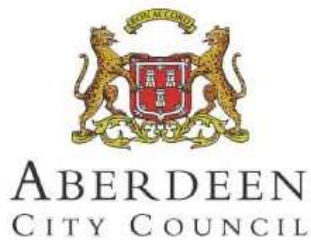


Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee Annual Report 2020/21



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1. 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 further 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 covered by this Annual Update obviously includes the full impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It was during this period that I became Chair of the Joint Committee. The impact of the 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.

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 and I have every confidence that we will adopt the same approach over the next year and beyond.

Councillor Durno

Chair of the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

2. Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The first meeting of the Joint Committee was held on 18 May 2018 in Woodhill House, Aberdeen.
- 2.3 The Joint 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 Program. 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.
- 2.4 The Joint Committee met a total of 4 occasions in its first year 2018/19. In 2019/20 the Committee met on a further 4 occasions.
- 2.5 This financial year 2020/21 the Committee has met on 3 occasions on 28 August 2020, 27 November 2020 and 5 March 2021. All meetings have been by Skype/Teams.
- 2.6 During the year, Councillor Durno (Angus Council) and Councillor Coull (Moray Council) were appointed Chair and Vice Chair respectively.
- 2.7 To support the Joint Committee the Officer Group met a total of 6 times and also ran a workshop in September 2020 on various topics including Workforce of the Future, Position and Opportunities on Electric and Hydrogen, Lessons from Spaces for People/Active Travel Implementation and Future Proofing the Network and Increasing Resilience.
- 2.8 Membership of the Joint Committee is shown in **Appendix 1** together with the officers from each local authority.

3 Reports presented at Joint Committee meetings in 2020/21

3.1 [28 August 2020](#)

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Review of Governance Arrangements and Financial Monitoring

Annual Report on Activities

Covid-19 Roads and Transport Service Update

National Roads Collaboration Programme Updates

Update on the Procurement of Network

Management Contracts (NMCs) for the Scottish Trunk Road Network

3.2 [27 November 2020](#)

Appointment of Vice Chair

A Presentation on the Research into the Value of the Local Road Network with Initial Outputs

Infrastructure Investment and Resilience

An Update on the National Roads Collaboration Programme

3.3 [5 March 2021](#)

Autonomous Vehicle

Activity Plan

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – Update Report 2021

4. **Planning for the Future**

- 4.1 An Activity Plan was developed for the planned areas of work for the Joint Committee to consider and this was approved at the Joint Committee at its meeting on 5 March 2021. A copy is appended to this document (**Appendix 2**).
- 4.2 Delivery of the Activity Plan is subject to available resources within the 7 Local Authorities making up the collaboration. It is clear that available resources do not match the demands of the Joint Committee and the ambitious programme set out in the Activity Plan.
- 4.3 To focus the limited resources to the areas where the Joint Committee can best deliver change, a stock taking exercise is taking place in May/June 2021 where the Lead Authority, Aberdeenshire Council will be interviewing officers from the 7 Local Authorities and 3 Regional Transport Partnerships. This will form a report to the Joint Committee in 2021/22 looking at the remit and format of the Joint Committee which will allow members to consider the future role and remit of the Joint Committee prior to the local authority elections in May 2022.
- 4.4 A workshop for officers, with guest presenters will be held on EV Infrastructure and Alternative Fuels on Monday 21 June 2021. This will include consideration of the matters to take into a Member Officer Working Group on this areas of work as requested by the Joint Committee.
- 4.5 For the foreseeable future, meetings will continue to be held remotely using Skype or Teams.

5. Costs and Funding

- 5.1 The central support costs to operate the Joint Committee in 2020/21 were £6,171.48. These reflect a reduction in the business of the Joint Committee as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.2 These 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. However, this may be an approach that members would wish to see taken when engaging with Transport Scotland and Scottish Government in the period to May 2022.
- 5.3 The Joint Committee has historically received significant support from the Roads Collaboration Programme officers retained by the Improvement Service. The Roads Collaboration Programme was funded by Transport Scotland and the 32 Local Authorities.
- 5.4 However, during 2020/21 the Scottish Government's Improvement Service took the decision to stop hosting the National Roads Collaboration Programme. To date no alternative support arrangement has been put in place to replace this resource and the Lead Authority has sought to pick up as much of that role as they can.
- 5.5 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 are also included in the Lead Officer Group that supports the Joint Committee.
- 5.6 Members and officers time and expenses are covered by each authority.

Appendix 1 - Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee and Officers as of 31 March 2021

	Members	Substitute Members	Officer
Aberdeen City Council	Councillor M Hutchison Councillor S Macdonald	Councillor R Grant Councillor A Nicoll	Doug Ritchie
Aberdeenshire Council	Councillor D Aitchison Councillor J Gifford	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 K Braes	Douglas Hill
Argyll & Bute Council	Councillor R Colville Councillor B Good		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

Appendix 2 - Northern Roads Collaboration – Activity Plan April 2021-March 2023

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Comments
Joint Committee Meetings	Clerk to the Joint Committee	25 June 2021 10 September 2021 26 November 2021 February 2022 June 2022 September 2022 December 2022 February 2023	Dates are set for 2021. Future dates will be decided in due course.
Officer Group Meetings	Lead Officer	In advance and following each Joint Committee meeting	
Recurring Reports to Joint Committee	Lead Officer	Every second Joint Committee in June and November/December	Transport Strategy Update
	Lead Officer	Annually to June Joint Committee	Annual Report on Activities
	Lead Officer	Annually to June Joint Committee	Network Status and Resilience

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Comments
	Lead Officer	Annually in September	Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of Joint Committee
One off reports	Appropriate Report Author from Partners	June 2021	Road Safety
			A presentation on the dualling of the A9/A96 trunk roads
			The implications and opportunities to the Northern Roads Collaboration area of the National
			Review of Governance Arrangements and Financial Monitoring
			The implications and opportunities to the Northern Roads Collaboration area of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and secondary legislation.
		September 2021	Shared Training Opportunities
			Continuing Joint Procurement intra-authority discussions and Joint contractual agreements

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Comments
		TBC	Updates on National Roads Collaboration Programme (as required)
			The Strategic Timber Transport Fund and its possible extension beyond that for timber to other industries (such as distilleries, farm vehicles etc.) which impact on the rural road network.
			Updates on Research into the Value of the Local Road Network (as required).
			Maintenance of Cobble surface specialist repair issues
			The potential security implications for Ports in the context of BREXIT
			Updates on the use of recycled plastics and other materials in road surfacing
			Electric (and other low carbon) Vehicles
			Signage on the network and interrelationship with linkages to trunk roads.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Comments
Programme of Workshops for Officers	Lead Officer	3 times per year	Subject topics to be developed
Communication Strategy to make the work of the Joint Committee more known.	Lead Officer	September 2021	Strategy to be worked up and presented for approval to Joint Committee