

21 June 2012

Our Ref RD/N13/8

Your Ref

Dan Peck  
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Dear Dan

### **Response to Airport Masterplan Consultation**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the new Masterplan for Aberdeen Airport.

A report was considered by the Nestrans Board at its meeting on 20 June and the following was agreed as their response:

Nestrans welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Masterplan and agrees that the airport is a key gateway to the city region and is vital for the future economic prosperity of the area. Enhanced connectivity is a key economic priority and a Nestrans objective - the airport has an important role to play in this.

The current Regional Transport Strategy (approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008) recognises the importance of the airport and of improvements to surface access to it. In particular, the airport will continue to have a vital role in connecting the region to its major markets given that Aberdeen will not benefit from the advantages which high-speed rail proposals may bring to other cities.

Nestrans welcomes the investment BAA has put into Aberdeen Airport over the last five years since the publication of the last masterplan, including the runway extension implemented last year. This has been particularly welcome in the context of the economic uncertainty over recent years – with the strong passenger growth over recent months a welcome indication of the value of this investment.

### **Key Points**

On the issue of extending the runway, it is noted that most of the development proposed at the airport over the period to 2040 do not differ substantially from the proposals in the current masterplan. However, the issues arising from any future need for a further runway extension in the period 2020-2040 should be given early consideration with relevant stakeholders to ensure that, if appropriate, longer-term safeguardings are put in place. Clarification of the situation in the period to 2020 would also be helpful in the text – although the plans at the back of the masterplan indicate that no extension is planned in this period this is not stated in the text. In a similar way, the plans does not differentiate between

extensions already consented and those for which consent would still be required (which is mentioned in the text).

### **Surface Access**

The second main observation relates to surface access. Surface access to the airport is of key importance, not only in terms of convenience but also the impression it creates for visitors and the environmental impact it generates.

A number of key road schemes are highlighted in the masterplan reflecting the Regional Transport Strategy and proposals by Nestrans and its partners. Early implementation of schemes in this area will reduce journey times and increase reliability by both car and public transport.

Although the masterplan states that the surface access strategy will be updated in the coming year or so, it would be useful for further detail to be provided giving direction to that document. Reducing the percentage of journeys made by car is an important goal which will require concerted action to achieve. The increase in the use of bus services over recent years is welcome and provides a strong foundation for further aspirational targets. Issues such as alternative fuels for cars could also be highlighted, with the opportunity explored to make electric vehicle charging points available in the car parks.

Nestrans also supports a shuttle bus between Dyce railway station and the airport and would welcome a commitment from Aberdeen Airport in the masterplan to work towards improving accessibility to the station in order to enhance opportunities for effective connections to the railway. This should include a commitment towards funding and jointly delivering improved access to the station as appropriate.

I hope that you will be able to take account of these comments in pulling together the final masterplan. If you wish to discuss any aspect of this response or require any more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Rab Dickson  
Transport Strategy Manager