborate may become even more attractive.

Autumn of 2020 will also see me step back from the role of Chair of this Joint Committee. Any collaboration is only as strong as its members make it and I would like to thank all of the elected representatives and their officers for how we have continued to work proactively and positively over the last 18 months. I have every confidence that you will adopt the same approach over the next year and beyond.

Councillor Ellen Morton

Chair of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

The first meeting of the Joint Committee was held on 18 May 2018 in Woodhill House, Aberdeen.

The Committee had been preceded by an informal collaborative forum which had been established on the back of one of the workstreams under the national Roads Collaboration Programme (RCP). That forum agreed that it should move to a formal Joint Committee arrangement and the appropriate papers were approved by each of the partner Authorities. The first meeting of the Joint Committee put in place the chairing and officer support arrangements.

The Standing Orders for the Joint Committee allow for business to be conducted with members attending remotely. This has allowed a good level of attendance by members of the Joint Committee and also by officers presenting reports. It has also reduced costs and minimised the carbon footprint compared to an approach requiring physical attendance.

In 2019/20 the Joint Committee met on a further 4 occasions:

- 21 June 2019 in Forfar
- 6 September 2019 in Inverness
- 29 November 2019 in Aberdeen and;
- 21 February 2020 by Skype.

Collaborative Initiatives and Topics reported to the Joint Committee in 2019/20

During 2019/20 officers met by Skype/Microsoft Teams on 8 May 2019, 23 August 2019 and 10 February 2020.

Updates on the Joint Committee work has been provided at SCOTS Meetings in 2019, 2020 and via the National Roads Collaboration Board.

Use of Recycled Plastic in Road Surfacing was first reported to the Joint Committee on 23 November 2018 (Item No 6) and again on 21 June 2019 (Item 7). Officers are continuing to explore opportunities.

Initial officer engagement with National Timber Transport Forum began in March 2019 with an update provided to the Joint Committee on 6 September 2019 (Item 11). This work is still ongoing.

Officer liaison meetings were held with BEAR Scotland on 29 April 2019 and 18 November 2019 and this work is ongoing.

During the period of 2019/20 the following reports were present to the Joint Committee:

- Updates on the National Roads Collaboration Programme
- Proposed Carriageway Recycling and Retexturing Joint Collaboration Contracts
- Strategic Business Case for Roads Asset Management
- Scottish Roads Training Partnership
- Commenting on the National Transport Strategy
- Road Casualty
- Business Case Approval for Sharing of Professional Services and Staff
- Future Funding for Road Maintenance due to the Impact of Industrial Vehicles
- Joint Asset Management
- A9/A96 Dualling Programmes
- National Gully Maintenance Project
- Maintenance of Natural Stone Surfacing
- Road Drainage and Flood Risk
- Proposal to Transport Scotland for £300k to fund Northern Roads Collaboration activities over next two years

National Activity 2019/20

Workforce Planning

- Successful Routes to Leadership course
- Co-ordination on Recruitment of Graduate Apprentices and establishment of new courses
- Foundation Apprentice placements
- Support to School Career Events
- Roads Training Partnership
- Development of Knowledge Hub across Scotland

Collaborative Network Management

- Scottish Road Network Management Forum
- Exploring collaboration opportunities with BEAR Scotland

Technical Projects

- Research Project on the Value of the Local Road Network
- Position Paper on Plastic Roads
- Guidance on consistent road material specifications and associated training events
- Sharing of Information and Best Practice
- Development of an Asset Management Hub

Planning for the Future

During the meetings of the Joint Committee in 2019/20 requests were made for reports and presentations to be brought forward on the following topics:

- Continuing Joint Procurement intra-authority discussions
- Scottish Roads Asset Management Plan
- The Strategic Timber Transport Fund
- Cobble surface specialist repair issues
- The potential security implications for Ports in the context of BREXIT
- Continued consideration of the use of recycled plastics in road surfacing
- Joint contractual agreements
- Consideration of the “Value in Local Roads”
- Consideration of national transport infrastructure in support of the emerging National Transport Strategy
- A presentation on the dualling of the A9/A96
- The officer group considered how to share the learning experiences of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), recently completed, including the lack consideration of active travel and bus service networking, and the knock on impact for local road authorities in falling unexpected heirs to detrunked roads
- Electric vehicles (including ULEV and Hydrogen vehicles)
- Signage on the network and interrelationship with linkages to trunk roads

Where these have not already been reported back to subsequent meetings of the Joint Committee the requests will be considered as part of the Activity Plan for the period 2020 to 2022.

The Plan will also take into account any other regional or national initiatives relevant to the work of the Joint Committee as well as the ongoing impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Finally, the Plan will consider the themes and proposed areas of work detailed in the unsuccessful bid for funding from Transport Scotland whilst taking into account the available resources within the partners. The formal Activity Plan will be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic the Joint Committee meetings will continue to be held virtually for the foreseeable future.

Costs and Funding

The central support costs to operate the Joint Committee in 2019/20 were £21,400.

These costs have been split as per the approach agreed in May 2018. No formal bids for funding support have been made to national agencies or partner authorities at this time although a proposal was put to the RCP partners. The RCP is currently being reviewed and so there may be an opportunity to revisit that proposal in 2020/21 for the period from 2021/22.

The Joint Committee also receives support from the RCP officers retained by the Improvement Service. The RCP is funded by Transport Scotland and the 32 Local Authorities.

The Joint Committee and the Officer Group are also supported by a nominated officer representative from Transport Scotland whilst 3 of the Regional Transport Partnerships (HITRANS, NESTRANS and TACTRAN) are also included in the Officer Group that supports the Committee.

Members and officers time and expenses are covered by each authority.

Appendix 1 - Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee and Officers as of 31 March 2020

	Members	Substitute Members	Officer
Aberdeen City Council	Councillor M Hutchison Councillor S Macdonald	Councillor R Grant Councillor A Nicoll	Doug Ritchie
Aberdeenshire Council	Councillor P Argyle Councillor D Aitchison	Councillor J Cox Councillor A Kloppert	Ewan Wallace Philip McKay Legal Officer Ruth O'Hare Committee Officer Jan McRobbie
Angus Council	Councillor B Durno Councillor R Sturrock	Councillor R Proctor Councillor B Duff	Douglas Hill
Argyll & Bute Council	Councillor E Morton Councillor R Curry		Jim Smith
Highland Council	Councillor A Henderson Councillor T Robertson	Councillor K Gowans Councillor L MacDonald	Robin Pope Tracey Urry Finance Officer Mike Mitchell
	Members	Substitute Members	Officer
Moray Council	Councillor G Cowie Councillor T Coull		Stephen Cooper Mark Atherton

Western Isles Council	Councillor U Robertson Councillor K MacLeod	Councillor I M Macleod Councillor J N Macleod	Callum Mackenzie
----------------------------------	--	--	---------------------