

Nestrans

Regional Transport Strategy 2006-2021
Option Generation Consultation

September 2006

Context

The Role of a Regional Transport Strategy

1. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 created a series of statutory Regional Transport Partnerships throughout Scotland from 1 April 2006. The North East Scotland Transport Partnership (Nestrans) covers the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council areas and carries on the work of the previous voluntary partnership of the same name which has existed since 2002.
2. In March 2006, the Scottish Executive issued "Guidance on Regional Transport Strategies", requiring partnerships to submit a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) by 31 March 2007, for approval by Ministers.
3. The RTS should provide a vision and objectives for transport in the Region, analyse the current transport situation, set out a programme of activities, projects and interventions, inform the partnership's implementation and investment planning, make the case for any additional contributions, provide a steer for Local Transport Strategies and support the National Transport Strategy, including input to the Strategic Projects Review.

The Process of Preparation

4. Nestrans has appointed consultants (Steer Davies Gleave) to help in the preparation of its RTS. During July, an Issues and Objectives paper was issued to stakeholders through the North East Transport Consultative Forum. The stakeholders were given the opportunity to contribute as to whether they supported the vision and objectives, and agreed with the issues identified. In addition to this, the stakeholders' views were also requested on possible ways of dealing with the issues. The paper was sent to over 100 stakeholders and a broad range of responses was received and taken account of. The Nestrans Board has reviewed all the responses and are very grateful to all those who expressed their views. Stakeholder participation is vital in the preparation of the RTS and responses to the Issues and Objectives paper have been used to finalise the vision and objectives for the strategy, and have also played a key part in informing the initial option generation process.
5. This Options Generation Consultation paper forms the second stage in working towards a draft Strategy by the end of the year, and a finalised strategy (after public consultation) to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by 31 March 2007.
6. At the end of this document, there are a series of questions to give interested parties an opportunity to contribute as to whether they support the initial packages of options that have been generated to meet the agreed objectives for the strategy. This consultation will be channelled through the North East Transport Consultative Forum, representing organisations across a wide spectrum of transport bodies, community and business organisations, and environmental groups. Individual responses will also be accepted, although it is emphasised that this stage is an early part of the process and full formal consultation with the public will form an important part of the development of the finalised RTS.
7. The initial packages of options identified in this paper have been generated in full accordance with the methodology set out in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). The packages have all been generated in order to address the specific demands of the strategy and include the activities and measures that are currently part of Nestrans' existing strategy to develop a Modern Transport System (MTS).

Vision and Objectives for the Regional Transport Strategy

Vision and Objectives

8. The consultation generated a wide range of comments and these have been taken account of in preparing this report. In particular, there was general support for the vision for transport set out in the Issues report as indicated below:

“A transport system for the north east of Scotland which enables a more economically competitive, sustainable, and socially inclusive society.”

The objectives will be used to ascertain the success of different measures and packages in achieving what are the main aims of the Regional Transport Strategy. It is therefore very important that the strategic direction is clearly articulated at this stage. Having balanced the comments and responses to the Issues report, the four strategic transport objectives and twelve operational transport objectives have now been agreed as forming the objectives for the Regional Transport Strategy. These are listed below:

Strategic Transport Objectives	Operational Transport Objectives
Economy	
a) To enhance and exploit the north east’s competitive economic advantages, and reduce the impacts of peripherality.	i) To make the movement of goods and people within the north east and to/from the area more efficient and reliable. ii) To improve the range and quality of transport to/from the north east to key business destinations. iii) To improve connectivity within the north east, particularly between residential and employment areas.
Accessibility and Social Inclusion	
b) To enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited.	iv) To enhance travel opportunities and achieve sustained cost and quality advantages for public transport relative to the car. v) To reduce the number and severity of traffic related accidents and improve personal safety and security for all users of transport. vi) To achieve increased use of active travel and improve air quality as part of wider strategies to improve the health of north east residents.
Environment	
c) To conserve and enhance the north east’s natural and built environment and heritage and reduce the effects of transport on climate and air quality.	vii) To reduce the proportion of journeys made by cars and especially by single occupant cars. viii) To achieve targets for reductions in the environmental impacts of transport, which will be set out in the forthcoming National Transport Strategy. ix) To reduce growth in vehicle kilometres travelled.
Spatial Planning	
d) To support a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east.	x) To improve connectivity to and within Aberdeen, especially by public transport, walking and cycling. xi) To improve connectivity to and within towns in Aberdeenshire, especially by public transport, walking and cycling. xii) To enhance public transport opportunities and reduce barriers to use across the north east, especially rural areas.

