

General - 6b Publications and Consultations

o Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform members of recent publications and consultation papers of interest and to agree a response where appropriate.

o Aberdeen City Council Draft Local Transport Strategy Refresh

Aberdeen City Council is consulting on a draft Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy Refresh (LTS) 2015-2020.

The LTS has been developed to set out the policies and interventions adopted by the Council to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the next five years. In doing so, it takes into account national and regional transport, planning and economic development policies and is fully integrated with the Council's wider objectives and outcomes.

The consultation period for the Local Transport Strategy ran for a six-week period from Monday 9th February to Friday 20th March 2015. However, Council officers have been informed that the Nestrans Board would be considering a response at this meeting and a formal response will follow. A draft response has been shared with officers to enable them to maintain progress on the refresh.

A copy of the draft Strategy, Environmental Report and an accompanying questionnaire are available from the Council's website, www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/lts. Appendix A to this report provides a draft response for members' views and comments.

Following consultation, it is anticipated that a final LTS will be presented to the Council at a future date.

o Aberdeen City Council Local Development Plan 2015

Aberdeen City Council is consulting on a Proposed Local Development Plan 2015 over a ten-week period between 20 March and 1st June. A copy of the Proposed Plan is available from the Council's website at:

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_proposed_plan.asp

The Plan has addressed the majority of Nestrans' comments on the previous Main Issues Report, as agreed by the Board at its meeting on 12 February 2014.

A Draft response on the Proposed Plan is attached as Appendix B to this report for members' views or comments. Responses are required by Monday 1st June 2015.

o **Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan**

Aberdeen City Council has appointed a consortium of consultants to develop a Master Plan for the City Centre, which will include significant proposals for developments and major impact on existing transport infrastructure. The Master Plan has reached its third consultation stage, at which a draft Master Plan is presented and public engagement and consultation form a key part.

Nestrans have been involved as stakeholders in the process and the transport consultant has been invited to make a presentation to the Board both on the key objectives, principles and proposals contained in the Plan and also on the traffic and transport implications, which are likely to be of most interest to Nestrans.

The master Plan is available from the City Council's website at:

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/shaping_aberdeen/City_Centre_Master_plan.asp

A draft response is attached as Appendix C to this report.

The consultation closed on 29th March 2015, and the attached Appendix has therefore be forwarded to the team organising the consultation process along with a letter indicating that further comments might be generated by today's meeting and presentation.

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o **Active Cairngorms**

Cairngorms National Park has published a draft Outdoor Access Strategy for the national park area, part of which is in the Aberdeenshire part of the area covered by Nestrans. A copy of the draft is available from the CNPA website at:

http://cairngorms.co.uk/uploads/documents/Park%20Authority/About%20Us/consultation_responses/150202ActiveCairngormsConsultFinal.pdf

A draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix D to this report

Responses are required by 10th April 2015.

o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the content of this report and approve the attached Appendices as Nestrans' response to the consultation on the City Council's Local Transport Strategy refresh, City Local Development Plan, Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan and Active Cairngorms Outdoor Access Strategy.

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Draft Response to Aberdeen City Council:

Draft Local Transport Strategy Refresh 2015-2020

Nestrans welcomes the opportunity to input to the Draft Local Transport Strategy refresh and acknowledges the early involvement already in the production of the document. In general, we welcome the recognition of the role of Nestrans and the appropriate references to Regional Transport Strategy and Action Plans as well as the collaborative working which goes on. The Draft Refresh correctly focuses on a five-year time horizon, in line with the longer-term strategic overview provided by the RTS.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

The role of RTS and Nestrans:

Section 2 Policy and Progress provides a clear and concise reflection of the role of Nestrans and recognition that LTS fits within the RTS: there is also appropriate recognition of Aberdeenshire's LTS and need for coordination between the two authorities within the context of the Regional Transport Partnership.

Nestrans welcomes this emphasis on delivery over the next five years, recognising that the RTS provides long-term, strategic framework and the LTS properly articulates actions in the immediate timeframe.

We also welcome the recognition of the role of the Getabout Partnership in delivering behaviour change within a regional context and in partnership with Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian and other partners.

Vision:

The Refresh sets out a clear vision "To develop a sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy and minimises the impact on our environment". This is in line with the RTS vision as well as National and European policies.

Key Indicators:

Nestrans welcomes progress against many of the strategy's key indicators and feels that these successes should be better publicised:

- 7% reduction in driving to work from the early 2000's to 2012;
- Number of children driven to school reduced 9% from 2007 to 2012;

- A 6% fall in traffic in Aberdeen between 2007 and 2012;
- A 33% reduction in fatalities in road traffic collisions between 2004/08 to 2013;
- Fuel consumption (and consequently CO2 emissions) down by more than 3% per annum since 2008; and
- Numbers walking and cycling increasing.

