

## **General - 6b Publications and Consultations**

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### **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 International Airport Capital Investment Plan**

Aberdeen International Airport have published their Capital Investment Plan 2015. This can be found at: <http://www.nestrans.org.uk/aberdeen-international-airport.html>

This Plan has been published for consultation with airport users. It details the airports plan for capital investment over the next few years based upon the anticipated passenger numbers that the airport is expected to experience.

The plan details expenditure, as might be expected, on the taxiways, stances and terminal improvements. It also discusses a need to consider extending car parking as passenger numbers increase.

From Nestrans point of view, the airports consultation is welcomed. A particular point that Nestrans Members may wish to respond on is the increase in car parking numbers. Whilst a significant amount of work is underway to improve access to the airport via the public road system, there is no recognition of the improved numbers of passengers arriving at the airport via public transport. This has been discussed in the Monitoring report at item 3c on the Boards agenda.

The Board may wish to respond to the airports consultation that as well as considering the parking requirement for future passenger numbers the airport should also consider both the road capacity to meet that increase (should it be solely the public authorities responsibility to meet that need?) and also with an increasing number of passengers arriving by public transport should the airport be encouraging that movement towards public transport access? This is discussed further in the item below.

A response will be drafted to the airports consultation based upon Members views at the Board meeting.

### **o UK Parliament's Transport Committee Inquiry into surface access to airports**

The UK Parliament's Transport Committee is undertaking an inquiry into surface transport at airports. The inquiry will examine whether strategic connections to airports fulfil current and future requirements in terms of range and capacity.

The Committee is interested to assess the effectiveness of the Government's approach to planning surface access to airports, as well as understanding whether the Government is

making full use of its powers to influence the selection of infrastructure and accompanying modes of transport to and from airports.

The inquiry will be limited to looking at UK airports with 1 million passengers per annum or above. The Committee is particularly interested in receiving written submissions on:

- The range and capacity of current strategic connections to airports and how predicted changes in demand for capacity (both passengers and freight) are being planned for.
- The importance of surface transport in freeing up existing spare capacity in airports.
- The Government's role in planning surface access to airports in conjunction with airport owners, local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The funding of strategic connections to airports, particularly: Department for Transport's (DfT) role in ensuring that surface access infrastructure is planned and built in a joined-up way where different parts of the infrastructure are funded by different parties.
- The level of responsibility that should be borne by the taxpayer for funding access and interfaces with national networks
- The Government's effectiveness in ensuring that its own policies, such as modal shift, are being achieved in decisions about surface transport to airports.
- The extent to which airport customer preference and DfT policy concur in terms of preferred modes of surface transport to airports.

The following issues will not be covered by this inquiry:

- Non-surface access modes of transport e.g. domestic flights
- Air quality issues

Written submissions are to be received by Monday 12 October 2015.

A draft submission has been attached as Appendix A for the Board's consideration.

## • **Aberdeen Harbour Extension Proposals**

Aberdeen City Council are conducting a public consultation in association with the Harbour Board's proposals for an extension to the harbour and have written : Nigg Bay Development Framework and Environmental Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment).

On 27 August 2015, Aberdeen City Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee approved the Draft Nigg Bay Development Framework for public consultation. The consultation offers the opportunity to consider the relationship between the proposed new harbour facility at Nigg Bay and the surrounding area. This includes infrastructure, access, amenity, open spaces, and connections. There is also an Environmental Report which considers the potential environmental impacts of the Nigg Bay Development Framework.

The principle of the new harbour facility at Nigg Bay is established as a 'National Development' by the Scottish Government and is outlined in the *National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) A Plan for Scotland: Ambition, Opportunity, Place*, and, is identified in the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2015.

A 6 week public consultation will be in place until Wednesday 11th November 2015. A copy of the documents published for consultation are available online under the 'Current Consultations' headings at the following web link:

[www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/masterplanning)

In addition, a number of 'Drop-in' Sessions will be held during the consultation: on Thursday 8 October at Tullos, Saturday 10 October at Torry Library; and on Wednesday 14 October at Torry Library.

It is suggested that Nestrans officers, in consultation with the Chair and vice Chairs, should prepare a response for input to the consultation before the deadline of 11 November. Results of the consultation will be reported back to the Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on the 20 January 2016.

### o **Aberdeen Union Square Extension Proposals**

Union Square are currently conducting pre-application consultations on a proposal to extend their shopping and leisure development in Aberdeen City Centre.

The proposal could include additional floorspace and an increase in car parking capacity of around 1,000 additional spaces. As Union Square includes Aberdeen station and bus station, there is a significant impact on public transport in terms of the development and the potential increase in parking numbers.

