



NESTRANS *REGIONAL* TRANSPORT STRATEGY /2021

SUMMARY

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The Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy for Aberdeen City and Shire. A finalised Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) was submitted to Scottish Ministers, as required in May 2008 and was approved by Ministers in July 2008. The RTS sets out the challenges facing Aberdeen City and Shire to 2021 and how we will address them. It is a strategic document which includes a comprehensive appraisal of the problems and issues affecting transport in the north east and sets out our vision and objectives for the period to 2021. A Delivery Plan detailing the plan of action for improving transport in the region will be published later in the year.

The strategy is ambitious yet realistic, building on Nestrans' and our partners' achievements and looking to the future. It recognises the importance of improved connectivity, but also that we all have a responsibility to consider the impact of our travel choices on each other and the environment. The RTS ensures a balanced approach, which meets the objectives and offers economic, environmental and accessibility benefits. It builds on and maximises the benefits of current and committed transport investment particularly the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

PROCESS

The RTS has been informed by wide-ranging public consultation on the draft strategy between December 2006 and February 2007, as well as earlier stakeholder consultation. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to the consultation and helped shape the strategy. Following that consultation the draft strategy was amended to take account of comments received and approved by the Nestrans Board on 14 March 2007. Following the elections in May 2008 and further government guidance to make the document more strategic by separating actions into a separate Delivery Plan, the revised strategy was approved by the Nestrans Board on 16 April 2008. The measures it contains have been tested and prioritised against economic, environmental and social indicators using a dynamic modelling tool and have been judged to contribute positively to achieving the strategy's objectives. The strategy has also been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), a report on which has been published separately.

The Regional Transport Strategy builds on and integrates the Modern Transport System (MTS) – a 14 strand integrated strategy for improving transport in the region up to 2011 – developed by Nestrans and endorsed by the Scottish Executive in 2003. The RTS has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and Scottish Government guidance. It has been updated to reflect the new legislation and links with transport, land use, community and economic development plans and strategies for the region.



ISSUES

Following detailed analysis and consultation with stakeholders, the following twelve key issues were identified for the strategy to address:

Supporting sustainable economic growth

Transport has a key role to play in providing the connections which support and sustain economic growth and make Aberdeen City and Shire an attractive and competitive place to live, work, visit and do business. The RTS needs to support regional economic goals and integrate with land use planning. This is in line with the Scottish Government's over-riding purpose and a key objective of the economic development strategy developed by Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ACSEF) and the structure plan for the area.

Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants

Climate change is recognised as an international priority that requires action at all levels to tackle carbon emissions. The Scottish Climate Change Programme and the consultation on a Climate Change Bill set out Scotland's contribution to meeting the UK Government's commitments to reducing carbon emissions. The Stern Review provides detailed evidence of the threat posed by climate change and

what needs to be done to reduce carbon emissions. Poor air quality from vehicle pollutants is an issue in Aberdeen City Centre and to a lesser extent in towns across the region, which has an impact on health.

Ensuring social inclusion

Transport needs to promote social inclusion and a high quality of life. Transport connects people to jobs, education and services whereas poor access to transport limits opportunities, particularly for low income households and young people. Transport must also meet the needs of older and disabled people and demand responsive and community transport options can contribute to this.

Improving safety and security

Engineering, education and enforcement all have a role to play in reducing road collisions and casualties. Addressing real and perceived safety issues is important in encouraging greater use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Improving connectivity

The need to increase the north east's connections to the rest of the UK and the wider world and reduce journey times, overcoming real and perceived peripherality. This involves tackling existing constraints



on the road and rail network, further development of the airport and air services, express coach and bus services and continued expansion of maritime links.

Increasing public transport usage

Across the north east car use is high and bus and rail use comparatively low. In part this reflects the dispersed nature of residential and employment locations, but more needs to be done to ensure that public transport offers attractive, affordable services that meet people's needs. Demand responsive transport has a role to play in filling gaps in the public transport network.

Ensuring efficient movement of goods

Efficient and reliable freight movements underpin the region's economy. These are predominately undertaken by road and there is a need to ensure goods move reliably and efficiently. Sea and rail based freight movements are growing, and as energy costs rise, rail freight and maritime services will become more economically attractive.

Maximising the benefits of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route

The AWPR will make a big difference to connectivity and journey times across the region. Complementary transport measures and land use policies will be needed to 'lock in' the benefits of the AWPR and

ensure that the economic and transport opportunities it presents are realised.

Developing a strong City Centre

A strong centre with a more concentrated retail, leisure and business base will increase the viability of public transport and reduce the need for cross-city travel. A high quality urban environment will encourage increased walking and cycling.

