

PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING
17TH FEBRUARY 2006

Held in the Court Room, City Chambers, Dunfermline, Fife.

Present

Cllr Carol Bartholomew	West Lothian Council
Cllr David Bryson	Falkirk Council
Cllr Andrew Burns	City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Neil Calvert	Scottish Borders Council
Cllr Maureen Child	City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Gordon Edgar	Scottish Borders Council
Cllr Norman Hampshire	East Lothian Council
Cllr Russell Imrie (Chair)	Midlothian Council
Cllr Alice McGarry	Fife Council
Cllr Fred Mackintosh	City of Edinburgh Council (substitute for Cllr Wheeler)
Cllr Harry McLaren	Clackmannanshire Council (substitute for Cllr Carrick)
Cllr Antony Martin	Fife Council
Cllr George Matchett QPM	Clackmannanshire Council
Cllr Jim Muirhead	Midlothian Council
Cllr Jim Philp	Fife Council
Cllr Bishop Shepherd	East Lothian Council
Cllr Robert Spears	Falkirk Council

In Attendance

Mr Alistair Clyne	Fife Council
Mr Pete Collins	East Lothian Council
Mr John Connarty	City of Edinburgh Council
Ms Natasha Farrell	Scottish Executive
Mr Andrew Ferguson	Fife Council
Mr Trond Haugen	Fife Council
Dr Bob McLellan	Fife Council
Mr Graeme Malcolm	West Lothian Council
Mr David Peace	SESTRAN Secretariat
Mr Keith Rimmer	City of Edinburgh Council
Mr Roger Stewart	SESTRAN Secretariat
Mr Karl Vanters	Midlothian Council
Mr Mac West	Clackmannanshire Council
Mr Stuart Wilson	Falkirk Council
Mr Brian Young	Scottish Borders Council

In his introductory remarks, Cllr Imrie expressed thanks to Fife Council for organising the venue and hosting the meeting. Deputy Provost, Cllr Andrew Patterson welcomed the Partnership to Dunfermline and Fife.

1. Order of Business

The Chair informed the meeting that an extra item on High Speed Rail had been added to the agenda and would be taken at Item 9a.

Discussion of Item 7 was to be moved to the end of the meeting and taken in private session due to commercial confidentiality.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Cllr Allan Jackson, City of Edinburgh Council

Cllr Phil Wheeler, City of Edinburgh Council

Cllr Eddie Carrick, Clackmannanshire Council

Cllr Dave King, West Lothian Council

Cllr Lawrence Marshall, City of Edinburgh Council.

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Burns, Child and Mackintosh declared interests as directors of **tie** Limited.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of 19 December 2005

The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Item 5 – Item 14a. Mr Stewart reported that progress had been made on the design of a new SESTRAN corporate identity. Conceptual visuals had been shown to the Chair and Vice-Chairs who had requested further development work and sight of further options. Mr Stewart confirmed a further report would be made to the RTP on 17 March. The meeting noted the position.

6. Funding and Staffing

a) Core Revenue Funding 2006-2008

Mr Connarty spoke to the circulated paper, and highlighted the amendments to the previous draft budget. Savings were available from the lower than anticipated assessment of the salary of the Partnership Director, and a reduced estimate of the costs of office accommodation.

Decision

The meeting approved the core revenue budget for 2006/'07 of £500,000 and instructed Mr Connarty to requisition funds from the constituent councils as set out in the paper.

b) Recruitment Arrangements for Partnership Director/ Chief Officer

Mr Peace spoke to the circulated paper which highlighted the proposed timetable for recruitment of the Partnership Director. Advertisements had appeared from 10 February and interviews of shortlisted candidates would take place on 31 March. A recommendation of the successful candidate would be made to the Partnership at the 7 April meeting. The Partnership noted the position.

c) Recruitment and Selection of Other Members

Mr Peace spoke to the circulated paper. Because of anticipated high numbers of applicants for Other membership, the Recruitment Sub-Group had been considering a selection process involving group interviews. However, it was now understood that only some 14 applications had been received by Munro Consulting, the SE appointed recruitment consultants, and individual interviews would be offered prior to submitting recommendations to the Minister.

In discussion the Partnership agreed that it was essential to appoint an appropriate quality and balance of Other Members, and in the light of the limited numbers of applicants, the Partnership should not recommend unsuitable candidates merely to make up numbers.

The Partnership noted the position and looked forward to receiving further reports from the Recruitment Sub-Group

d) Sustainable Travel/Travel Plan Officer

Mr Peace reported that the Scottish Executive had confirmed funding of £90,000 per annum for two years for a Travel Plan Officer for SESTRAN. This officer would have a remit of working with the constituent Councils to produce Travel Plans and produce a rolling programme for how these plans were to be implemented.

The Partnership discussed how the appointment of this officer might be made, and Ms Farrell undertook to circulate a proposed job description and further details of the proposed arrangements for circulation with the minutes of the meeting.

Decision

The Partnership noted the report and agreed that the Travel Plan Officer should report to the Partnership at the first meeting after his/her appointment on how he/she intended to implement the programme of work.

7. Commissioning of Consulting Services to Assist in the Preparation of the South East of Scotland Statutory Regional Transport Strategy.

This item was taken in private session at the end of the meeting.

8. Corporate Governance

a) Proper Officer Role

Andrew Ferguson spoke to the circulated paper which set out proposed interim arrangements for the Partnership's Proper Officer functions for the period until the Partnership Director took up post.