DETAILED COMMENTS:

Although well balanced overall, the document could have more emphasis on Safety and casualty reduction and would benefit by strengthening the role of Traffic Management.

Figure 1 should also include Nestrans' Active Travel Action Plan and the Regional Car Parking Strategy within the Transport Strategy Hierarchy;

In Section 3 on Strategy Development, under Integration, there is reference that “the dispersal of population from the City to the County increases car use”. This is a much wider phenomenon, including movement from central areas to periphery of the City and also that commuters are prepared to travel much longer distances to access jobs – not just a “County” issue.

Under Air Services, references to BAA should be changed to AGS Airports Ltd (Aberdeen, Glasgow and Southampton).

Under Trunk Road Network, there is an opportunity to strengthen the desire for improvements to the walking and cycling network associated with trunk roads.

The Section under Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route is a little misleading, listing a range of possible initiatives many of which are not being actively progressed at this stage. It would be better to contain a high level statement of commitment to investigate and implement, where appropriate, measures to maximise the benefits offered by the new road capacity in terms of ensuring a reduction in through traffic, a reassessment of road hierarchies to better manage traffic away from sensitive areas and a commitment to enabling modal shift by providing walking, cycling environment and a series of bus priorities.

The section on Flooding contains a figure of £17million as the annual cost of flood damage, but it is unclear whether this is a present-day cost or relates to the possible increase in rainfall and sea level changes.

The section on Car Parking talks of consideration of emission-based parking charges, but falls short of promoting a policy or commitment to implement any changes based on that examination.

The extension of Controlled Parking Zones should not be limited by “where there is support from local residents”. CPZs may be required to properly manage parking and may need to be implemented without the support of residents, for example in areas where there are few

residential properties (industrial estates, North Dee, in urban parks, etc.) - the caveat should at least be reversed to read “unless there is opposition from a majority of residents”. The potential impact of inappropriate parking in terms of road safety, flow of traffic and particularly to enable the free flow of buses should be highlighted in this section.

The section on Enforcement should include a further bullet point “To work with Police Scotland to ensure appropriate enforcement of moving traffic offences, such as blocking of yellow boxes, running red lights, etc.”

The section on Land Use Planning should include an additional action to “Require developers to contribute towards a Strategic Transport Fund to mitigate the Cumulative Transport Impact of developments on the transport network.”

The section on Travel Plans should include an additional action “To seek monitoring information on approved Travel Plans in order to provide information on the effectiveness of Plans and the actions contained therein”.

Overall, we recognise that the City Council are making significant progress and have achieved major successes, however, although statistics for City residents are mostly improving, there is still growing traffic coming into the City, predominantly at peak times. This reflects the changing nature of the employment markets, commercial decisions and there is a need to have a policy response to ensure the long-term achievement of the stated aims of the LTS. The LTS could usefully reference the ongoing development of a City Deal bid and the City Centre Master Plan, key elements of which might include:

1. Managing traffic away from the City Centre and sensitive areas;
2. Managing car parking by retaining maximum standards for new developments and a focus on Private Non-Residential parking, extending Controlled Parking Zones to address the issue of free commuter parking and realistic charges in Council car parks;
3. A Ring of car parks around a walkable City Centre (pedestrianised core);
4. A Network of Park & Rides supported by meaningful bus priorities enabling competitive bus journey times; and
5. Safe and convenient Active Travel Networks.

I hope these comments are helpful as you move towards a finalised Local Transport Strategy and look forward to working collaboratively in developing and implementing the elements of the LTS. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager.

2 April 2015

Our Ref

RD/N14/5

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Local Development Plan Team
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Dear Andy

Aberdeen Local Development Plan Proposed Plan

Thank you for your letter of 17 March, containing a copy of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Proposed Plan. As the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, we have focussed our comments on those issues that are relevant to transport and particularly those on which we commented in February 2014 at the Main Issues stage.

