

Sustainable Economic Growth Statement

Introduction

Section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year each listed public body must publish a statement of the steps it has taken during the financial year to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions. Nestrans is a listed body within the Act.

This statement is intended to fulfil the requirement of the Act in relation to Sustainable Economic Growth. This statement should be read in conjunction with the statement on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy and the financial information provided on the Nestrans website that are also required by the Act.

Government purpose and performance framework

The Scottish Government launched Scotland's Economic Strategy on 3 March 2015 which combines work to boost economic growth and increase competitiveness with a drive to tackle inequality. The updated Strategy has four priorities, namely:

- **Investing** in people and infrastructure in a sustainable way;
- Fostering a culture of **innovation** and research and development;
- Promoting **inclusive growth** and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market and regional cohesion; and,
- Promoting Scotland on the **international** stage to boost our trade and investment, influence and networks.

Progress will be measured through the National Performance Framework that is to be updated to reflect the new strategic approach and Nestrans will ensure that future activity supports the requirements within the new Framework when published.

Aligning to the Purpose and National Objectives

The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy, approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008, includes, at page 102, an Appendix outlining how the Regional Transport Strategy objectives align with the National Objectives. This can be found at:

http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/Nestrans%20RTS%20final%20printed.pdf

The objectives of the RTS have been retained within the recent refresh of the strategy.

Regional Transport Strategy

Nestrans primary function is to produce and implement a Regional Transport Strategy.

Transport has long been recognised as a significant contributor to sustainable economic growth. The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy was developed in conjunction with the Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) Economic Manifesto and the Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) Structure Plan. The ACSEF Manifesto sets out a vision for the economic growth of the North East region of Scotland. The SDPA Structure Plan sets out the spatial strategy for achieving that growth. The Regional Transport Strategy examines how the growth can be achieved without increasing congestion levels. As the SDPA were developing a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the North East to 2035 a refresh of the RTS was undertaken to ensure that it takes account of current policies and to better align it with the SDP timeline and the transport implications of this plan. The refresh gained Ministerial approval in January 2014. As the refresh builds on the original RTS, it should be taken as an addendum to the original strategy document.

The principal ethos in setting and determining the Regional Transport Strategy and subsequent refresh has therefore been to encourage and permit sustainable economic growth.

Achievements in 2014/15

Planning

Nestrans previously developed a Cumulative Impact Assessment of the development proposals across both Council areas. This assessment considered the transport impact of development with the Regional Transport Strategy in place and what further interventions are likely to be required to assist in the objective of achieving sustainable economic growth.

This assessment resulted in agreement between the Councils to develop joint and complementary Supplementary Planning Guidance for issue as part of the Structure and Local Development Plans. The non-statutory supplementary guidance for the Structure Plan 2009 has been developed and formally adopted. It determines a framework for assessing developer contributions towards improvements to the strategic transport network. Nestrans hold and administer the Strategic Transport Fund and to date contributions of over £20.5 million have been agreed, of which almost £1.5 million has already been received.

The Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in March 2014 and Nestrans is continuing to work with the Strategic Development Planning Authority and other relevant stakeholders to develop a mechanism to secure contributions to the Strategic Transport Fund that can be approved as statutory supplementary guidance to the Strategic Development Plan as soon as is practicably possible.

Nestrans has worked with Government and Network Rail to ensure that the aspirations of the North East are taken into account in developing our railways. Nestrans is a member of the East Coast Mainline Authorities grouping, who aim to highlight the economic importance of the line and need for investment.

Nestrans has continued to be active in discussing the implications for the North East (and consequently the Scottish and UK economy) of current and future aviation policy. Nestrans and HiTrans jointly commissioned an update to the previous regional air access evidence work and submitted this to the Airports Commission. The Nestrans Director was part of the National Connectivity Task Force, which was funded by Heathrow Airport and made recommendations to the Airports Commission for regional access to south east airports.

Nestrans continues to work with the Scottish Government on developing proposals for improvements on the Aberdeen to Inverness Railway and Trunk Road network within the North East.

Nestrans has worked with partners to develop projects including:

- Investigations into transport improvements in the Bridge of Dee and Laurencekirk areas
- Provision of a Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme and promotion of sustainable, active travel through the Getabout partnership and brand
- Various cycling measures

Action Plans

Nestrans has four Action Plans intended to assist in the implementation of the Regional and Local Transport Strategies.

