

## **Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy 2015/16**

During 2015/16 NESTRANS has continued to seek and implement initiatives to assist in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the services delivered. A brief overview of these initiatives has been included.

### **Shared Services**

#### **Collaborative Working**

Although the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) is no longer co-located with Nestrans they retain a desk within the Nestrans office to allow close and collaborative working to easily and efficiently take place. Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) continued to be based within the Nestrans office until the manager retired in September 2015.

#### **Shared Public Relations Service**

To ensure best value Nestrans and ACSEF tendered a combined contract for PR and communications services in 2013 to allow both organisations to benefit from cost savings. This has provided full time access to a dedicated marketing and communications officer and the cost to Nestrans in 2015/16 was just over £14,500, which is a considerable saving in comparison with previous years when Nestrans had their own PR contract.

#### **Legal, Administrative, Financial, ICT and HR Services**

The activities of NESTRANS continue to be supported by partner Councils through the provision of specialist assistance and advice. These activities are governed by separate Service Level Agreements. The use of existing support staff is considered to be an efficient and economic use of an existing pool of specialist staff, the cost of which would be significantly higher if an external or dedicated in-house cadre of similarly qualified and experienced staff were to be used. Details of each support service are as follows:

##### **Legal & Administrative Services**

Legal Services etc are provided by Aberdeen City Council. Services include legal advice, contractual advice and provision of clerking for the Board and meetings. The cost of legal and contractual advice in 2015/16 was £7,856, whereas the administrative costs of clerking for the Board remained at £20,000.

##### **Treasurer**

Accountancy etc support is provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Services provided include invoice and payment processing, financial ledger, regular financial monitoring reporting to the Board, internal audit, liaising with external audit, assistance with budget preparation and control, final accounts preparation and pension fund management, general accountancy advice and treasury management. Since 2012/13 this has been extended to include financial services relating to the Strategic Transport Fund that was set up for developer contributions to strategic transport measures. The quality of

support is considered to be excellent and the cost of this service in 2015/16 remained at £21,100.

### **ICT Services**

Aberdeen City Council provides and maintains quality Information and Communication Technology Services for Nestrans. The cost of this service in 2015/16 remained at £5,000

### **HR Services**

HR services are provided by Aberdeenshire Council. This includes drafting and review of HR policies and procedures, monitoring any changes in legislation, support in dealing with staff matters, offering advice on related matters and reporting to the Nestrans Board. In 2015/16 this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of the Cycling Development Officer post and job evaluation surveys with several of the Nestrans staff. The cost of this service in 2015/16 remained at £15,900.

### **Getabout Partnership**

Nestrans is a key member of the Getabout Partnership that also consists of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen University, Robert Gordon University, North East College, the James Hutton Institute and Home Energy Scotland. The joint working of the partnership continues to provide increased efficiency and effectiveness when promoting sustainable travel throughout the region via a single brand. The partnership has achieved economies through individual member organisations supporting getabout events organised by others eg providing staffing, transport and promotional merchandise.

### **ACTtravelwise Membership**

Nestrans again negotiated a group membership for all members of the getabout partnership to ACTtravelwise for 2015/16 that resulted in a saving in comparison with the cost that individual memberships would otherwise have been.

### **Getabout Cycle Roadshow**

The Getabout cycle roadshow consists of a range of bicycles, including novelty and disability accessible cycles. The bikes were purchased by Nestrans and rates have been agreed with locally based Adventure Aberdeen to hold and maintain them and supplement them with other bikes they own. Adventure Aberdeen also transports the bikes to events organised by the getabout partners and provides tutors to assist with each event. The locally sourced and managed equipment dramatically reduces delivery mileage and carbon emissions in getting to events and is achieving considerable savings, whilst allowing priority booking by all getabout members. This is of particular benefit during themed weeks such as Cycle to Work and European Mobility Week when privately hired bike events are usually fully booked. The full cycle roadshow and getabout events kit, comprising of a getabout branded marquee, feather flags, banners and bunting previously purchased by Nestrans has been further supplemented in 2015/16 and is available for hire to private companies when not required by the partners, with any profit being used for the purchase of additional stock.