Option Generation

Introduction

9. In keeping with the Minister's desire for each RTS to be visionary, a broad range of potential strategic policy interventions has been generated. The strategy objectives have been used as the starting point for the option generation, with schemes and packages developed which are likely to address the issues identified and achieve the agreed objectives. No realistic options have been dismissed at this stage in order to ensure that a wide range of options are considered in combination for inclusion in the strategy.
10. Once Nestrans is satisfied that all the realistic options have been identified and set in complementary packages then a process of sifting and appraisal will commence. The sifting will identify options that make very little contribution towards the strategy's objectives and/or are considered to be extremely difficult to implement. The appraisal methodology will measure the merits of all the sifted packages of options against the strategy's objectives.
11. Given the comparatively long timescale for this strategy (to 2021), and the recognition that a number of variable external influences exist, such as oil prices and land use policies that are beyond the control of Nestrans, it is considered prudent to test each alternative package of options within the context of a number of different frameworks, which will reflect the range of potential external influences.

Broad Strategic Interventions

12. Firstly, a series of broad strategic intervention categories that can address some or all of the strategy's objectives has been identified:
 - ❖ External links – Measures and activities that relate to connections beyond the north east.
 - ❖ Network development – Measures and activities that will develop the existing transport network in the north east, such as road schemes or railway development.
 - ❖ Network rationing – Measures and activities that will physically reallocate the existing road space in the north east towards more sustainable modes. This might include interventions such as bus priority lanes or pedestrianising areas within town and city centres.
 - ❖ Travel choice – Measures and activities that will encourage more sustainable travel within and outwith the north east by ensuring travellers are more aware of the alternatives and enhanced, safer facilities are made available.
 - ❖ Fiscal & financial - Measures and activities that will encourage changes in travel behaviour in the north east through adjusting regimes such as the cost of travel (parking or bus fares for example) or stepping up enforcement.
13. Before these five broad categories were developed further, they were assessed to ensure that they fitted with the strategy's objectives. Comfortable that they could contribute towards achieving the identified objectives, a range of specific schemes were then developed containing different measures and activities under each heading.

Packages of Complementary Measures and Activities

14. The final strategy will consist of a package of complementary measures and activities, (including all those currently identified in the existing MTS) that collectively will best meet the strategy's objectives. Clearly not all the options generated at this stage will form part of the final strategy; indeed some of the options are mutually exclusive and would not normally be implemented together. The various measures and activities generated have therefore been assigned to one or more distinct packages, so that their relative merits can be assessed with a view to identifying the preferred package. The broad strategy interventions, the associated measures and activities, and the various complementary packages are detailed in the following tables.
15. It should be noted that the generation and sifting of options will be informed by this consultation exercise and by a parallel modelling exercise, and it is likely that the final package of measures and activities that emerges will be a hybrid of these. Elements of each package which perform best against the objectives will be combined into a "preferred package" and tested for inclusion within the draft Regional Transport Strategy.
16. Six different packages are presented in addition to a base case consisting only of current schemes (these have been indicated in relation to their broad level of public expenditure – costs in the section below refers roughly to the relative extent of public money required to deliver them, in both capital and revenue terms):

A Reference Case – Basically a Do-minimum scenario, consisting of measures and activities which already have a relatively high degree of commitment and are expected be part of the north east's transport network early within the strategy's life. It should be noted that elements contained in the Reference case are expected to be delivered in the early part of the life of the RTS and are therefore all also contained within each of the tested scenarios.

1. Low Cost – Measures and activities that will require relatively low levels of revenue and capital funding. This would approximate to a continuing level of expenditure for transport broadly equivalent to present levels of funding.
2. Medium Cost (Economy) – This package would require an increased level of expenditure on transport over the life of the strategy, to relatively medium levels of revenue and capital funding. Options are included that would achieve the objectives i to iii in the previous Table, yielding benefits with an emphasis towards relieving congestion, boosting the north east's economy and infrastructure-based solutions.
3. Medium Cost (Accessibility and Social Inclusion) - This package also requires relatively medium levels of revenue and capital funding of a scale broadly equivalent to the other Medium Cost packages. Schemes are included which would best achieve objectives iv to vi in the previous table, yielding benefits with an emphasis towards social inclusion such as public transport measures, making travel more affordable and favouring socially excluded sectors of population or areas.
4. Medium Cost (Environmental) - A third package, also requiring relatively medium levels of revenue and capital funding similar to other Medium Cost packages. Focus is on schemes that would best achieve objectives vii to ix, yielding benefits with an emphasis towards the environment, including measures to encourage modal shift and active travel.

