

## **General -**

### **6b Publications and Consultations**

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#### **o Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of a number of recent publications and consultation papers.

#### **o SesTran Regional Transport Strategy Refresh**

For information, Sustran have recently completed a consultation upon their draft RTS Refresh. Similar to the refresh that Nestrans undertook last year, this reviews the original RTS published in 2008 and updates the objectives, policies and actions to reflect trends and developments since the strategy was first published. The draft document can be found on the Sustran website at [www.sestran.gov.uk](http://www.sestran.gov.uk).

#### **o Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance: Strategy Document**

The Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) has produced an Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland with the aim of improving transport access for disabled people. SATA is a user-led charity made up of some 80 corporate and individual members active in the voluntary, public and private sectors. Its aim is to work for the provision of accessible transport in Scotland as a basic right for all people.

The draft strategy adopts five broad principles:

- Working in partnership with public, private, community and statutory transport providers to improve transport services, making them easier to use and understand so that people's confidence about using them is increased;
- Being proactive in our efforts to identify and remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities accessing the transport system and to ensure that further barriers are not created;
- Implementing best practice by making sure that we keep up-to-date with best practice and reflect this when developing policies and implementation plans;
- Good consultation, working openly in partnership with people who provide transport services and facilities and those who use them. Strive to maintain good communication with people with disabilities to listen to their views and exchange information;
- Value for money in targeting available resources towards initiatives that are affordable, sustainable and that maximise the benefits for people with disabilities.

The draft strategy also outlines a wide range of actions, under seven strategic objective headings. Responsibility for delivery of these actions would however fall across a very wide range of organisations including Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, RTPs, Local Authorities, transport operators and others. RTPs are identified, along with others, under the following actions:

- Support and consult with access panels, equalities forums, SATA and other stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally about transport infrastructure, service co-ordination, better information provision and training standards.

- Monitor and publish reports on the implementation of specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 including transport;
- Monitor and publish reports on, the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and the duty of public bodies to promote non-discrimination and equal opportunity to travel.

The aims and objectives of the draft strategy are in line with the vision and objectives of the RTS. A draft response to this consultation is provided in Appendix A.

The consultation closes on Friday 16 January 2015.

### o **A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland**

Keith Brown MSP, when Minister for Transport, announced a Vision document of how Scotland should look by 2030 in terms of supporting Active Travel. A copy is available from the Government's website at:

[http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/Active\\_Travel\\_Vision.pdf](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/Active_Travel_Vision.pdf)

Rab Dickson of Nestrans and Eric Guthrie of Tactran provided input to the working group which developed the document, which sets out how Scotland could look and how it would benefit from more people walking and cycling.

### o **Transform Scotland: Interchange Audit of Aberdeen Bus Station, Railway Station and Ferry Terminal**

Transform Scotland are a sustainable transport charity and pressure group. They have been commissioned to undertake some research into the suitability of some of Scotland's primary transport hubs and to provide commentary on the suitability and usability of these from the perspective of a cyclist or pedestrian. One of their focuses was on the transport interchange at Aberdeen, consisting of the railway station, bus station and ferry terminal. A copy of the Aberdeen Interchange report is attached below:

<http://www.transformscotland.org.uk/GetFile.aspx?ItemId=773>

A copy has been forwarded to City Council colleagues, ScotRail, Stagecoach, Northlink Ferries and Aberdeen Harbour Board as well as to Hammerson, who manage Union Square. The report concludes that the co-location of bus, rail and ferry terminals being so close together in the City Centre provides real opportunities for integration, and suggests a few possible improvements such as signage and additional cycle parking. Nestrans has asked the operators whether they would be interested in working collaboratively to see if it is feasible to address some of the points and improve access to/from the station, bus station and ferry terminal.

### o **Smarter Choices, Smart Places**

Transport Scotland has announced a funding package of £5 million for Behaviour Change initiatives in 2015/16. An indicative allocation has been set aside for each local authority (£208,064 for Aberdeen and £236,337 for Aberdeenshire), although this must meet defined criteria and is subject to approval by Paths for All, who are administering the scheme on behalf of Transport Scotland.

