



Scottish Transport Awards 2011
Category 12: Transport Partnership of the Year

Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire. Nestrans epitomises the principle of partnership by bringing together a range of interested parties and creating synergies through its role in facilitating and co-ordinating efforts in the interests of improving transport and travel across the region.

Nestrans' Board of 12 members reflects its broad interest - consisting of four elected members from each of Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council and four non-elected experts, initially drawn from a major bus operator, a major haulier, Scottish Enterprise Grampian and NHS Grampian.

As well as a non-Councillor Vice Chair, the Board consists of both administration and opposition councillors from each Council, which has led to consensus decision-making with cross-party support and very little party politics.

The Leader and Deputy Leader of Aberdeen City Council and the Leader of Aberdeenshire Council sit on the Board, along with the Chairs of the appropriate strategic transport Committees. This has resulted in key decisions being quickly articulated at Council level and a consistency of decision-making.

The work of Nestrans

Joint working and co-ordination:

Nestrans works closely with other partnerships and organisations representing the north east in economic development and land use planning and business. By working co-operatively it has been possible to present a single north east view, with widespread support and a high level of understanding amongst the public and business organisations, including the local economic forum ACSEF. Nestrans also contributes to many other joint schemes and areas where partnership working can help to deliver improvements. One example would be the North East Road Casualty Reduction Partnership, which has recently produced a strategy aimed at minimising deaths and serious injuries in Road Traffic Collisions in the area.

Regional Transport Strategy:

In its early months after establishment as a statutory partnership, Nestrans first role was to develop a Regional Transport Strategy for the period up to 2021. Consultants helped to develop a range of options through member/officer workshops and established an Urban Dynamic Model in which different packages of interventions could be tested against objectives of reducing mileage travelled, improved economic performance and enhanced accessibility. A final strategy after public consultation was delivered to the Scottish Government in April 2007 and approved by Ministers the following year.



http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/Nestrans%20RTS%20final%20printed.pdf

The Regional Transport Strategy supports both the National Outcomes of the Scottish Government and the local objectives identified by the local Councils as set out in their Single Outcome Agreements.

Action Plans:

A series of four Action Plans have been produced in support of the Regional Strategy, each of which has been identified to provide more detail on priority areas of policy including specific actions and objectives.

- Bus Action Plan - developed in partnership with major bus operators in the area and looks at all aspects of improving bus operations and services throughout the region. Nestrans now co-ordinates the area's Local Authority/Bus Operators Forum, which has refreshed Scotland's original Quality Partnership and has established a Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnership. Bus priority measures will be implemented and an audit of infrastructure and service standards has identified joint priorities.
- Rail Action Plan - produced to provide an agreed strategic overview of how the partners see rail facilities and services developing in the region over the next twenty years. Early involvement in reopening Laurencekirk railway station after 42 years has seen spectacular results with passenger numbers exceeding projections by 78%, additional cross-Aberdeen services to Inverurie has seen a 42% increase in travellers through Inverurie. Nestrans has also developed local information on facilities at stations within the region, published in the form of an easy-to-use local rail services brochure.



- Health & Transport Action Plan - developed in partnership with NHS Grampian, focussing on three key areas: Active Travel as a means of improving public health as well as achieving transport objectives; the impact of transport on pollution affecting air quality and hence Public Health; and Access to Healthcare with detailed consideration of accessibility of healthcare facilities, the quality of transport links to health and the opportunity to better link transport with hospital and GP appointments. Other partners including local authorities and Scottish Ambulance Service are closely involved and jointly employ a full-time member of staff to drive the work, funded by Nestrans and NHS Grampian with support from the Scottish Government.
- Freight Action Plan - supported by local hauliers and businesses and has identified key issues for deliveries and freight within the north east.

A Freight Forum has been established to help identify priority actions which Nestrans, the two Councils and partners can deliver such as route maps, lorry parking facilities, the potential for Large Vehicle Lanes and the opportunities for modal shift towards maritime and rail transport. The Freight Forum provides a “voice for freight” which has been lacking in the area and is chaired by Nestrans’ Vice Chair, identified as a Champion for Freight. Involvement in European Interreg projects has enabled Scandinavian partners to see the work of the Freight Forum, which is regarded as best practice in its field.