5. Medium Cost (Spatial Planning) – a further package requiring relatively medium levels of funding similar to other Medium Cost packages. Emphasis is on schemes which best achieve objectives x to xii, yielding benefits for connectivity within and between settlements in the north east.
 6. High Cost – A package, which combines many of the schemes within the medium cost scenarios and contains some measures and activities requiring a relatively high level of revenue and capital funding. Many of the schemes within this category are hugely expensive and could only be considered feasible if taking a very large proportion of all transport expenditure within the north east or in conjunction with new revenue streams, but have been included to ascertain their relative merits and acceptability.
17. It is recognised that schemes will contribute towards many objectives, but for the purposes of testing these have been allocated into different packages. Similarly, it is recognised that it is likely that some elements will require to be implemented, regardless of the chosen emphasis, but that the priority given to them relative to other elements may be influenced by the direction the strategy takes. In the table on the following pages, these packages are presented by listing specific schemes (or types of intervention which may be appropriate) into one or more of the above packages. The six packages are as above (abbreviations refer to the package as listed – for example, MEc is Medium Cost Economy). Other than the Reference Case elements, the schemes are listed alphabetically within the strategic intervention categories. Although some schemes may contribute to more than one category, they have been indicated only once, in the category which was deemed to be most relevant.

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High
External Links <i>The future competitiveness of the north east as a place to live, work, invest, visit and study depends in part on its external links and on how the region is perceived. There is a need to enhance connections to central Scotland, the rest of the UK, and beyond.</i>	Rail Freight Gauge Enhancement to enable containerised traffic to better utilise the railway to and from the north east.	●						
	Aberdeen Airport - Increase the number of air routes and frequency of services			●				●
	Aberdeen Airport - runway extension to allow larger aircraft to operate and increase the introduction of direct transatlantic air services.			●				●
	Aberdeen Airport – implement public service obligations, ensuring continuation of services to major hubs, including Heathrow.		●	●				●
	Developing existing and new passenger ferry connections and routes between the north east and Europe - continue to promote and support projects to enhance the role of the north east's ports particularly to Scandinavia and the recent EU accession countries in the Baltic.		●	●				●
	Northern Maritime Corridor/Motorways of the Northern Seas - support development of short sea and coastal shipping, as an alternative to road freight between north east ports and ports on the UK's east coast and the continent.		●	●				●
	Orkney / Shetland ferries - promote and support existing services from Aberdeen		●	●		●		●
	Rail links to central Scotland - Work with the rail industry and others to promote and support measures to reduce journey times, overcrowding improve the reliability of services to central Scotland and beyond.				●	●		●
Strategic roads - promote and support the development of the strategic road network outwith the north east, including removing constraints on the national network, such as River Forth crossing points.				●			●	

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High	
Network development <i>There will continue to be a need to enhance and develop the existing transport network</i>	A947 Parkhill junction improvements, including Park and Ride Site and bus services	●							
	A96 to Airport Link Road (Dyce Drive)	●							
	Aberdeen Crossrail - Extending some intercity services from south to terminate at Inverurie, some Inverness to Stonehaven to enable 30 min. frequency service based on intercity improvements and new station at Kintore	●							
	Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Milltimber Brae Upgrade Route with Stonehaven Fastlink	●							
	Balmedie to Tipperty Dualling	●							
	Chapelbrae Park and Ride Site and bus services (A96)	●							
	Dualling of A956 (Charleston to Southerhead) with associated bus priority	●							
	Grade Separated Junction on A90 at Schoolhill, including Park and Ride Site and bus services	●							
	Reopened railway station at Laurencekirk	●							
	Transport Interchange at Guild Street	●							
	Aberdeen Airport Surface Connections - Enhanced existing bus service between Aberdeen Airport and city centre / other key locations		●				●		
	Aberdeen Airport Surface Connections - Multimodal Interchange at airport terminal. Key components new railway link and branded express bus service between Aberdeen Airport and city centre / other key locations.				●	●		●	●
	Aberdeen Airport Surface Connections - Pedestrian link between Dyce Railway Station and Airport, via subterranean walkway under runway.								●
	Aberdeen Crossrail - Introduce 15 minute dedicated service and new railway stations					●	●	●	●
	Aberdeen Harbour - enhance existing access facilities in vicinity of harbour				●				●
	Bus Park & Ride - A93 (Banchory)					●	●	●	●
Extended dedicated cycle network - promote and support major enhancements to existing network in partnership with Sustrans, with particular emphasis given to creating off road routes in the city centre, to the south of Aberdeen, along the A93 corridor, and in Aberdeenshire's towns.					●	●	●	●	