### **Bike Doctor Sessions**

Transport Scotland funded Edinburgh Bike Station to provide 4 sessions of Bike Doctor and Cycle promotion Days in Aberdeen and Nestrans contributed match funding to double the number of sessions to eight. The promotions took place in association with various getabout cycle events.

### **Liftshare**

Nestrans provides a central data base for car sharing throughout the region under contract with Liftshare Ltd. The website address is [getabout.liftshare.com](http://getabout.liftshare.com) to help identify it with the overall getabout brand for sustainable and active travel in the North East. The website operates with a number of sub-groups so that individual organisations can have their own section under the wider umbrella or be involved in the larger scheme. By contracting the licence and hosting costs on a regional basis there are significant savings compared to each of the partners contracting individually. In addition there are benefits to the customers of being able to access a larger data base for potential matching of trips.

### **ASAM Regional Transport Model**

Developed initially by Transport Scotland, the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) is now managed and maintained by Nestrans. A contract for ASAM support was previously negotiated with Systra to allow Nestrans to obtain the same terms as Transport Scotland has been offered when they retendered the LATIS Commission on a consultancy framework basis. The ASAM multi modal land use transport model provides the facility for detailed regional transport analysis in the north east. In 2015/16 the model has been used for strategic projects such as the Bridge of Dee Stag Part 2 and Fraserburgh/Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport studies. The model has also been used by local authorities for future year demand predictions and strategic input to local micro simulation models for Aberdeen city centre, Anderson Drive, Stonehaven and Westhill and by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Managing Agent. Developers have also been granted access to model information when undertaking Transport Assessments, thus ensuring that the local planning authorities requirements are met using the best available means.

### **East Coast Main Line Authorities**

Nestrans are partners in the East Coast Main Line consortium. All partners contribute to the consortium, which is a grouping of local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships that aim to work in partnership to promote the case for investment in the line to enable economic growth.

### **Attracted Funding**

#### **Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme**

Nestrans provides a Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme, which can provide up to 50% match funding to organisations investing in measures to promote more sustainable travel by their employees or customers. There is an upper limit on any award of £10,000. In 2015/16 the following grants were awarded:

- £420 to James Hutton Institute for an 4 month electric bike pool trial, with the Institute providing staff time and maintenance costs and Tactran also contributing
- £200 to Inspire for cycle racks at Café Coast, with remaining 50% met by Inspire

### **Realtimebus.com**

The website was launched in September 2010 as a joint initiative between Nestrans and First in Aberdeen. The website allows customers to access real time information for First bus services based on their preferred stop, bus route and time of day via PCs and mobile devices. The branding complements that already in place for the getabout partnership. Nestrans funded the initial capital outlay and 10 year registration of the domain name and First Aberdeen have met the ongoing annual hosting and maintenance costs. It is intended that access to the region wide real time information system that is being developed this year will be provided from this website.

### **Dyce Airlink Shuttlebus Service**

Since 2013/14 Stagecoach has rebranded the service as Jetconnect and operated it on a commercial basis. They continued to again provide the service without subsidy throughout 2015/16 given the current levels of patronage and Nestrans completing the construction a turning circle on the west side of the station to provide ease of access and allow larger vehicles to be used.

### **Grasshopper Advertising**

The Grasshopper multi-operator daily and weekly bus tickets were launched in May 2014. In June 2015 the service was extended to cover a wider zone across the entire region and permits travel on services from 13 operators. Nestrans has again contributed in 2015/16 along with the local authorities and bus operators towards advertising in support of this service.

### **Forfar – Edzell Bus Service**

Angus Council awarded a contract to Stagecoach Strathtay for a new direct bus service that launched in January 2015 between the Edzell/Stracathro Hospital/Brechin area and Dundee. This service provides direct access to Dundee and improves connectivity to Stracathro and Dundee Hospitals. The service was extended into Aberdeenshire to meet requests for better service provision in the Edzell Woods area. Nestrans previously contributed to publicity for this cross Council boundaries service along with Tactran and in 2015/16 Nestrans funded the installation of a bus shelter in the Edzell Woods area.

