

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	City Growth and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Regional Quality Partnership for Public Transport
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	PLA/18/009
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Steven Whyte
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Gale Beattie
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<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.2

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for an overarching voluntary Regional Quality Partnership for Public Transport Agreement and to commit the Council to the Agreement.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 Approve for signature on behalf of the Council the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance Quality Partnership Agreement 2018 in Appendix 1 of this report; and
- 2.2 Note that a Service Update report would be circulated in September 2018 to update on targets and proposed action plan set by the Bus Alliance Board.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 It was proposed by the Local Authority and Bus Operator Forum (LABOF) partners that a more ambitious voluntary region-wide Quality Partnership for public transport agreement be established which set the objectives, standards & targets for the region, governance arrangements and a programme and timeframe for delivery of interventions on specific transport corridors, which could then be the subject of statutory or enhanced partnership agreements depending on the requirements of the transport corridor.
- 3.1.2 A report was submitted to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017 which advised members on the proposals of LABOF toward the options for refreshing the current structure of the Quality

Partnership for Public Transport and to seek approval for the principles of a revised voluntary Quality Partnership with statutory functions for public transport for the North East of Scotland Region (including Aberdeen City). The committee “*approved a two tier approach for a region-wide voluntary partnership agreement and subsequent corridor specific agreements such as statutory or enhanced partnership agreements*”; and requested “*the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development to report to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in January 2018 confirming the terms of the Quality Partnership Board and region-wide Voluntary Quality Partnership Agreement and associated technical, procedural and/or financial matters arising.*”

3.1.3 Officers were unable to report in January 2018 as LABOF partners continued to shape the Bus Alliance (Quality Partnership) Board membership and the governance arrangements for the board and partnership.

### **3.2 Proposed Bus Alliance Purpose and Objectives**

3.2.1 The proposed regional Quality Partnership Agreement is appended to this report at Appendix 1.

3.2.2 The region wide Quality Partnership will be known as the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance. It establishes a new Bus Alliance Board responsible for the establishment of joint objectives and targets, overseeing monitoring, providing resources and committing to the aims of a Passenger Charter. By joining the North East Bus Alliance, partners are signing up to a Passenger Charter and Terms of Reference, which can be viewed in Appendix 1 (pages 2 and 10).

3.2.3 The Bus Alliance and region-wide Quality Partnership Agreement form a voluntary partnership with all partners participating on an equal basis. The Agreement is intended to support delivery of the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils’ respective Local Transport Strategies and to lock in the benefits of significant investment in recent and imminent infrastructure improvements. The overarching objectives of the Agreement are to:

- Arrest decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022;
- Achieve year-on-year growth in bus patronage to 2025.

3.2.4 Several sub-objectives have also been developed, against which targets will be set and progress will be monitored through the Board and are detailed in Appendix 1 (page 3).

3.2.5 As well as aiming to improve quality standards across the region, the purpose of the Bus Alliance and region-wide voluntary Quality Partnership Agreement is to set an agreed framework for the development of more formal statutory agreements on individual transport corridors. Further information on the current proposed programme for delivery is detailed in Appendix 1 (page 9).