A report on the proposed Plan was considered by the Nestrans Board at its meeting on 1st April and the following comments were agreed as a representation. Nestrans is generally supportive of the Plan and note the following specific points:

- We welcome the retention of the Raiths Farm Rail Freight Facilities as a reservation for transport-related activities;
- In relation to site OP104 at Craiginches, we would still wish to see the opportunity for redevelopment of this site to provide for improvements to Wellington Road, particularly for buses, pedestrians and cyclists, which may be facilitated through a reservation within the site in any redevelopment proposals. A study has been carried out on behalf of Nestrans identifying the possible extent of land necessary to provide for a road widening to facilitate such an improvement;
- We welcome and support the objective of reducing congestion and improving air quality in the city centre and the weight given to encouraging sustainable travel within the Plan;
- We welcome the references made to the Cumulative Transport Appraisal and the Strategic Transport Fund, both in the Plan and in the Supplementary Guidance;
- We are supportive of the preferred option to create a new deep water harbour facility at Nigg Bay and welcome its inclusion as OP62 in the Proposed Plan. The Plan also identifies the need for a full and detailed examination of the transport access requirements and the impacts of the development on the existing network, including the need for a second access, to be undertaken as part of the planning process.
- We welcome the proposed reallocation of a section of land at Dyce, close to the railway station as OP86, to land available for transport purposes, in order to facilitate

consideration of an opportunity to enhance access to the railway station at Dyce and to increase parking available both for users of the station (which has seen significant patronage growth in recent years) and users of the Pitmedden playing fields and the Formartine & Buchan Way. Nestrans has commissioned a consultancy study in support of the reallocation, which will provide a projected forecast of station patronage and include an indicative layout for a possible car park extension at this location.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Plan and I hope that these comments are helpful. If you would like to discuss any of the points raised in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Rab Dickson
Transport Strategy Manager



Draft Response to Aberdeen City Council:

Draft City Centre Master Plan and Delivery Programme

Nestrans welcomes the opportunity to input to the Draft City Centre Master Plan (CCMP) and acknowledges the opportunity to be involved in the developing Plan through stakeholder engagement to date.

In general, we welcome the principles of the Master Plan, the identified priorities and the acknowledgement of the important role that Aberdeen City Centre plays as the economic heart of the region.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS:

The role of the RTS and Nestrans:

The CCMP could be strengthened by appropriate reference to the role of Nestrans as Regional Transport Partnership and the statutory Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). The RTS contains key proposals, including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and Locking in the Benefits of that and other road improvement schemes, and a context for the pedestrianisation schemes in the City Centre.

Vision:

The CCMP vision is to provide “A City Centre for a global city” and the purpose to “Energise the City Centre to deliver prosperity and better quality of life for all.”

The emphasis on Quality of Life is to be welcomed although the generality of the vision and purpose are such that there is no clear targeted direction for proposals. Eight objectives are identified, within four themes. Theme 3 “Connected City” is of most relevance for Nestrans, focussing on an improved pedestrian environment, more opportunity for cycling and public transport improvements.

Principles and Detailed Comments:

Nestrans welcomes the principles and direction of the Master Plan, but would make the following comments:

- Although well balanced overall, the document could have more emphasis on Safety and casualty reduction and would benefit by strengthening the role of Traffic Management. Accident reduction and air quality improvements should be identified as key requirements and the text should emphasise the opportunities to reduce casualties and reduce emissions through delivery of the proposals.

- Streets for People: the CCMP proposes traffic reduction and redesigned streets to create a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists; the Plan needs to be clearer on traffic reduction, it is not sufficient to state that “traffic would be removed” – rather this should be articulated as managing traffic away from the central core and mode shift by improving walking and cycling opportunities, bus priorities and public transport choice. It is important to ensure that the City Centre can accommodate and attract people and that to achieve that, a mode shift is required;
- Keep on Moving: the proposed Inner Relief Road needs to be carefully considered within the context of the ongoing work looking at road hierarchies, and the proposals to lock in the benefits of the road construction programme which is ongoing. Again, emphasis on enabling people to access the City Centre will require enhanced walking and cycling opportunities and improved public transport both in the Central Area and on key routes accessing the City Centre, linking Park & Ride sites and key bus corridors supported by bus priorities;
- There could be greater emphasis on removing unnecessary through traffic from the City Centre area, by utilising traffic management techniques to reallocate traffic on an appropriate road hierarchy. Within the City, mode shift will be essential to achieving the vision, opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cycling environment within the core area must be complemented by improved public transport opportunities through improvements to local rail, bus priorities within and through the City Centre, competitive bus journey times especially on key radial corridors and linking Park & Ride sites to the key destinations within the City;
- Proposals to introduce a network of bus, taxi, cyclist and local access only streets need to be carefully thought through, particularly looking at the volume of traffic which would be on key sections such as the central part of Union Street:
 - To be successful, the Master Plan will require to accommodate additional bus patronage, yet the indicative drawings imply a much reduced space for buses in the central core. There is a need to ensure that adequate space is provided for buses, including bus stopping areas in the key areas;
 - It will be necessary to restrict through traffic from the Central Core, such as off-duty taxis, taxis without passengers, and taxis crossing the City, although this might be difficult to enforce unless an area is limited to service buses only;
 - Full consideration should be given to deliveries and servicing of premises in the central area.
- Proposed pedestrian bridges at Union Terrace Gardens and across the River Dee should be considered in terms of the costs and benefits associated with them, and against other options which may offer alternative ways of achieving the objectives of improving walking/cycling benefits;
- The railway station gateway proposals are supported in principle, but need to be developed in conjunction with Abellio, the new ScotRail franchise holder.