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High
	Extended dedicated cycle network - promote and support minor enhancements to existing network in partnership with Sustrans, with particular emphasis given to lowering traffic speeds on shared routes.		●					
	Interchange - Support the introduction of high quality transport interchanges in Aberdeen city centre, Inverurie and Peterhead.				●	●	●	●
	Inner city bus service – free low-emission city centre service			●	●	●	●	●
	Mass transit (Micro Light Tram) - Promote and support introduction of system in Aberdeen's city centre			●		●	●	●
	Mass transit (Light Rail)- Promote and support introduction of tram system on appropriate radial routes within Aberdeen and to/from major towns							●
	Mass transit (Guided Bus)- Promote and support introduction of system on appropriate radial routes to avoid congestion hotspots around Aberdeen				●	●	●	●
	Peterhead Bay Harbour - enhance access facilities in vicinity of harbour			●				●
	Pedestrian linkages between Guild Street and Union Street - Escalator			●			●	●
	Rail extension Ellon - Introduce line and services							●
	Rail extension Peterhead - Introduce line and services							●
	Rail extension Banchory – Introduce line and services							●
	Super Bus – Promote and support system on appropriate radial routes within Aberdeen and to/from major towns				●		●	
	Real time bus management & information - Roll out of existing system across the north east				●	●	●	●
	Strategic roads (capacity improvements) - A90 dualling (Ellon to Peterhead), A96 Complete Dualling (in partnership HITRANS), Haudigan Roundabout, Bridge of Dee, Anderson Drive (dualling on specific sections), Third Don Crossing, Stonehaven/Banchory/Inverurie - highway and public transport connectivity enhancements			●				●
	Strategic roads (safety priorities) - A90 dualling (Ellon to Peterhead), A96 Complete Dualling (in partnership HITRANS), A90 (south of Aberdeen to remove at-grade junctions such as Laurencekirk), A947, A944, A93 route actions (further improvements)				●			●

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High	
Network rationing <i>Changes in travel demand can also be achieved by rationing and reducing space available for less sustainable travel modes</i>	Extended city centre parking charge zone	●							
	Union Street Traffic Management (including pedestrianisation of Union Street (Market Street to Bridge Street), new junctions and road layout changes in the City Centre, dualling of Berryden Road, and Variable Message Signs (VMS) to direct drivers to appropriate car parks.	●							
	Bus priority/ bus lanes - On key radial approaches to city: A90 (northern approach), Anderson drive, A947, A96, A93, and A90 (southern approach) and in key locations within Aberdeenshire		●		●	●	●	●	●
	HGV lanes - promote and support introduction of a trial route to benefit goods vehicle journey times, on a corridor where bus frequency is low			●					
	HOV lanes - identify corridor for trial to assess the impact of implementing a bus and high occupancy vehicle lane		●	●		●	●	●	●
	Parking Strategy for north east - Develop and implement framework for managing supply / demand for parking, including pricing and enforcement				●	●	●	●	●
	Pedestrian improvements - promote and support enhancements to pedestrian environment in Aberdeen city centre		●						
	Pedestrian improvements - promote and support enhancements to pedestrian environment throughout the north east				●	●	●	●	●
	Prioritised maintenance - on routes serving vulnerable road users and public transport across the north east				●	●	●	●	●
	Prioritised maintenance - on routes serving vulnerable road users and public transport within Aberdeen		●						