Supporting vibrant Aberdeenshire towns

The north east's towns are a key part of the region's social and economic fabric. Their mixed residential, service and employment function helps reduce demand for travel and contributes to strong communities.

Embracing new technologies

The north east has the opportunity to lead the development and adoption of new technology, in particular alternative energy sources for transport, but also innovations that enable transport to keep pace with social and demographic change.

Changing travel behaviour

Making small changes in how we travel can have a big impact on congestion and the environment. Sustainable travel choices need to be developed and promoted to enable people and businesses to contribute to traffic reduction.

VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The vision and objectives have been developed based on analysis of existing transport problems and issues, the input from the Modern Transport System and the National Transport Strategy objectives. The consultation demonstrated broad support for the vision and objectives, which are strongly correlated with the national purpose and objectives set by the Scottish Government.

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

Economy

To enhance and exploit the north east's competitive economic advantages, and reduce the impacts of peripherality.

- To make the movement of goods and people within the north east and to/from the area more efficient and reliable.
- To improve the range and quality of transport to/from the north east to key business destinations.
- To improve connectivity within the north east, particularly between residential and employment areas.

Accessibility, safety and social inclusion

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.

- To enhance travel opportunities and achieve sustained cost and quality advantages for public transport relative to the car.
- To reduce the number and severity of traffic related accidents and improve personal safety and security for all users of transport.
- 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

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.

- To reduce the proportion of journeys made by cars and especially by single occupant cars.
- To reduce the environmental impacts of transport in line with national targets.
- To reduce growth in vehicle kilometres travelled.

Spatial planning

To support transport integration and a strong, vibrant and dynamic city centre and town centres across the north east.

- To improve connectivity to and within Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire towns, especially by public transport, walking and cycling.
- To encourage integration of transport and spatial planning and improve connections between transport modes and services.
- To enhance public transport opportunities and reduce barriers to use across the north east, especially rural areas.



PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The existing MTS strategy has been a key building block for the Regional Transport Strategy. Many of the projects contained within the MTS are already being delivered, while others are at an advanced stage of development.

These projects include the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, the re-opening of Laurencekirk Station and dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty, Aberdeen Crossrail (under development) and new Park and Ride sites (committed but not yet underway). The proposals set out below build on what has already been achieved and committed, and represent a coherent package of measures for the future.

SUB STRATEGY 1

The External Connections Strategy

EC1 : Rail links and services

- Reducing journey times to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and further south.
- Improved train capacity, comfort and reliability.
- Support for High Speed Rail connections to London, which benefit the north east.

EC2 : Strategic roads

- Overcoming constraints on the network that have a direct impact on travel to/from the north east, such as the A90 through Dundee.

EC3 : Inter-regional Bus and Coach travel

- Support further development of inter-regional bus and coach travel between the north east and other Scottish towns and cities and further afield. Explore possible links to Park and Ride sites.

EC4 : Connections by sea

- Closer joint working through the Freight Action Plan.
- Improved access and facilities at ports and interchange with passenger ferries.
- Development of new freight and passenger services.

EC5 : Connections by air

- Support expansion of direct destinations from Aberdeen and frequency of popular services.
- Support runway extension to facilitate wider range of destinations and more efficient, modern aircraft.
- Ensure protection of slots for Aberdeen services at key hubs such as London Heathrow.



SUB STRATEGY 2

THE INTERNAL CONNECTIONS STRATEGY

IC1 : Rail

- Increased frequency of services between Inverurie-Aberdeen-Stonehaven through Aberdeen Crossrail and improved services to Inverness.
- Proposed new station at Kintore and further development of the rail system to be set out in the Rail Action Plan.

IC2 : Road Improvements

- Strategic Roads Capacity improvements – tackling constraints at A90 Ellon - Peterhead, A96 west of Inverurie, Haudagain junction, Access to Aberdeen from the south, and at other junctions serving Aberdeenshire towns.
- Strategic Roads Safety improvements – alignment and junction improvements on A90 south. Overtaking, junction and alignment improvements on A90 north and A96. Route Action on A92, A93, A944, A947.
- Car share lanes – trialling priority lanes for cars with multiple occupancy.
- Prioritised maintenance for strategic routes, with particular benefits for public transport and sustainable modes.
- Support Local Authorities in bringing forward LTS projects that contribute to strategic objectives.

These build on the AWPR and dualling of A90 Balmedie-Tipperty which are being taken forward by Transport Scotland and are due to be completed in 2012.

