

General -

6b Publications and Consultations

o 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.

o Aberdeen City Council Local Transport Strategy Questionnaire

Aberdeen City Council is currently consulting on a re-refresh of their 2008-2012 Local Transport Strategy. As a first stage in this process officers have developed an online survey to help establish the main issues that should be included in the refresh and are asking stakeholders to consider if the vision, aims, objectives and actions are still relevant.

Nestrans responded to this online questionnaire by the deadline of Friday 29th November and raised the following issues:

- It is considered that the vision, aims and objectives of the LTS remain relevant. As this is a refresh of the current LTS rather than a re-write, it would seem appropriate that these remain the same as they reflect a longer term vision. They also remain aligned with the objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy.
- In terms of main issues, the cumulative impact of development, as set out in the Strategic and Local Development Plans, on the city's transport network needs to be recognised and identified as a main issue along with a greater emphasis on the package of measures identified as 'Locking in the Benefits' of the AWPR and associated road improvement schemes which are now progressing.
- In addition, it is felt that existing policies relating to the development of park and ride could be strengthened to ensure that their development is accompanied by provision of bus priority measures which will be essential to ensuring their success.
- Reference should also be made to initiatives that have developed in the years since the LTS was published including the Getabout partnership and hydrogen technologies.

o Aberdeenshire Council LDP Main Issues Report

Aberdeenshire Council are currently consulting on a Main Issues Report as part of the development of the next Local Development Plan (LDP). The Main Issues Report identifies that much of the 2012 LDP remains sound and fit for purpose and that there is currently enough land identified through the phases of the 2012 LDP to meet the needs of the area

well into the future. It highlights that, generally, the existing allocated sites can be carried forward into the next LDP with little change. There are however a number of key issues that are discussed in detail where there may need to be a change from what is set out in the current LDP. Of particular relevance are the proposals relating to development in Inverurie and Westhill where changes to the current position are proposed.

A proposed response to this consultation is provided in Appendix A for consideration. The deadline for responses is 1st February 2014.

o **Night Flying Restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted: Stage 2 Consultation**

On 11 November, the Department for Transport published its second stage consultation for the next night noise regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports from October 2014. The consultation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/night-flights>.

This second stage consultation follows an analysis of responses to the first stage consultation issued in January 2013 and this consultation includes a summary of these. Nestrans responded to the first consultation, having considered a report on this topic at the Board meeting on 17 April expressing concern on two issues:

- Next day deliveries for mail and parcels, and
- Passengers from global destinations being able to transfer to the first flight to Aberdeen in the morning to permit a full day's business to be conducted.

In particular, the issue of passengers transferring from an intercontinental flight to an Aberdeen flight has been raised by the airlines who believe they have a number of passengers who take advantage of this offer, which brings the north east into closer contact with global destinations for business purposes.

Passengers taking advantage of this connection need to be in the transfer airport, generally Heathrow, in time for transfer to the first flight to Aberdeen which is currently scheduled for 07:15 arriving into Aberdeen at 08:40 to enable a day's business.

The extent to which this impacts on the current first landing times of 04:30 at Heathrow is a matter for the airport and the airlines to agree, but given that Heathrow is generally operating at capacity, any change in operating times without increasing landing capacity has the potential to impact on passengers' ability to meet the connection.

The consultation closes on 31 January 2014. It is recommended that Nestrans respond, reiterating the previous concerns.

o **A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen Public Exhibition Feedback Form**

As reported orally to the last meeting of the Board, Transport Scotland have been conducting a series of public meetings to inform the public regarding plans for dualling the A96 between Inverurie and Inverness. Over 1,800 people attended the nine public meetings. Three of these were in the Nestrans area, at Dyce, Inverurie and Huntly.

Documentation was handed out, detailing the benefits of dualling and providing a programme on the likely phasing of elements of the project. A feedback form was distributed and it is suggested that the following comments are relayed back to Transport Scotland as the formal response from Nestrans:

1. Transport Scotland should recognise the importance and need for early engagement to prioritise the dualling of the A96 around Inverurie. Development pressure in the vicinity are substantial, Aberdeenshire Council wish to progress a Local Development Plan and traffic issues in Inverurie town centre are becoming acute.
2. The importance of recognising that in dualling the A96 between Inverurie and Inverness, there is a need to also ensure that junctions between Inverurie and AWPR, the already dualled section, are treated similarly as part of a consistent junction strategy. This will likely involve converting a number of existing junctions to grade-separated junctions.