### o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the content of this report and approve the attached Appendix as Nestrans' response to the UK Parliament's Transport Committee's inquiry into surface access to airports; and
- b) instruct the Director to prepare a response, in consultation with the Chair and vice Chairs, to Aberdeen International Airports Capital Investment Plan 2015 based upon Members views at the Board meeting and to the Nigg masterplan

RD & RGM 24 Sept 2015

### UK Parliament Transport Committee

#### Inquiry into: surface access to airports

#### Submission by Nestrans (September 2015)

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the north east of Scotland covering the geographical region of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Local Authority areas. This covers approximately 10% of both Scotland's population and land mass. We have a Board consisting of four Councillors from each Local Authority plus four non-councillor Members.
- 1.2 Our principal airport is Aberdeen International Airport. This airport is primarily a business airport connecting the north east of Scotland to other parts of the UK and to international hub airports. It is the best connected UK to UK airport and the worlds busiest heliport (c0.5k pax). The airport has a catchment of around 600,000-700,000 but serves over 3.5m passengers per annum. This high propensity to fly reflects both the geography of our area and the industries of the region. It highlights the importance of air travel to our region in delivering substantial economic benefits to both Scotland and the UK. Passenger numbers are anticipated to reach 5m/ annum in the coming years.
- 1.3 Although outwith the scope of this inquiry it is worth noting the importance of air access to the international hubs. These, including Heathrow, provide access to the world. This is particularly important for the industries in our region including Energy, Tourism and Food & Drink. These are truly global industries which require global access. Given the geography of our region and our relatively small catchment size our access to the markets in these industries is via the hub airports through transfer from an Aberdeen flight. Surface access is either not possible or not feasible due to excessive journey times. The further you are from a hub airport the more important air access to the hub becomes.
- 2.0 Surface Access to Aberdeen International Airport
  - 2.1 Road
    - 2.1.1 Road access to Aberdeen International Airport has become congested and at times extremely congested. At peak times the roads surrounding the airport can become so congested that the first mile around the airport can take 45 minutes to negotiate. Major road improvement schemes are however underway to ease road congestion in the area. These include the £750m Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road (Transport Scotland, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire Councils) and the £18m new airport link road including a park and ride facility (Aberdeen City Council). When these are completed the nearby Haudagain junction (Transport Scotland) is to be upgraded. These upgrades will provide a significant boost to accessing the airport by road.

2.1.2 There are further business, industrial and housing developments being planned for the area. Developer contribution through our [Strategic Transport Fund](#) will help support this development whilst maintaining access to the airport. However further intervention is likely and this is currently part of the City Region Deal negotiations with the Scottish and UK Governments.

## 2.2 Public Transport

2.2.1 Access to Aberdeen International Airport has traditionally been via car or taxi. There has been very limited access via public transport. Over the past ten years or so there has been a considerable effort by the airport, bus operators, train operators and the local authorities to encourage a growth in public transport access. This has been a successful project resulting in a substantial shift towards public transport access. This can be seen in the figure from our monitoring report below:



### 2.2.2 Bus

A number of bus options have been tried over the years. The two currently most successful operations include a bus from Aberdeen Rail station & City Centre and a bus link between the airport and Dyce railway station, the nearest station to the airport. The city centre bus has been developed with only minor contributions from the local authorities. The Dyce railway station bus has been developed with funding from Aberdeen International Airport (via a planning condition) and Nestrans but has reached the stage of operating commercially. This has led to the construction, by Nestrans on airport land, of a new bus turning facility at Dyce station to permit full sized buses to operate to meet demand.

### 2.2.3 Rail

As the figure shows, although close to a railway station the access difficulties between the station and the airport meant that very few passengers used this option. Improvements to rail timetabling and the introduction of a connecting bus has resulted in a significant proportion of passengers now using rail to access the airport.

### 3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The growth of the use of public transport to access the airport is a success story which has to be attributed to those involved in making that success, the airport, bus operators, rail operators and local authorities. However it should also be noted that the Regional Transport Strategy recognised the importance of the airport to the economy and the strategic link between public transport and the airport. The airport's own surface access strategy also recognised the need to improve public transport access to the airport and the need to increase public transport's share of passenger and staff numbers accessing the airport in a period of growing passenger arrivals and departures.
- 3.2 It is suggested that this strategic context is useful in identifying both the importance of recognising the need for an increasing mode share for public transport but also in concentrating minds on how to achieve such a mode share increase across a number of bodies involved in public transport delivery.
- 3.3 It is therefore suggested that airports should be required to keep an up to date surface access strategy linked to their development plans and predicted passenger and staff numbers. This document should include targets for increasing mode share for public transport and incorporate an action plan for implementing that mode share increase. This would clearly involve the airport in discussions with public transport operators and local authorities. These strategies and plans should be submitted to the appropriate authorities (DfT, Transport Scotland and LA's) for agreement and approval.