### **3.3 Proposed Bus Alliance Governance**

- 3.3.1 Governance and reporting on both the voluntary and statutory elements of the Partnership Agreement will be critical and both require a robust governance structure and the establishment of a Bus Alliance Board by which actions will be agreed, progress reported and that is able to resolve any disputes that may arise. It is anticipated that there will also be an Executive Group, which will be constituted of representatives from each member of the Bus Alliance, as appropriate, and will implement the instructions from the Board by overseeing the delivery of activity by the working groups and report on progress to and seek direction from the Board. It is anticipated that Working Groups will take forward the main delivery of the Quality Partnership and membership will be constituted of appropriate representatives from across the members of the Bus Alliance, as required, specific to a particular area of delivery, reporting to the Executive Group.
- 3.3.2 The Bus Alliance Board will be made up of the proposed membership:
- Independent Chair
  - Director, Nestrans
  - Chief Officer, Aberdeen City Council
  - Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Council
  - Managing Director, First Aberdeen
  - Managing Director, Stagecoach North Scotland
  - Representative for all other bus operators
  - Passenger Representative.
- 3.3.3 The Bus Alliance will look to work with a number of key stakeholders throughout inception and implementation, as detailed in Appendix 1 (page 10). George Mair, from the Confederation of Passenger Transport and a Nestrans Board member, has been identified as the preferred candidate for the Independent Chair of the Board, acting in a personal capacity. It is envisaged that the Board member for the Council will be the Chief Officer responsible for Public Transport. All other operators of commercial local bus services in the north-east have been approached with a view to participation as have several individuals regarding the role of passenger representative.
- 3.3.4 The first tasks of the new Board will include the development of an action plan and agreement of a dispute resolution procedure. The Board will review the action plan on an annual basis.
- 3.3.5 The minutes and decisions of the Bus Alliance Board will be reported directly to the Nestrans Board with progress and project specific updates also reported to the two Councils. The two Councils and Transport Scotland will remain the relevant roads authorities and issues relating to roads consent will require to be submitted to the relevant roads authority for approval.
- 3.3.6 Full detail on the structure and responsibilities of the Bus Alliance can be viewed in Appendix 1 (pages 10-13).

## **3.4 Next Steps**

- 3.4.1 Following approval of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and Quality Partnership Agreement by all partners, the first step will be for the Board to be established and meet for the first time. The Board will scope targets for objectives and prepare an action plan and a Service Update report will be submitted; once these have been established.
- 3.4.2 The Board will also prioritise the programme for implementation of statutory partnerships on specific transport corridors. Corridors to be considered as a priority will be highlighted through a forthcoming '*State of the Network Report*', which will be developed as the Bus Alliance's first action later in 2018. The key transport corridors detailed on page 9 of Appendix 1 are the key 'A' classification routes in the City which due to their classification set out that they are the City's most important transport corridors as reflected in the Regional Transport Strategy and Local Transport Strategy and links to the ongoing works focussing on the Roads Hierarchy post implementation of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and for the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan.
- 3.4.3 Any projects from the Bus Alliance will be managed through the Council's governance arrangements and reported to committee as appropriate.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no anticipated implications in terms of the establishment of the Bus Alliance and the progression to the next stage other than staff time, which can be met from existing resources.
- 4.2 On the basis of the recommendations there is a requirement to further report, particularly where each corridor intervention will require to be considered by the appropriate committee and the financial implications would be brought forward at that time.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The input into the Bus Alliance falls under existing general delegated powers (including but not limited to those relative to implementation of policy, arrangement for traffic management and the promotion of new infrastructure schemes where they are included in Transport Strategies and Development Plans) and will be managed through the normal governance arrangements and programming of work priorities, ensuring these are in line with Council/Partner objectives and priorities. Legal colleagues have reviewed the Agreement and are content that there are no governance or contractual concerns.
- 5.2 Under the Local Transport Strategy the Council has committed to increase public transport patronage by making bus travel an attractive option to all users and competitive with the car in terms of speed and cost. One option for enshrining commitments to improve bus services recommended in the Local Transport Strategy is to enter into a statutory Quality Partnership (sQP), as defined in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001.