IC3 : Bus Improvements

- Quality bus corridor improvements to services and facilities.
- Develop a Bus Action Plan to improve quality and reliability of services and set out proposals for extending bus priority measures..
- Explore Rapid Transit options through the Bus Action Plan.
- Expand Park and Ride provision linked to the development of the AWPR.
- Improve information provision including expanded real-time information systems across Aberdeen City and Shire.

IC4 : Demand Responsive Transport

- Support extension of 'Dial-a-Bus' and similar services to serve those unable to access conventional buses and to link with scheduled bus services.
- Support community transport providers and encourage development of services.
- Seek to ensure that taxis are provided in an efficient and effective way, which meets the needs of customers.

IC5 : Transport Interchange

- Maximising interchange potential of Guild Street development and link with Union Street and support enhancement of other interchange points in Aberdeen.
- Support further improvements to interchange facilities in Aberdeenshire towns, in particular building on developments at Inverurie, Peterhead and Banchory.
- Work with operators to develop integrated ticketing across services and operators in the north east.

IC6 : Walking and Cycling

- Support investment in measures to increase safety and security of walking and in particular to facilitate interchange between different modes of transport. Urban realm improvements to improve the pedestrian environment.
- Support the extension of low speed zones, particularly where it improves the environment for pedestrians and cyclists and increases safety for children.
- Continued development of cycle routes on key routes within Aberdeenshire, into Aberdeen and on routes through the City.

IC7 : Airport Surface Connections

- Encourage enhanced bus services to Aberdeen Airport to be detailed in the Bus Action Plan and Delivery Plan.
- Support a shuttle bus between Dyce station and the airport terminal.
- In the longer term, explore the potential for Bus Rapid Transit or enhanced rail services to the airport, providing faster, more reliable journey times.

IC8 : Port Surface Connections

- Support measures to improve access to port facilities.
- Facilitate improved interchange between the Aberdeen ferry terminal and bus and rail stations.

IC9 : Freight

- Support the development of modern intermodal freight terminals to provide future capacity for rail freight expansion.
- Investigate potential for measures to provide more reliable journey times for HGVs and identify a trial route for implementation of priority measures.

IC10 : Powered two-wheelers

- Support measures to improve safety for users of motorcycles and other powered two-wheelers and provide appropriate parking facilities.



SUB STRATEGY 3

THE STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

Travel Behaviour

TB1 : Promoting Travel Planning and Travel Awareness

- Implementation and future development of Nestrans' Travel Planning Strategy.
- Continue to provide support through the Sustainable Travel Grants Scheme.
- Encourage increased up-take of car-sharing.

TB2 : Promoting Active Travel

- Encourage more people to walk and cycle more often.
- Work with NHS Grampian and Community Planning Partnerships to promote the benefits of active travel and achieve objectives for a healthier population.

TB3 : Improving Safety

- Work with the Councils, Emergency Services and others to promote road safety as part of a comprehensive approach covering Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement measures.
- Improve security for users of public transport services and interchanges.

INCENTIVES AND ENFORCEMENT

IE1 : Changing Choices through Incentives and Partnerships

- Work with operators to identify possible fare incentives to encourage increased bus use, particularly where this enables access to employment or training.
- Through the Local Authorities/Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) continue to develop the Quality Partnership for Public Transport and consider introducing Punctuality Improvement Partnerships.
- Support measures which encourage uptake of alternative fuels, particularly by public transport providers, to build on the north east's role as an energy hub.