Responses are sought by 31 January 2014.

o **Draft Scottish Planning Policy: Sustainability & Planning**

Following consultation on Draft SPP in Summer 2013, the Scottish Government is now considering replacing the Draft SPP principal policies on 'sustainable economic growth' and 'sustainable development' with a principal policy on 'Sustainability and Planning' and introducing a presumption in favour of sustainable development into the SPP.

A further period of consultation is now being allowed to consult on this proposed change. The consultation document is available at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/10/3406/2>

Both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have recommended resisting the presumption in favour of sustainable development and a report will be considered by the Strategic Development Planning Authority at its meeting on 11 December. It is suggested that Nestrans should also respond to the consultation along similar lines to the SDPA response.

Comments are required by Monday 16 December 2013.

o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the content of this report and the documents referred to above
- b) approve the suggested responses to the consultations.

RGM/RD/KC 4 December 2013

5 December 2013

Our Ref
Your Ref

KC/N14/5

Planning Policy Team
Infrastructure Services
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

Dear Sir / Madam

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report

I am writing in response to the consultation on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR). As the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, we have focussed our comments on those issues that are relevant to transport. We generally support the policies and issues raised in the MIR and the objectives of the Local Development Plan and do not wish to make any comments on the policies that it is suggested remain unchanged into the next LDP. We would however like to raise the following specific points:

- **Main issue 1: A new policy for climate change issues** - Nestrans supports the proposal to have a high level policy on climate change and to group together policies on this subject.
- **Main Issue 2: Green networks** - We support the proposal to include the creation of green networks as one of the principal aims of the plan. Such a policy would also link to the development of active travel networks and could play a significant role in increasing opportunities for cycling and walking.
- **Main Issue 3: Supporting town centres** – We support the proposal to require office developments to locate in town centres unless they can demonstrate that there are no town centre sites available. A focus on town centres will provide significantly greater opportunities for servicing business sites with public transport making sustainable modes a more viable and attractive option.
- **Main Issue 4: Rural development** - we support the transport reasoning provided in support of the preferred option identified for rural development.
- **Main Issue 15: What are the implications of uncertainty regarding trunk road development in Inverurie** – Nestrans agrees with the preferred approach identified regarding Inverurie.
- **Main Issue 16: Is further development opportunity required in Westhill** – current and predicted congestion issues at Westhill and on the A944 corridor mean that any further development in this area needs to be carefully considered. We would question the conclusion that these concerns are outweighed by the needs to maintain the success of Westhill as a centre of sub-sea excellence when, from a regional perspective, other development sites on this corridor and across the region provide substantial business land allocations. Westhill does not fall within one of the Structure Plan's identified Strategic Growth Corridors and as such significant development in this corridor may well be contrary to the Strategic Development Plan, through which mechanisms are in place to ensure that developer obligations are met for addressing the cumulative impact of development on the transport network. If further land allocations are to be made in this area, significant improvements to the

transport infrastructure (both local and strategic mitigation) and substantial efforts to encourage travel by sustainable modes would need to be an essential requirement for any development.

- **Site GA069 Inch** – consideration should be given to whether this site could be suitable for expansion of car parking facilities for the station. Rail patronage has increased considerably in recent years across the region, in line with service improvements, and further improvements are anticipated on this rail corridor. Encouraging park and ride, both by rail and bus, is also a key policy of the Regional Transport Strategy and stations, such as Inch, provide a valuable part of the park and ride network and use of these facilities should be encouraged.
- More generally, where there are significant strategic transport proposals, Nestrans would wish to be involved in the consideration, identification and development of these to ensure links with the Regional Transport Strategy e.g. an eastern bypass at Newmachar.

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

Yours faithfully

Kirsty Chalmers
Transport Executive (Strategy & Delivery)