

## General -

### 6b Publications and Consultations

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- 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.

- Aviation Policy Consultation

There is a current consultation on Aviation Policy scheduled for responses by 31 October 2012. As discussed at Item 3a and at the last Board meeting, this consultation does not include the issue of capacity at South East of England airports. It had been intended to have a draft response on the remaining issue for approval at this meeting however the Department for Transport consultation meeting, organised by Transport Scotland has been postponed until 12 October 2012.

It is thought appropriate not to table a draft response until after this consultation with the Department for Transport in order that the proposed response can fully take into account issues raised in the all-Scotland consultation meeting.

It is therefore proposed to draft a response following the meeting and circulate to members for comment prior to submitting to the Department for Transport.

The current consultation considers economic regulation, noise, environmental impacts and local consultation within each airport's area.

- Aberdeen Harbour Board "A Case for Growth"

On 12 September 2012, Aberdeen Harbour Board launched a document entitled "A Case for Growth" outlining their aspiration for developing the port in coming years. A copy of the document is available from the Harbour Board website at :

<http://www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk/downloads/Case%20for%20Growth.pdf> .

The document details the harbour's contribution to the local regional economy, being directly responsible for 11,000 full-time equivalent jobs and contributing £510 million annually to the economy. The document cites recognition in both the National Planning Framework 2 and the Strategic Development Plan, recognising the role of the harbour in contributing to international trade and services to the energy industries, tourism and lifeline ferry services as important in strategic terms. However, it also indicates that there are significant pressures caused by mixed use land allocations and the limitations caused by access difficulties.

The "Case for Growth" document is the first step in a process, inviting key stakeholders to consider scenarios for growth of the port. It seeks comment on various aspects of future development and asks stakeholders to indicate if they wish to be involved in the feasibility study process.

It is recommended that Nestrans respond by expressing an interest to be involved in the development process. A draft letter to the Harbour Board Chief Executive is attached as Appendix 1 to this report for members' endorsement or comment.

- Drink/Drive Limit Consultation

The Scottish Government is consulting on a proposal to reduce the drink drive limit in Scotland. It is estimated that over 10% of road deaths are caused by drink driving and current limits have been in place since the first introduction of tests in the UK in the 1960's.

Changes such as differential limits for new drivers, definition of offences and associated penalties are reserved matters to the UK Parliament and are therefore not considered under the current consultation, which only relates to the level limits. The Scotland Act 2012 devolves power to the Scottish Parliament to prescribe limits and this is the subject of the current consultation. There are three drink driving limits in force (blood, breath and urine) and it is necessary to ensure that whatever limits are introduced are relatively proportionate between these three samples.

Although advice is that no alcohol should be consumed before driving, it is nevertheless accepted that a zero limit or near zero limit would bring difficulties in terms of individuals' response to alcohol varying with a range of matters including age, gender, weight, time of day, the time taken to consume alcohol and whether or not they have eaten. The UK and Malta now have the highest limits in Europe, with most countries adopting limits of either 20mg or 50mg per 100 ml of blood. The consultation therefore proposes:

- A reduction in the blood limit from 80 milligrammes of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood to 50 milligrammes of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood,
- An (equivalent) reduction in the breath limit from 35 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath to 22 mcg of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of breath, and
- An (equivalent) reduction in the urine limit from 107 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of urine to 67 mg of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of urine.

Although there are no estimates for Scotland of the current number of alcohol-related injury road accidents where legal alcohol levels are involved, it is therefore difficult to quantify the impact of this proposal. However, studies elsewhere have been extrapolated and estimates vary but a change in the law may result in between 3 and 17 fewer deaths per year.

As safety and casualty reduction are key objectives of the Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy, it is considered appropriate to support the Scottish Government in their aim to reduce drink driving and therefore it is suggested that a response is made in support of the proposals to reduce the legal limits. A draft response to the consultation along with suggested answers to the consultation questions is contained within Appendix 1, which members are asked to endorse or provide comment on.

Written responses are invited before 29 November 2012.

- National Planning Framework 3

As members will be aware, the Scottish Government outline their national planning priorities in National Planning Framework documents. The most recent, NPF2 was published in June

2009 and the Government are now seeking to review and update that document with a National Planning Framework 3.

This will not form an evolving roll-forward of NPF2 but is likely to be a stand alone document with strategic schemes requiring to be stated and agreed, whether or not they are in the existing document.

For the north east, the existing NPF2 recognises a number of transport issues:

- ~ Aberdeen is recognised as one of four “urban networks”;
- ~ Routes west, south and north of Aberdeen are recognised as “National Transport Corridors”;
- ~ Aberdeen Airport is one of five identified airports;
- ~ Aberdeen Harbour is identified as a Gateway Port with Global Shipping Routes;
- ~ Peterhead as a port, deepwater terminal and oil/gas opportunity.

NPF2 also identifies the importance of links between city regions, particularly reducing journey times between Aberdeen and Inverness and enhancing the railway between Aberdeen and Central Belt including journey time reduction by 20 minutes. The AWPR is acknowledged as a scheme as are improved rail services between Stonehaven and Inverurie.

In addition to presenting a case for these schemes to be included in NPF3, it is likely that Nestrans would wish to press for the following specific schemes and issues to be given a high profile:

- ~ Upgrade of A96 to dual carriageway standard;
- ~ Upgrade of Aberdeen-Inverness rail line;
- ~ Upgrade and journey time improvements Aberdeen-Central Belt;

The Scottish Government has offered to conduct a workshop in Aberdeen, to which members of Nestrans and the Strategic Development Authority are invited. This is provisionally booked for the Town House on 9 November over lunch to precede the next meeting of the SDPA.

## ● Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the report and the documents referred to above and endorse the comments as Nestrans’ response to the Drink Drive consultation and Aberdeen Harbour’s “Case for Growth”.

RD/ 01 October 2012