

General -

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.

- Airport Masterplan

As reported to the last Board meeting on 28 April, Aberdeen Airport published its Masterplan on 2 April 2012, to replace the previous 2006 version and consider the implications of the economic downturn on forecasts for the aviation industry. The Masterplan can be found at:

[http://www.aberdeenairport.com/static/Aberdeen/Downloads/PDF/GA12015%20Aberdeen%20MP%20Document%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.aberdeenairport.com/static/Aberdeen/Downloads/PDF/GA12015%20Aberdeen%20MP%20Document%20(Final).pdf)

Nestrans has been involved in the development of the Plan through involvement with the stakeholders group and has fed into the Plan's development. The Masterplan forecasts growth from current passenger levels of 3.1 million per year to four million by 2020 and 5.1 million by 2040. The draft Masterplan sets out how Aberdeen Airport will develop to accommodate this increased demand in two phases:

Phase One to 2020:

- ~ Focus on making best use of current facilities and alterations to existing infrastructure to meet capacity requirements;
- ~ Construction of new aircraft parking stands;
- ~ Upgrade and refurbishment of parts of the main terminal to provide a more efficient and attractive facility;
- ~ Additional short-stay car parking and possible additional long-stay parking;
- ~ Developing an Air Freight Strategy;
- ~ Ancillary facilities to support growth, located within the land allocated for airport use.

Phase 2 to 2040:

- ~ Possible runway extension, in addition to current planning approval (requiring land currently used as a cricket ground);
- ~ Further aircraft parking stands;
- ~ Further extensions and improvements to the terminal;
- ~ Safeguarding land for maintenance facilities;
- ~ Ancillary facilities to support growth within land allocated for airport use.

The consultation on the draft Masterplan runs until 30 June 2012 and a Final Masterplan is envisaged by the end of 2012.

A suggested response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

- New rail stations fund

At the previous meeting of the Board, it was reported that the Transport Minister had announced a £30million programme of improvements for railway stations across Scotland.

To date, there has been no further detail on the workings of the scheme, but Nestrans will be highlighting the particularly strong growth in passenger numbers across the North East, significantly stronger than across Scotland as a whole, the success of the Laurencekirk Station re-opening, the success of running more regular trains to Inverurie, the desire within communities to see improvements and the possibility of joint working afforded by the North East's Strategic Transport Fund.

- Reforming our Railways: Putting the Customer First

On 25 January, Justine Greening MP the UK Secretary of State for Transport issued a Command Paper (Cmnd 8313 <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/reforming-our-railways/reforming-our-railways.pdf>) following on from the McNulty Review "Rail Value for Money Study" which identified inefficiencies in the railway industry.

The paper seeks to reduce Government subsidy to the railways by delivering efficiency savings and increasing transparency, reforming rail franchises and expanding smart ticketing to benefit passengers.

The Command Paper emphasises that it is not the goal to limit the railway to only profitable services with no subsidies. Where social, environmental or economic benefits can be demonstrated, and services are not commercially viable without taxpayer support, a case can be made.

The aim is to strike a better balance between farepaying passengers and taxpayers. Table 5.1 within the paper highlights that the ratio of taxpayer to farepayer funding for long distance rail is 25:75, in London and the south east it is 19:81, whereas across the rest of the network it is 61:39.

The Government states that it wishes to see continued investment in rail enhancements, but that the existing system is "unacceptably inefficient". Electrification, High Speed Rail, rolling stock and station improvements are all seen as important where they can deliver value for money and support the sustainable growth of the industry and the economy. In future, franchises are likely to be more flexible, there will be encouragement to better utilise capacities and fares and tickets will increasingly use smart ticketing technology to spread demand more evenly over the day.

- Railfares and Ticketing Review

On 8 March, the Department for Transport also issued a Consultation on a Rail Fares and Ticketing Review (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-09/main-document.pdf>). The review considers issues such as limiting and eventually eliminating above-inflation rises in regulated fares, giving consideration to fares structures and enabling more flexibility to encourage better value fares on quieter trains. It also offers the opportunity to consider issues relating to the complexity of the system and other issues relating to ticketing arrangements such as ways of purchasing tickets. The review has implications for Scotland as the UK Secretary of State has responsibilities for the rules and mechanics of setting fares as well as regulatory aspects of cross-boundary services.

A draft response to the questionnaire on the consultation is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. Responses are sought by 28 June 2012.

- Rail Decentralisation

The Department for Transport has also issued a guidance document for consultation regarding decision-making on passenger rail services in England (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2012-10/main-document.pdf>). This enables local bodies to take more decisions about local rail services and will provide transparency over the costs and benefits of providing services. Responsibility (and budgets) for rail passenger services could be devolved to Passenger Transport Executives or local authorities, rail operators or community rail partnerships and the Government is seeking views on whether improved outcomes for passengers might be achieved by decision-making at a level closer to the communities served.

Although this guidance currently relates only to services in England, it is possible that the principles involved could equally be relevant to rail services elsewhere in the future.

It is however, suggested that members note the guidance rather than make a formal response.

- Network Rail – Alternative Solutions Scoping Document

In February, Network Rail issued a consultation on Alternative Solutions (<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20utilisation%20strategies/network/working%20group%205%20-%20alternative%20solutions%20to%20efficiently%20deliver%20passenger%20demand/network%20rus%20alternative%20solutions%20scoping%20document.pdf>), focusing on three key areas – whether tram and tram/train technologies can deliver savings whilst improving the offering to the travelling customer; if there are cheaper or more innovative ways of replacing diesel traction with electrically powered trains; and to what extent can the further development of community rail initiatives provide locally applicable opportunities for adding value to railway operations?

It is suggested that members note the scoping document.

- A96 Inveramsay Bridge Improvement

Members will be aware that Transport Scotland has committed to removing the blockage at Inveramsay Bridge on the A96. Further to consultation on a range of options for the improvement carried out last winter, the consultant appointed by Transport Scotland has now indicated that a preferred options has been identified and an Environmental Statement is being prepared. Geotechnical investigations will begin on-site later this month.

The proposal is for an off-line route which runs from 100 metres west of the existing Inveramsay Bridge eastwards towards the River Urie, parallel with the river for approximately 600 metres before turning southwards to cross over the railway line north of Dier Cottage. A plan is attached below.



- Recommendation

It is recommended that Members :

- a) note the report and the documents referred to above and endorse the comments as Nestrans' responses to the consultations.

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