- 5.3 Statutory partnerships place legal obligations on both the local transport authority and the bus operators, with the local transport authority providing the relevant facilities and the latter to operate their services to the prescribed standards. If the Council fail to deliver on what has been agreed under such agreements, then there will be legal implications and possible recourse against the Council.
- 5.4 The Council must adhere to the legislative requirements for bus services as determined by the Transport Act 1985 and Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 and any future legislation that may apply.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	There are no financial risks as a result of the recommendations of this report and further consideration to such risks will be addressed through the future reports to committee.	L	As noted, further consideration to such risks will be addressed through the future reports to committee.
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal risks as a result of the recommendations of this report and further consideration to any risks will be addressed through the future reports to committee when statutory partnerships are formed.	L	As noted, further consideration to such risks will be addressed through the future reports to committee when statutory partnerships are formed.
<b>Employee</b>	There is a risk that there is insufficient staff time and resource to fully engage in and deliver the proposed partnership agreement. There is a low likelihood of this occurring and the workloads of Officers will be managed by Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning to ensure	L	The workloads of Officers will be managed by Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning to ensure milestones/deadlines are met.

	milestones/deadlines are met.		
<b>Customer</b>	There is a risk if the Council does not sign up to the Quality Partnership and Bus Alliance that this will be to the detriment of bus services in the city, and to the delivery of the Local Transport Strategy.	H	Approving the Quality Partnership will mitigate this risk and Officers will work with partners to ensure the agreement meets all partners' priorities.
<b>Environment</b>	There are no environmental risks as a result of the recommendations of this report and further consideration to such risks will be addressed through the future reports to committee as each corridor intervention is considered and detailed targets are agreed including those with a focus on air quality and vehicle emission standards.	L	N/A
<b>Technology</b>	There are no technological risks as a result of the recommendations of this report	L	N/A
<b>Reputational</b>	There is a risk of adverse publicity and repute for the Council if the Quality Partnership is not agreed, as this is the primary driver to improving public transport in the City and Region.	M	We will ensure any decision is managed through our communications team and details are fully set out with regards to the reasoning for any decision and ensure officers continue to engage with the partners involved and to work in collaboration with them, to establish an acceptable agreement.

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	<p>Investment in infrastructure and economic growth - the recommendations in this report are focussed on improving public transport in the City. A high quality public transport system is important for any thriving economy in transporting people to work and education and directly support the business and education sectors and ensures the workforce can travel effectively and that all have access to appropriate education opportunities and access to all facilities in a cost-effective way.</p> <p>A consistent approach to delivery of public transport in the City will ensure that local environmental factors, changing priorities and customer needs are considered as well as available budgets are considered on a reviewed basis.</p>
<b>Prosperous People</b>	<p>People are supported to live as independently as possible - The improvement to public transport links to the Community Plan vision of creating a <i>'sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all.'</i> The actions in the Action and Delivery Plan assist in the delivery of actions identified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013, in particular the Thematic Priority – Older People (<i>'Older people in Aberdeen have increased independence'</i>) and the Multi-lateral Priority – Integrated Transport (<i>'Aberdeen is easy to access and move around in'</i>) and the Underlying Principle – (A presumption for community based access to services – <i>'Services are accessible to all citizens in the ways which meet their needs'</i>).</p>
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	<p>People friendly city - the LOIP sets out that we will improve multi-modal access to Aberdeen. The LOIP identifies that transport is a major contributor to carbon emissions and in Aberdeen there is an exceptionally high level of car ownership and usage. It is a circular agreement – poor air quality and poor road safety discourages people from walking or cycling, however reducing reliance on private transport is the best way to improve air quality and a high quality public transport network is critical to this and this is identified in the LOIP which sets out the requirement for a competitive and accessible public transport system.</p>

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	<b>Co-design:</b> Delivery of the Quality Partnership will require considerable consultation and engagement with communities and stakeholders.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	<b>Enabling:</b> The Council will be working with partners to deliver improvements to public transport and this will be a collaborative and joint effort with each partner playing a role.
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Transparent:</b> All delivery of actions through the Quality Partnership will be robustly evidenced through studies, modelling, assessment of data and public feedback and where actions take place clear measurable evidence of improvement will be required.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	This is a partnership agreement where we ensure all have shared vision and are working to deliver shared objectives.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b><u><a href="#">Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</a></u></b>	Not required

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A

## 10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

10.1 Appendix 1 - North East of Scotland Bus Alliance Quality Partnership Agreement 2018

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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