

6b Publications and Consultations

- Purpose of Report

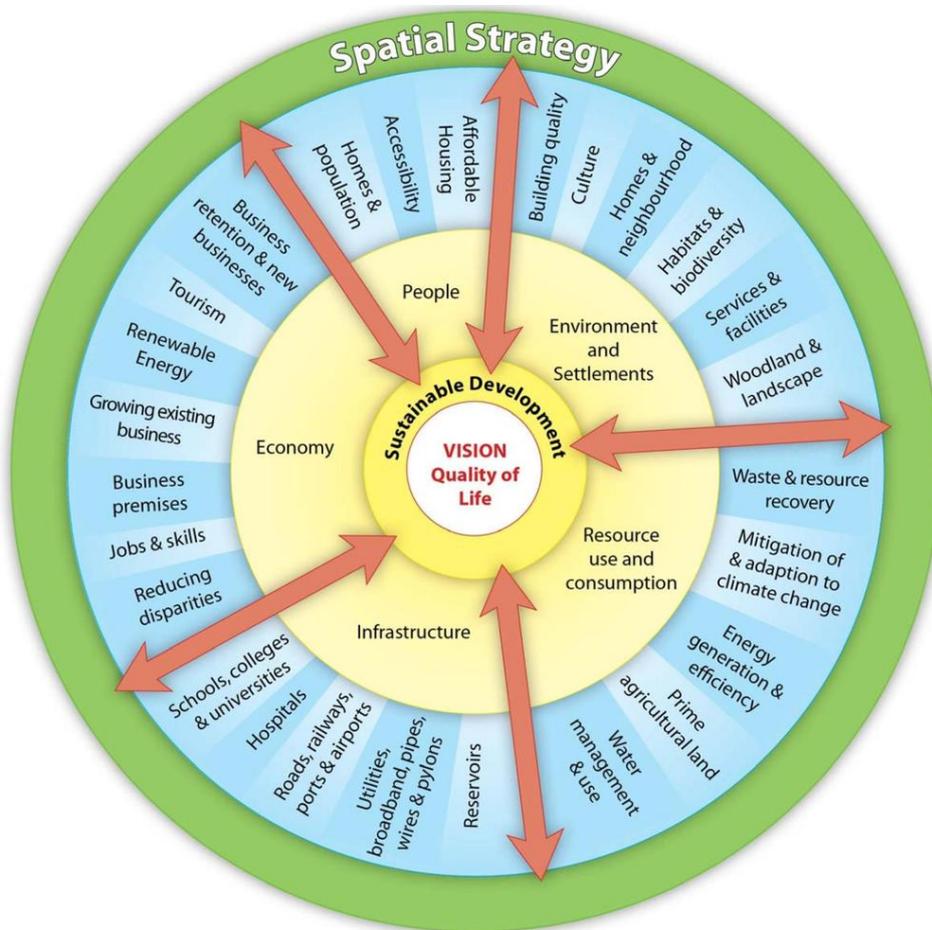
The purpose of this report is to inform members of a number of recent publications and consultation papers and to seek approval of draft responses as appropriate.

- Tayplan Main Issues Report

The Strategic Development Plan Authority for the travel to work area around Dundee (TayPlan) has recently published a Main Issues Report for consultation. The area covered is that of Dundee City, Angus, Perth & Kinross and the north east part of Fife. It should be noted that this is a different geographical area from that of Tactran, which incorporates Stirling but does not include any of Fife despite the local commuter market into Dundee

Entitled “Main Issues Report: Options for Scotland's SusTAYnable Region 2012-2032”, the consultation was launched on 12 April and comments are sought by 2 July 2010.

The key issues for Nestrans are the strategic transport connections, particularly those around Dundee which is on the primary route south from Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.



As can be seen from the above diagram, The Plan has a vision to provide Quality of Life within sustainable development. In the Infrastructure section, roads, railways, ports and airports are identified as one of a number of issues.

The Plan summary on infrastructure contains the following statement:

*“We need to locate development and improve infrastructure so that it is easier and more appealing to use public transport and other modes of personal and freight transport which minimise resource consumption. Infrastructure will also be key to improving accessibility and economic opportunities. The Proposed Plan may need to support infrastructure improvements which contribute to these objectives and may also need to locate development in places which best contribute to reducing travel demand.”*

New railway stations are planned at Oudenarde near Bridge of Earn and to relocate Invergowrie to west Dundee, although it is recognised that it is unlikely in the medium-term that further stations would be built due to tight public sector funding. The Tay Estuary Rail Study proposal requires timetabling changes, infrastructure improvements and rolling stock rather than additional infrastructure, to improve rail access between Angus, suburban Dundee and Perth & Kinross, to Stirling and Glasgow. Such timetable changes could impact on stopping patterns and therefore journey times between Aberdeen and the central belt. The report also recognises the importance of the planned Strategic Transport Project Review schemes at Usan near Montrose and to electrify the primary rail routes within Scotland.

The STPR also identifies the need for an upgraded road system “through or around Dundee” which is reflected in the Plan, but with no detail or preference.

It is recommended that Nestrans respond to the consultation highlighting the importance of strategic links through the Tayplan area, particularly the importance of bringing forward proposals to alleviate traffic around Dundee and the strategic rail connections currently constrained by the single track section at Usan. Nestrans should offer no objection to proposed rail station openings, but would wish to ensure that these contribute to enhanced journey times between the north east and central belt, rather than causing longer journeys.

- East Coast Mail Line consultation

As members will know, the East Coast Main Line rail franchise has now been taken into government ownership and Aberdeen-London trains are being operated by East Coast Ltd.

East Coast are currently consulting on a revision to the timetable from May 2011. Branded as “Eureka”, the key changes are to enable clock-face departure times to and from London with additional trains to Leeds and Lincoln. The company boasts “more seats, more services and faster journey times”, but most of the benefits are south of Edinburgh, particularly in accessing London.

The proposed timetable contains the following services to and from Aberdeen, all of which call at Stonehaven. Northbound:

- 0710 Leeds to Aberdeen, arriving 1305;
- 1000 London Kings Cross arriving 1705;
- 1503 Leeds to Aberdeen arriving 2055;
- 1400 London Kings Cross arriving 2110;
- 1600 London Kings Cross arriving 2305.

Southbound, Aberdeen departure times with Stonehaven calls:

- 0752 to London Kings Cross arriving 1450;

- 0820 to Leeds arriving 1411;
- 0952 to London Kings Cross arriving 1651;
- 1450 to London Kings Cross arriving 2202;
- 1755 to York arriving 2330.

Within Scotland, there will no longer be through trains via the East Coast to Glasgow, but the changes to Aberdeen and Inverness are minimal.

East Coast held a number of consultation meetings, including a presentation in the Station Hotel in Aberdeen on Friday 5 February.

- Competition Commission investigation into Local Bus Services

The Office of Fair Trading referred to the local bus market to the Competition Commission for further investigation, following its initial study into the sector and public consultation. The CC is now carrying out its own investigation to see if any features of this market prevent, restrict or distort competition and, if so, what action might be taken to address any adverse effects.

On 8<sup>th</sup> March an initial request for information was received from the Competition Commission in relation to this investigation into Local Bus Services. A number of specific questions / requests were made and the information provided is set out in the Appendix.

- GROS consultation on the 2011 Census

The General Register Office for Scotland is currently consulting widely with users of Census data to make sure the census output products are relevant and practical for them to use. As part of this consultation, a number of road show events are being held across the country. The event in Aberdeen will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

- Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and agree the attached appendices as Nestrans' comments where appropriate.

RD/KM 5 April 2010