Dyce Service 80 Airport Shuttle bus:

Nestrans’ Regional Transport Strategy identified a significant missing link in the regional transport network in that there was a lack of public transport opportunities to and from Aberdeen Airport. The airport had produced a Surface Access Strategy, but there was no commercial operator willing to provide a bus between the airport terminal and Dyce railway station.

Nestrans formed a partnership with the Council, Airport and First Aberdeen to start a shuttle bus. Nestrans provided capital investment in facilities and helped bridge the funding gap for a fixed period of time. The shuttle bus has carried over 100,000 passengers in two years and has provided the foundations for a service operated on a commercial basis.



Cycling investment:

Nestrans is ensuring continued investment in cycling infrastructure in the north east. The cycling campaign Spokes recently noted that funding for cycling across Scotland is generally declining, except in six areas. They state that “on cycle investment, best are Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire (both work through their RTP Nestrans)” alongside four other Councils. This investment has seen consistent, planned development of cycling infrastructure in the north east, working with Aberdeen Cycle Forum and Sustrans as appropriate. Recent completions include a Westhill-Aberdeen commuter route and a new bridge at West Cults to complete a missing link on the Deeside Way within Aberdeen on the former railway line towards Ballater. Cycling in Aberdeen is now the third highest in Scotland at 3.5%, a substantial increase from 2% just three years earlier.



Getabout campaign:

Nestrans has led the way in ensuring collaborative working on travel planning, encouraging mode shift and promoting active travel. The Getabout partnership of 9 public and private sector bodies co-ordinates travel planning across the region, ensuring staff work collectively to push the travel planning agenda across the north east.

Nestrans also operates a car share database getabout.liftshare.com, which operates with a number of sub-groups so that individual organisations can have their own section under the wider umbrella or be involved in the larger scheme. It currently has over 1,300 members and is estimated to have saved some 1.9 million miles in the past year.

A Sustainable Transport Grant Scheme enables organisations to apply for match funding in the form of a capital grant of up to £10,000 to implement a sustainable travel scheme. Successful applications have included cycle parking, a bicycle pool for Grampian Police officers and a vehicle for a local Community Demand Responsive Transport scheme. The scheme provides a substantial incentive to companies to consider investing in green transport initiatives, but also acts as a focus for media and awareness campaigns to show that positive measures can make a difference.



Successes

The reason Nestrans works well is a sense of trust. True partnership requires full involvement of all concerned and contributions in a constructive and inclusive way.

Nestrans and key staff from the two Councils meet regularly as a Strategic Transportation Officers' Liaison Group. Delegated decisions are made collectively at these meetings, strategy is discussed and projects developed and reported back to these meetings before formal reports are prepared for Board decision.

The consistency of policy and objectives manifest in the two Councils' Local Transport Strategies, each of which is supportive and complementary to the Regional Transport Strategy, is another key factor in the success of Nestrans. Nestrans has proven itself as a valued member of the local authority family.

Results

Nestrans has established a monitoring regime, consisting of 57 indicators providing annual progress against the objectives contained in the Regional Transport Strategy:

http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/Monitoring%20Report_April%202010.pdf .

Against these 57 indicators, a number of targets have been set and progress is measured against these targets and reported to the Nestrans Board. Targets, where possible relate back to the strategy's objectives and 21 identified priority strands for implementation.

The most significant successful results have been in:

- achieving growth in use of the north east's railways with passenger miles travelled to/from north east stations up by 20% between 2004/05 and 2007/08;
- progress in accessibility to Aberdeen Airport, 15% more passengers in 2008 than three years earlier and an increasing proportion by public transport;
- journey times for twelve sample public transport journeys across the region significantly reduced;
- 19% increase in taxi numbers over three years;
- use of motorcycles and bicycles increased with cycling in Aberdeen increasing from 2% to 3.5% in three years to be the third highest level of cycling in Scotland; and
- overall mode shift away from single occupant car use.