

Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy

During 2013/14 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

Shared accommodation, administration and supplies

In 2013/14 NESTRANS continued to share accommodation with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) until the end of July 2013. The shared running cost of the office during this period resulted in a reduction in overall aggregate cost for both organisations. The co-location enabled close collaboration to easily and efficiently take place whilst the Strategic Development Plan and Regional Transport Strategy refresh were being developed.

Shared Public Relations Service

Nestrans and ACSEF had a combined contract for PR and communications services with The Big Partnership. To ensure best value this was tendered in 2013 to allow both organisations to benefit from cost savings and full time access to a dedicated marketing and communications officer. The cost to Nestrans in 2013/14 was approximately £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.

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 2013/14 was just over £2,900, whereas the administrative costs of clerking for the Board was £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 2013/14 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 2013/14 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 2013/14 this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of the Health and Transport Co-ordinator and non-Councillor Board posts. The cost of this service in 2013/14 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, Aberdeen 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 2013/14 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 2013/14 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.

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 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 MVA Consultants Ltd to allow Nestrans to obtain the same terms as Transport Scotland has been offered by MVA 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 2013/14 the model has been used for strategic projects such as the Bridge of Dee Stag Part 1 Appraisal, the AWPR Locking in the Benefits investigations and Access to Laurencekirk studies. The model has also been used by local authorities for future year demand predictions and strategic input to local micro simulation models and by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Managing Agent to include the allocations within the now approved Local Development Plans for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. 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. Access to the model was also granted to the consultants appointed by the Scottish Government to undertake a DMRB Stage 2 report for the A90/A96 Haudagain junction.

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 2013/14 the following grants, each amounting to a 50% contribution, were awarded:

- £1,490 to Hazlewood School for 4 cycle lockers
- £7,797 to Robert Gordon's University for 26 lockers at Riverside East
- £3,225 to Dana Petroleum for 10 cycle lockers

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 in Aberdeen have committed to meeting the ongoing annual hosting and maintenance costs and are advertising the website both within and on the outside of many buses.

Dyce Airlink Shuttlebus Service

Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council reduced the service in 2011 from a two bus operation to a single bus as this reduced costs whilst maintaining a reasonable service in line with train arrival and departure times that is meeting customer demand. The service was again tendered in 2012 resulting in a significant reduction to support costs for Nestrans. Stagecoach Bluebird was appointed and the service was rebranded as Jet Connect to tie in with the existing Jet service from the City Centre to the Airport. In 2013/14 Stagecoach has continued the operation on a commercial basis without subsidy given the current levels of patronage and Nestrans' commitment to establish a turning circle on the west side of the station.

Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements

Nestrans funding towards cycle and core path improvements has again been used by the Local Authorities as a basis to attract further match funding. In 2013/14 this resulted in:

Project	Nestrans Funding	Funding from other Organisations		Total Cost
Greenbrae Cycle Demonstration Project path	£35,937	Sustrans	£10,000	£45,937
Core Paths	£58,837	Aberdeen Greenspace Trust	£32,536	£91,373
Ellon Road-Strategic Cycle Links	£14,646	Sustrans	£12,500	£27,146
Parkway – Strategic Cycle Links	£11,714	Sustrans	£10,000	£21,714
Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town	£120,000	Sustrans	£45,000	£165,000
Total	£241,134		£110,036	£351,170

Health and Transport Action Plan

Nestrans funded 50% of the costs of a support manager for the Health and Transport Programme in partnership with NHS Grampian in 2013/14 now that the Scottish Government no longer fund a third of the costs of this post.

Nestrans has also continued to contribute along with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils, NHS Grampian and The Scottish Ambulance Service to deliver the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC). This was initially run as a pilot and opened in Elgin on 31 January 2013 to provide a dedicated telephone service offering guidance on accessing suitable transport options for the public to get to and from their appointments at a small number of clinics, where they may have no personal means of transport. In the past year this service has been rolled out to provide information on access to all NHS Grampian sites and Hitrans has contributed to the promotion costs.

Nestrans also jointly funded a journey planning travel screen with NHS Grampian for the new Aberdeen Community Health and Care Village that opened in December 2013.

Access to Laurencekirk Study

Nestrans has commissioned CH2MHill to undertake a study and prepare a robust evidence case for any proposed scheme to improve access to/from the A90 Trunk road in the vicinity of Laurencekirk. The study is being undertaken in partnership with Transport Scotland, Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils and Tactran. Part funding for the study was sought from Transport Scotland, who contributed £100,000 in 2013/14.

EU Funding

Nestrans has again been involved with a European project being led by one of our constituent local authorities. In 2013/14 this amounted to a £25,000 contribution to Aberdeenshire for the green freight corridors, GreCor project, which attracted EU match funding.

East Coast Mainline Authorities

An East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) grouping has been established, consisting of local authorities and Regional Transport partnerships along the route of the London Kings Cross-Aberdeen railway. Nestrans has contributed along with the other ECMA members to develop a business case, to highlight the economic importance of the line and the need for investment to ensure that the economies of the relevant regions continue to prosper.

Aviation Evidence Note

Nestrans has commissioned an update to the previous regional air access evidence work that was undertaken in 2012 and Hitrans has agreed to contribute 50% towards the cost.

Strategic Transport Fund

Supplementary guidance on 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund' was adopted in December 2011. This guidance is non-statutory supplementary guidance in support of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and allows 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. It is intended that this mechanism be reviewed and adopted as statutory guidance as part of the new Strategic Development Plan 2014 as soon as possible.

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 2013/14 contributions of £10,067,000 have been agreed and £1,179,000 has already been paid into the fund.

Procurement Activity

Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement

Nestrans has become an associate member of Scotland Excel and as such are able to acquire consultancy services under the above framework agreement. This framework operates from 18 March 2013 to 17 March 2015, with an option to extend for up to two years thereafter at the discretion of Scotland Excel. Members and associate members can engage appropriate consultants via the framework, but are not bound to make appointments via this method.

Nestrans will 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.

The agreement is split into the following lots with several consultants available within each lot:

- Lot 1 – Roads and Structures
- Lot 2 – Transportation and Traffic
- Lot 3 – Environmental Engineering
- Lot 4 – Land Surveying
- Lot 5 – Drainage and Flooding
- Lot 6 – Geotechnical and Testing
- Lot 7 – Project Management

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.