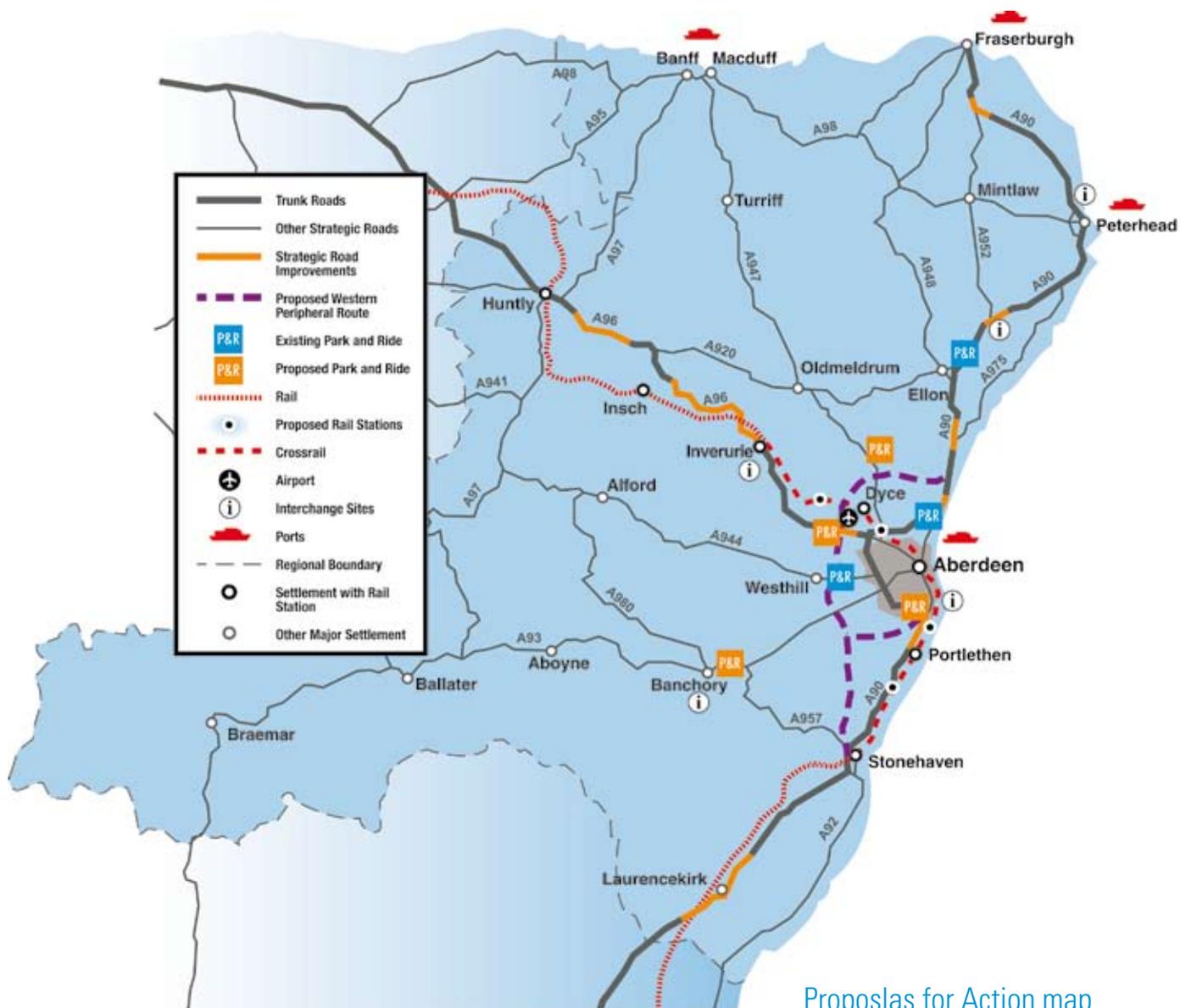
IE2 : Using Enforcement

- Support enforcement of vehicle emission standards to improve air quality, in Aberdeen City Centre and towns across the north east.
- Support measures to enforce speed limits to improve road safety and reduce carbon emissions. Promote the establishment of a Casualty Reduction Partnership to support the North East Safety Camera Partnership's (NESCAMP) activities and support the trial of average speed cameras.

IE3 : Parking

- Develop a Regional Parking Strategy to ensure a coherent approach to parking controls and standards across the north east.
- Support enforcement of parking restrictions, particularly where these exist to support strategic traffic movements, bus / pedestrian priority and road safety.
- Investigate the potential for parking incentives to encourage use of small or multi-occupancy vehicles.





Proposals for Action map

NEXT STEPS

Implementation of the RTS will rely upon partnership working by both public and private sectors and there is a key role for Nestrans in helping to make this happen. While there is potential for Nestrans to take on increased functions, we do not believe that this is necessary at the present time to ensure effective delivery of the strategy.

Much of the public sector funding to deliver strategic transport enhancements will need to come from central government and the case for this will need to be made and promoted particularly through Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review. Private sector investment will be vitally important and this will often depend on associated public sector investment and supportive local and regional policies.

Detailed Action Plans are being produced that focus on Buses, Freight, Health & Transport and Rail. Projects from the Action Plans and specific individual feasibility studies will be compiled in a prioritised and costed Delivery Plan that will be published later in 2008. The Delivery Plan will focus on who needs to do what and when, to ensure that the RTS is delivered efficiently and effectively. An Annual Report is produced to demonstrate progress in delivering the RTS and an annual Monitoring Report has been created to monitor and evaluate the success of the strategy. Progress updates on the key projects are also provided to each Nestrans Board meeting.

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For more information, please go to www.nestrans.org.uk/rts where you will also find our full strategy document.

You can also email us at: info@nestrans.org.uk or contact us at the address below.

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