### **Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements**

Nestrans continued to fund a cycling development officer in 2015/16, with Sustrans providing a capital contribution of up to £100,000 as match funding of this post and infrastructure measures funded by Nestrans that are not already being used by the Councils to match fund their bids to Sustrans. As a result Nestrans received grant funding from Sustrans of £82,600 in 2015/16 for agreed cycle/pedestrian improvement works.

A significant amount of Nestrans funding towards cycle and core path improvements has also been used by the Local Authorities as a basis to attract further match funding. In 2015/16 this resulted in:

Project	Nestrans Funding	Funding from other Organisations		Total Cost
Ellon Cycle Infrastructure to new Academy	£87,500	CWSS grant	£54,354	£141,854
Catto Park, Peterhead Ph 2	£42,500	CWSS grant	£24,425	£86,780
		Aberdeenshire Council	£19,855	
Cycle Racks for Towns	£20,000	Aberdeenshire Council	£7,309	£27,309
Ellon Road cycle path Phase 2 (Parkway – Murcar)	£177,500	Sustrans and AWPR non-motorised user mitigation fund	£377,500	£555,000
Parkway Ph1 (Balgownie – Scotstown)	£125,000	Sustrans	£155,000	£280,000
Upgrade F&B Way access from A947	£30,000	Sustrans and Aberdeen City Council	£46,000	£76,000
Anderson Dr ph1 Br of Dee - Ruthrieston Rd - design	£1,000	ACC Smarter Choices Smart Places grant	£1,000	£2,000
Anderson Dr ph3 - toucan at Rubislaw Den South and connections - design	£500	ACC Smarter Choices Smart Places grant	£1,000	£1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>£484,000</b>		<b>£686,443</b>	<b>£1,170,443</b>

### Health and Transport Action Plan

Nestrans continued to fund 50% of the costs of a support manager for the Health and Transport Programme in partnership with NHS Grampian in 2015/16.

Nestrans has also continued to contribute along with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils and NHS Grampian to deliver the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC). The public transport unity within Aberdeenshire Council operates this dedicated telephone service to provide information on transport options for access to all NHS Grampian sites.

### Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study

Nestrans commissioned a consortium of consultants comprising Sias, Peter Brett Associates and Energised Environments in 2014 to look into strategic transport options for improvements on the corridor between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen. The study being progressed in partnership with Transport Scotland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. A contribution of £25,000 towards the overall cost of the study was supplied by Transport Scotland in 2015/16.

### **Strategic Transport Fund**

Supplementary guidance on 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund' was adopted in December 2011. This guidance was non-statutory supplementary guidance in support of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and allowed contributions to be sought from housing and non-residential development for the delivery of the strategic transport projects indicated through the Cumulative Transport Appraisal that was previously commissioned by Nestrans.

This guidance has been reviewed in connection with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014) and statutory Supplementary Guidance in relation to the Strategic Transport Fund was adopted and came into force on 28 August 2015, at which point it superseded the previous non-statutory guidance.

Payment of contributions into the fund comes direct to Nestrans who will manage the fund and the prioritisation and delivery of the strategic transport interventions. By the end of 2015/16 contributions in excess of £23.2 million have been agreed and of this amount £1,716,470 was held by Nestrans.

### **Procurement Activity**

#### **Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement**

Nestrans continues to be an associate member of Scotland Excel and as such are able to acquire consultancy services under the above framework agreement. Nestrans can use the framework to appoint consultants for services that can not be undertaken in-house or by neighbouring authorities, either due to a skill shortage, the specialist nature of the work, or due to other workload commitments.

Although there is no guarantee of work being awarded, any use of the framework significantly reduces the cost of procurement of services to Nestrans and the consultants. To award a work package there is the option of directly selecting a consultant within the relevant lot(s) or conducting a mini-competition amongst relevant consultants. Work can be awarded on a priced contract (lump sum), target contract or time based contract basis. In 2015/16 Nestrans used the framework to make direct awards for the following projects:

Freight Action Plan assistance

Union Street/Alford Place junction modelling to test bus service journey time improvements

Nestrans continued to fund the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study that had previously been appointed via a mini-competition through the framework.