Decision

The Partnership approved the division of Proper Officer functions between the Clerk, the Treasurer and the Solicitor to the Partnership for an interim period as set out in Mr Ferguson's paper.

b) Member's Code of Conduct and Register of Member's Interests

Mr Stewart spoke to the circulated paper and highlighted that a draft Code of Conduct previously circulated had been superseded by a model Code issued by the Scottish Executive, which had been adapted for use by SESTRAN and was now put forward for adoption by the Partnership.

Mr Stewart also reported that an entry to the Register of Interests had still to be received from one member, but that once this was received the Register would be published on the website. Substitute and Other Members would also be asked to declare their interests and would be included in the Register.

Decision

The Partnership adopted the Code of Conduct as presented and noted the position with regard to the Register of Member's Interests.

c) Member Induction and Training

Mr Stewart reported that the Secretariat had met with the Scottish Executive and it was likely that the Executive would fund the organisation of a national Training and Induction day for members of all of the RTPs. The final date had not yet been confirmed, but it was likely to be 11 May 2006, with Dunblane Hydro the probable venue.. The Secretariat would provide further details for Partnership members when known. The Partnership noted the report.

9. Partnership Offices

Mr Peace gave a verbal update on the proposed premises for the Partnership Offices. A suitable property had been located at McDonald Road, Edinburgh. The Chair and a Vice-Chair of SESTRAN had viewed the property and instructed Mr Peace to negotiate a lease on behalf of SESTRAN.

Mr Peace had negotiated Heads of Terms on behalf of the Partnership including the following:

- 5 year lease
- £15 per square foot (2,691 square feet in total)
- 2 years at half rent
- Break option at year three (six months rent penalty if exercised)
- Annual service charge of £7,000 to include heat, light and power
- Annual insurance premium of £1,500
- Rates payable £17,204 per annum on rateable value of £37,400.

The property required some internal fit out for which quotations were being sought. The Heads of Terms had been passed to Mr Ferguson to conclude the lease.

Decision

The Partnership noted the report and approved the conclusion of the lease on the above terms and otherwise to the satisfaction of the Clerk and the Solicitor.

9a Additional Item: High Speed Rail Link

The Chair informed the Partnership that the late inclusion of this circulated paper had been his decision along with one of the Vice-Chairs. The business for discussion arose out of a meeting with the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) which had been held only on 10 February 2006 but which required to be reported promptly to the Partnership.

The meeting with SPT had discussed the UK Government initiative headed by Mr Rod Eddington to look into the possibility of a High Speed Rail Link (HSRL) between England and Scotland. The voluntary SESTRAN had previously worked with SPT and WESTRANS and the North East Assembly in England to produce a recommendation to the UK Government on the benefits of HSRL.

It was now proposed that SPT and SESTRAN initiate a joint scoping study to investigate a possible route for a HSRL between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Mr Haugen reported that an estimated cost of some £15,000 for the scoping study had been received from Leeds University who had expertise in this area. It was proposed that the cost be met jointly with SPT, and that up to £10,000 be earmarked by SESTRAN as its contribution, allowing for minor overspend. The study would be completed in two months

Mr Rimmer reported that Edinburgh and Glasgow cities had already agreed that the Intercity development manager currently being appointed jointly between the two cities, would have as a strategic priority a proposal for an Edinburgh – Glasgow HSRL..

In discussion, the Partnership agreed that this was an important initiative and that SESTRAN should make efforts to be seen as a driving force behind it. Various other reports and studies on HSR were discussed and it was agreed that this was a good opportunity to propose that HSR projects should start in Scotland and spread south rather than moving in the opposite direction as envisaged in some national reports.

Decision

The Partnership approved a maximum £10,000 contribution by SESTRAN towards the Leeds University HSRL scoping study.

The Partnership agreed that Mr Haugen should investigate the “Greengauge 21” HSR initiative and report back on whether there appeared to be merit in SESTRAN being a member.

10. Dates of Next Meetings

- 17 March 2006, Westfield Stadium, Falkirk. 9.30am for 10.00am start

- 7 April 2006

Commenting upon arrangements for meetings, Cllr Matchett reported that he had experienced difficulty in obtaining agenda papers and so felt unprepared for the meeting. The Clerk responded that with the exception of the late item on High Speed Rail, all papers had been circulated to members by e-mail and posted on the website within the time scales prescribed in the Standing Orders. However, the current monthly frequency of monthly Partnership meetings meant that deadlines for preparation and receipt of agenda papers were extremely tight. The Clerk offered to send paper copies of agenda papers by first class post to members upon request.

Private Session

7. Commissioning of Consulting Services to Assist in the Preparation of the South East of Scotland Statutory Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

Mr Clyne and Mr Malcolm spoke to the circulated paper and an additional tabled paper containing the results of the tender evaluation for the appointment of the RTS consultants. The confidentiality issues arose through the requirements of the statutory procurement process under which a 10-day "standstill" period had to be observed following the selection of a successful contractor in order to permit any challenge for unsuccessful parties.

Mr Clyne reported that the officer group which had conducted the tendering exercise recommended one out of the five tenderers for the appointment.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mr Malcolm confirmed that there were penalty clauses built in to the contract with regard to late production of the RTS. Specifically, there was a retention of a substantial amount until the RTS had been approved by the Minister.

In response to a question by Cllr Mackintosh, Mr Clyne reported that the Partnership would retain close control over the conduct of the consultancy but any significant variations to the brief could have financial implications.

Decisions

The Partnership::

- approved the appointment of the recommended tenderer to prepare the SESTRAN RTS via the agency of Fife council as per the report;
- instructed the Work Planning and Delivery Group, along with the Management Team, to continue providing officer support to the Partnership in managing and supervising the contract.