

## **5a Bus Action Plan**

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### **o Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update members in regard to a number of issues relating to the Bus Action Plan.

### **o Background**

The Regional Transport Strategy is supported by a number of Action Plans, one of which is the Bus Action Plan. Nestrans, local authorities, First Aberdeen and Stagecoach Bluebird work through a Voluntary Quality Partnership to deliver enhancements to the bus network for the benefit of passengers.

The Quality Partnership agreement was signed in 2010 and is available at:  
[http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db\\_docs/docs/Bus%20Quality%20Partnership.pdf](http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/Bus%20Quality%20Partnership.pdf)

The Bus Action Plan was approved by Nestrans Board in December 2009 and is available at:  
<http://www.nestrans.org.uk/bus-action-plan.html>

### **o Bus Satisfaction Survey**

Through the Quality Partnership, an annual survey of bus users' satisfaction is conducted. This year's survey was undertaken by Aecom consultants and a copy of the report and full results are available on the members' section of the Nestrans' website. The report will be made public and publicised in the next few weeks.

A total of 607 surveys of users of Aberdeenshire bus services (around 50 on each of the six main corridors and 303 at Aberdeen Bus Station) and 508 in Aberdeen (280 on Union Street; 228 elsewhere throughout the City) were undertaken, covering both weekday and weekend users.

Once again, the survey provides very positive overall results, as summarised below.

Key Findings include:

- Levels of positive satisfaction are broadly at the same level as those reported in 2014;
- In a number of cases, the percentage of "very satisfied" appears higher than the previous year;
- Overall satisfaction has risen from 85% in 2014 to 91% in 2015 (and very satisfied from 38% to 54%);
- Of 22 questions, 20 achieved responses with 75% or more respondents very or fairly satisfied;
- Of 22 questions, 13 increased the proportion of respondents satisfied compared to 2014; and
- Of 22 questions, 19 increased the proportion of respondents very satisfied.

The report also Benchmarks results against comparable surveys from elsewhere and concludes that the north east compares favourably. In seven key indicators where direct comparisons are possible, the proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements relating to reliability, cleanliness, safety, ticketing, information and value for money in north east Scotland was higher than in Scotland as a whole.

**o Barriers to Bus Use**

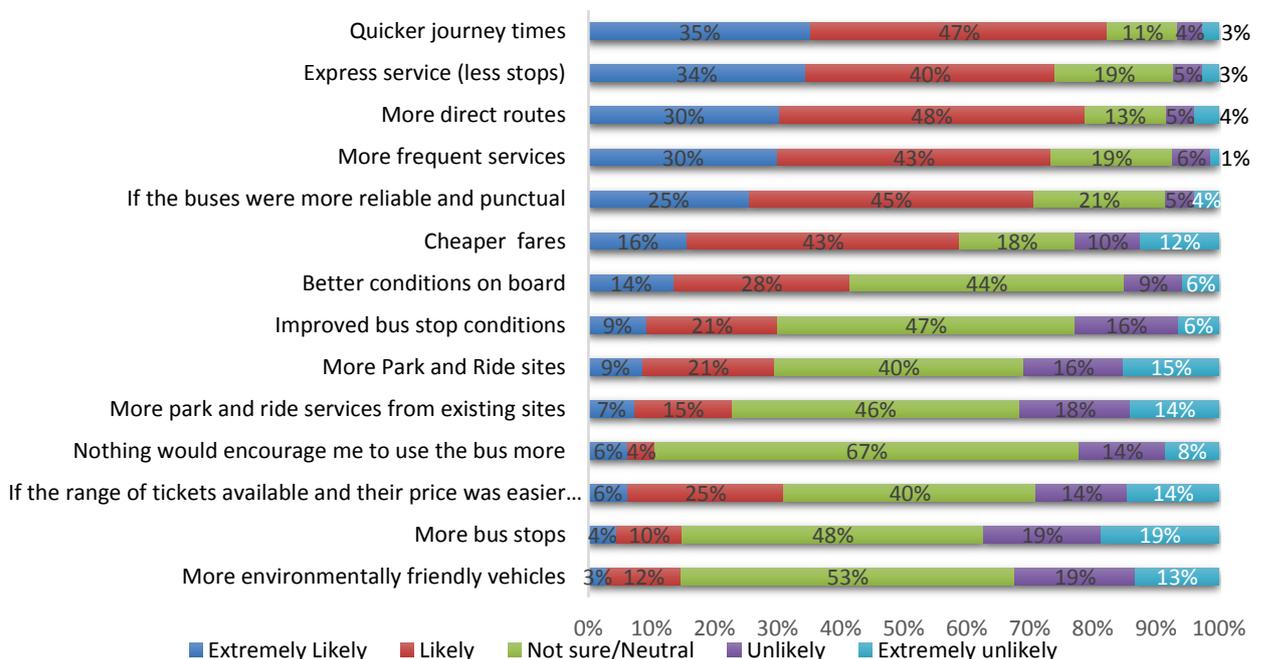
Nestrans, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and First Aberdeen jointly funded a study into an investigation of the reasons why more people don't use the bus in and around Aberdeen. A report has now been prepared and is available on the members' section of the Nestrans website. It is intended that a press launch will be arranged in the coming weeks and the full report will be made public at that time.

The study included 490 responses to a questionnaire distributed through the Chamber networks to both existing bus users and non-bus users and more detailed focus groups which were able to drill into detailed attitudes to public transport and what might influence individuals' travel behaviour. The research found that 66% of respondents travel by car as their primary method of travel to work, with 12% mainly using bus and a further 1% Park & Ride. However, 40% of respondents classed themselves as frequent bus users, or who would occasionally use the bus for commuting.

Investigation of factors which might encourage non-bus users to use the bus in the future concluded that quicker journey times, express services and direct routes, more frequent services and improved reliability and punctuality would be the main factors which would influence a change to bus use.

Figure 5 from the report represents what non-bus users feel would encourage them to use the bus more in the future.

**Figure: How likely would you be to take the bus in the future if the following changes were made?**



There may be issues relating to perceptions compared to actuality, for example in terms of journey times, punctuality and comparative costs of public transport to car use and it may be that more can be done through the Quality Partnership and through the Getabout Partnership to address some of these misperceptions.

The report contains recommendations to public organisations, employers and bus operators which could help to increase bus usage. These might include consideration of better information, re-evaluation of routes, car parking management issues, fares promotions and traffic management/bus priorities to address punctuality issues and journey times.

## o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Welcome the results of the Bus Satisfaction Survey; and
- b) Note the findings of the Barriers to Bus Use study and continue to work with operators, other partners and the Chamber of Commerce towards progressing the recommendations contained in the report.

RD/3 June 20