I hope these comments are helpful as you move towards a finalised Master Plan and look forward to working with Aberdeen City Council and others in helping to deliver and implement the measures contained in the final Plan. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager.



Draft response to

Cairngorms National Park Authority: Active Cairngorms

1. *Is the overall aim of encouraging residents and visitors to be active outdoors every day an appropriate ambition for Active Cairngorms?*

The overall aim of encouraging residents and visitors to be active outdoors every day is an appropriate ambition for Active Cairngorms and contributes to delivery of the Scottish Government's implementation plan "A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games" along with walking and cycling strategies; Cycling Scotland's Cycling Action Plan and The National Walking Strategy.

The Active Cairngorms strategy makes reference to the everyday journeys carried out in the National Park, however, within the strategy a stronger emphasis could be placed on how to achieve everyday active journeys between local attractions, places of work and recreation within the Cairngorms National Park.

2. *Are the priorities identified in the three strategic themes the best focus for activity to deliver Active Cairngorms?*

Overall, the priorities identified within the three strategic themes are a good focus for the activity to deliver Active Cairngorms.

Active Places:

Priority extension of Deeside way to multiuse path from Ballater to Braemar by 2020.

The Regional Active Travel Action Plan (AcTrAP) developed by Nestrans had identified the Deeside corridor: Aberdeen to Banchory and Cairngorms National Park as part of the strategic active travel network and has committed as an action to work with partners to extend this corridor west from Peterculter.

Nestrans welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with Cairngorms National Park and Aberdeenshire Council on developing and extending this strategic corridor.

Active Management:

The commitment by the Active Cairngorms strategy to invest in active travel within the National Park area is welcomed. A commitment to work with local, regional and national bodies to develop investment opportunities in active travel should be included to allow a greater variety of partnership working and funding opportunities.

Active Promotion:

As part of the promoting healthy lifestyles, information and awareness campaigns regarding everyday active travel should be included alongside information on opportunities, targeting the least active, promotion of family activities and inspiring children to enjoy the outdoors.

3. Does Active Cairngorms contain the right policies to promote and manage outdoor access in the National Park?

The Active Cairngorms Strategy looks to incorporate a number of actions and plans which are being developed by the National Park Authority in relation to walking and cycling.

An active travel action plan has already been developed and approved at a regional level for the North East, and work is continuing at a local level to develop an active travel strategy within the Aberdeenshire Council area.

A strategic and cohesive approach should be taken by all partners to ensure that similar strategies complement each other particularly at a local level, in order to achieve further take up of walking and cycling both within the Cairngorms National Park and throughout the North East region.

Nestrans will support and work with Cairngorms National Park and Aberdeenshire Council in the development of cycling and walking strategies and action plans.

4. Will the Action Plan deliver the strategy, and what can you or your organisation contribute to the Action Plan?

Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland. In December 2014 Nestrans developed and approved an active travel document for the North East region, the Active Travel Action Plan, (AcTrAP). AcTrAP was developed with the following vision “create an environment and culture in which walking and cycling are convenient, safe, comfortable, healthy and attractive choices for everyday journeys”.

Whilst the Active Cairngorms strategy has a focus on Tourism and Leisure, the promotion of active travel for functional every day journeys will help to achieve the aim of all residents and visitors using the park for physical activity everyday.

Both the Active Cairngorms strategy and Nestrans Active Travel Action Plan have identified the Deeside Way as a strategic route that if developed further within the Cairngorms National Park will help to promote both active lifestyles and active travel within the Park.

5. Will the monitoring framework provide a clear indication of the on-going effectiveness of the strategy?

Nestrans supports the aim for on-going and continued monitoring within the Cairngorms National Park. Further monitoring of cycling in the park could be achieved by using the Sustrans Hands up

survey which takes place in school across the country on annual basis and Cycle Scotland Annual Monitoring Reports.

6. *Ranger Services across the National Park are a key partner in supporting the delivery of Active Cairngorms. Is the current provision of rangers best placed to help deliver the strategy?*

Nestrans cannot comment on the Ranger Services across the National Park or whether the current provision of rangers is best placed to help deliver the strategy.