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High
Travel choice <i>Encourage and inform travellers on the use of alternative sustainable transport</i>	Bus Park & Ride - Prepare and implement strategy for sustaining and increasing usage at existing facilities.		●		●	●	●	●
	Demand Responsive Transport – expansion of existing Dial-a-Bus and other demand responsive initiatives in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire				●		●	●
	Extension of Community Transport Initiatives, including voluntary and car-based schemes serving both urban and rural communities,				●			●
	General marketing - promote Nestrans' activities and projects		●	●	●	●	●	●
	Working with existing transport providers to ensure the optimum mix of efficient services – co-ordinating commercial and subsidised bus services with school, health and voluntary transport groups (and others including car share schemes) to ensure effective connections to hospitals, work/study, community facilities, etc.		●		●			●
	Travel information / journey planner - promote sustainable travel by developing and existing information provision and journey planners in the north east		●		●	●	●	●
	Travel plans - build upon Nestrans' existing work to promote individual, businesses, and school travel plans		●					
	Travel plans - promote and support the development of travel plans for individuals, businesses, health care, and schools				●	●	●	●

Strategic Category	Measures and Activities	Ref	1 Low	2 MEc	3 MSoc	4 MEnv	5 MPlan	6 High
<p>Financial and fiscal</p> <p><i>To achieve key objectives, there may require to be a balance of attractiveness towards sustainable travel. Financial and fiscal measures are intended to provide direct carrots and sticks to transport users and providers to change demand and supply behaviour.</i></p>	Alternative fuels - facilitate an increase in the number of suppliers		●		●	●		
	Alternative fuels - facilitate an increase in the number of users		●	●		●		
	Bus Incentives / Subsidies - to help reduce the cost of bus fares				●	●	●	●
	Bus Partnerships - secure high quality bus services through the establishment of new partnership agreements with bus operators and Punctuality Improvement Partnerships		●				●	●
	Bus Quality Contracts - secure high quality bus services through the introduction of formal contracts with bus operators that will legally bind them into prescribed levels of bus service provision				●	●		●
	Secure high quality bus services and help bus running speeds relative to other transport through prioritising public transport opportunities and joint working with bus operators in the north east.				●			●
	Demand Management - consider the appropriateness of introducing measures that will control traffic demand (including urban parking surcharges, workplace parking controls, local congestion charging)				●	●	●	●
	Enforcement of emissions - in city centre and elsewhere to ensure UK and European air quality standards are achieved.		●			●		●
	Enforcement of parking (stepped up) - prioritise areas for enforcement throughout the north east to ensure public transport movements and road safety are not compromised by illegal parking acts.		●			●		●
	Enforcement of speed - promote and support NESCAMP's activities in reducing speeds and traffic-related incidents in the north east, in particular support the introduction of an average speed camera trial, such as the Fraserburgh to Peterhead section of the A90		●		●			●
	Extended low speed zones - promote and support speed reduction schemes across north east, particularly at locations where conflicts arise between vulnerable road users and general traffic				●	●		●
	Extended low speed zones – limited promotion and support for speed reduction schemes, particularly at locations where conflict arises between vulnerable road users and general traffic		●					
Small vehicle & HOV parking incentives - establish a parking club, offer discount to members with low emission vehicles or car share club agreements, and manage through existing Nestranscarshare.com				●	●	●	●	

Consultation Questions

- Q1. Do you think we have developed the right measures and activities to address the objectives for the strategy?
- Q2. Do you consider that there any measures and activities that should also be included?
- Q3. Are there any measures or activities for which you have a preference for inclusion within the strategy?
- Q4. Do you think we have combined the measures and activities into appropriate packages to best meet the objectives for the strategy?
- Q5. Are there any further packages of complementary measures and activities that you believe should be considered?
- Q6. Are there any packages of measures and activities for which you would like to form the preferred strategy?

Next Steps

- 18. This stage in the development of the RTS is focussed on generating a wide range of options that could potentially satisfy the strategy's objectives, with a view to identifying a preferred package of measures and activities. The next key stages of the RTS development are set out below:

Appraisal and Prioritisation of Strategy Options	September/October 2006
Preparation of Draft Strategy	October 2006
Public Consultation on Draft Strategy	Mid November 2006 to mid January 2007
Preparation of Final RTS	February/March 2007
Submission of RTS to Scottish Ministers	March 2007
- 19. Your views will be of great value in the option generation for the RTS and we would be very grateful if you could answer the questions in this consultation paper by:

Friday 29 September 2006

Responses should be returned by email to:
info@nestrans.org.uk

**North East Scotland Transport Partnership
Archibald Simpson House
27-29 King Street
Aberdeen
AB24 5AA**