- Health and Transport Action Plan
Working with NHS Grampian, our two Councils and the Scottish Ambulance Service we have continued to focus on the two themes within the refreshed Action Plan:
 - Transport and Public Health – Nestrans provided funding for various getabout events and promotions
 - Access to Health and Social Care – Nestrans contributed to Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC) and funded an update to the leaflet showing travel options to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary with NHS Grampian meeting the printing and distribution costs.
- Bus Action Plan
A bus passenger satisfaction study was undertaken to build upon the results reported from 2010 - 2014. Festive travel guides on public transport options to Aberdeen City Centre were produced and a promotional campaign undertaken. Nestrans contributed to promotion for the cross boundary Forfar – Edzell bus service and to a study by Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce to look into barriers to bus use within the business community. Further upgrades to bus stop infrastructure and information were implemented.

- **Freight Action Plan**
The refresh of the Freight Action Plan was completed and launched at a meeting of the Freight Forum in June 2014
- **Rail Action Plan**
A North East Rail Forum was established and an inaugural meeting held in July 2014. Nestrans funded a preliminary design for a car park extension at Dyce Station in support of a request that Aberdeen City Council designate land for an extension within their next Local Development Plan.
- **Active Travel Action Plan**
An Active Travel Action Plan was developed, consulted upon and published in December 2014 with the aim of increasing the proportion of journeys on foot and by bicycle to contribute to health, environment, economic, safety and social inclusion objectives. The Sustainable Travel Grant scheme provided match grant funding to support implementation of successful sustainable transport proposals.

Projects

In 2014/2015 Nestrans implemented the following:

- Strategic Road – Capacity Improvements
Access to Laurencekirk Study
- Strategic Road – Safety Improvements
A947 Route Action
Variable Message Signs on 3 strategic routes within Aberdeen
- Strategic Road – Maintenance
A98 High Street, Banff – asphalt resurfacing
A920 Colpy to Potts Rayne Phase 2 – edge repairs/haunching and asphalt overlay to address damage by large vehicles carrying wind turbines that are diverted from the A96 Trunk Road due to constraints at Inveramsay Bridge
A947 Mill of Kingoodie Bends – asphalt resurfacing
Great Southern Road (Whinhill Road to Murray Terrace) southbound - resurfacing
Malcolm Road - resurfacing
Victoria Road (South Esplanade to Menzies Road) - resurfacing
- Bus Improvements
A90 (S) Schoolhill Park & Choose – design and planning application
Aberdeen City and Shire Bus Stop Information Initiatives – replace or provide bus timetable display cases and ensure standardised region wide DDA compliant timetabling information displayed,
Ellon Park & Ride improvements – progressed plans for additional external waiting facilities and upgrade to bus turning circle to accommodate 15m vehicles,
Peterhead Transport Interchange Improvements
Dyce railway station bus turning circle - construction
Kingswells Park & Ride – through access contribution

- Walking and Cycling

- Ellon Cycle infrastructure – new paths to connect to new Academy
- Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Towns – Meethill Road Ph 2 and A950 missing link
- Ellon Road Strategic Cycle Links – implementation of cycle path northwards from Brig of Don towards Parkway as identified in 13/14
- Ellon Road feasibility study – design of route north of Parkway
- Parkway Strategic Cycle Links – detailed design of route investigated in 13/14
- Formartine and Buchan Way- Asset management of bridges phase 1
- Muchalls to Stonehaven cycle path – design investigations
- Meldrum Meg Way – path feasibility
- Inverallochie to Cairnbulg – cycle/footpath
- Deeside Way surfacing from Peterculter westwards
- Formartine & Buchan Way hard surfacing from Dyce railway station to north of Parkhill Bridge, lighting and drainage
- Riverside Drive Cycle path – upgrade to surfacing and installation of lighting between Bridge of Dee and King George VI bridge and lighting on path from King George VI Bridge to Abbotswell Road
- Stoneywood Cycle path – construction of new section of path
- Core Paths – provision of directional fingerposts and way-marking signage

- Various

- Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study – multi-modal corridor assessment
- Electric Vehicle Chargers – installation of chargers for electric vehicles in nine designated car parks across Aberdeenshire