Information seminars are scheduled, one of which is to be held in Aberdeen to provide further information, but it is known that match funding will be a requirement and bids are to be submitted by local authorities, by the end of January. This would potentially result in a funding package to support behaviour change across the north east of £888,802.

### o **Regional Air Connectivity Fund**

The Department for Transport has a current consultation titled "Consultation on the appraisal process for start-up aid for airports with less than 3mppa". This consultation runs through to 11 December 2014. Documents on the consultation can be found on the members section of The Nestrans website at: <http://www.nestrans.org.uk/members/>

Whilst Aberdeen International Airport has over 3.5 million passengers per annum the document does suggest (at para 1:12 of the "Protocol for UK start-up aid for airports of less than 3 million passengers per annum") that whilst the protocol does not directly affect airports with 3-5 million passengers (due to a higher risk of market distortion) aid can be compatible with the internal market only in duly substantiated exceptional cases.

The letter from the Department of Transport introducing the construction suggests that airports with between 3-5 million passengers who believe they may have "duly substantiated cases" should contact the Department. This includes Newcastle, Liverpool, East midlands, Belfast International, Aberdeen, London City and Leeds Bradford. Aberdeen International Airport has contacted the Department.

Discussion with Aberdeen International Airport has highlighted where they believe Nestrans comment could assist their case for "duly substantiated cases". This centres on the geography of our area meaning there is no viable alternative to flying for many business purposes. This case centres on the extremely high proportion of business passengers and the unsuitability of slow rail journeys. For travel within Scotland to alternative airports providing good access to a number of locations, at Edinburgh and Glasgow, this also involves not only a train journey but also transfers to bus. The current proposals appear to give greater weight to developing cases for key business and strategic links than before which could be helpful in developing an argument.

### o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) note the content of this report and the documents referred to above.
- b) Agree to submit a response to the start-up aid consultation in support of the Aberdeen International Airport position that our region does have a "duly substantiated case" for inclusion within the scheme.

**Reply Form: Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland**

To the Secretary, SATA  
65 The Loan  
Loanhead, EH20 9AG  
[secretary@scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk](mailto:secretary@scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk)

Please answer these three broad questions but add any reservations or suggestions in the comments sections below.

1. I/we agree this draft strategy and action plan is a useful document **YES**  
NO
2. I/we agree with the strategic objectives **YES**  
NO
3. I/we agree with the action plan **(see comments below)**
4. Comments.

Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for the north east of Scotland covering the local authority areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. As I am sure you are aware, one of our key responsibilities is the production and delivery of a Regional Transport Strategy. The aims and objectives identified in the draft ATSAP are very much in line with the vision of the RTS which is "*a transport system for the north east of Scotland which enables a more economically competitive, sustainable and socially inclusive society*". It also aligns specifically with strategic objective 2 of the RTS and a number of sub-objectives, particularly:

*"to enhance choice, accessibility and safety of transport for all in the north east, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society and those living in areas where transport options are limited"*

- *"To enhance travel opportunities and achieve sustained cost and quality advantages for public transport relative to the car;*
- *To reduce the number and severity of traffic related casualties and improve personal safety and security for all users of transport;*
- *To enhance public transport opportunities and reduce barriers to use across the north east, especially rural areas."*

Nestrans supports the five broad principles set out in the draft plan and will continue to work with our partners in the north east and nationally, including the Scottish Government, our two local authorities and major transport operators in the region, to improve accessibility for disabled people and those who do not have access to public transport.

There are a number of actions contained within the draft which identifies RTPs as one of the organisations for delivery. In relation to each of these, we feel that we are already achieving these through our existing consultation forums and reporting mechanisms. We are currently working on re-freshing our Equalities Outcomes which will also contribute to some of these actions.

In terms of the actions identified more generally, the responsibility for delivering many of these actions lies across a very wide range of organisations and, in order to achieve them, it will be important that the principles of this document are embedded in the strategies, policies and action plans of those organisations. The action plan should be clear that in many cases these are suggested actions for the organisations involved rather than a clear commitment.

As stated above however we support the overarching aims and objectives of the plan and would, in particular, support actions around the identification of best practice, research and identification of gaps in provision.

Signature

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