



**Scottish Transport Awards 2011  
Category 13: Travel Information and marketing**

**Background**

The Nestrans' Rail Action Plan identifies a number of projects towards implementing enhancements to the rail network in the north east of Scotland. However, it also identifies the opportunities with the existing services, particularly within the region. Traditionally, rail services have been perceived as having a strategic role but travellers within the region have been less inclined to appreciate the opportunities for local trips.

Local authorities and politicians have harboured aspirations for a local "Cross Rail" service in and around Aberdeen. This however requires significant capital expenditure, some of which is also required for other projects e.g. an improved Aberdeen to Inverness services.

Nestrans set out through the Getabout partnership to promote the opportunities for local rail journeys, maximising the existing services and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the railway network in the north east.

**Baseline**

When Nestrans was established, there were just seven railway stations in the region. Although Aberdeen station is Scotland's fifth busiest, over 60% of passengers are travelling over 100 kilometres, in contrast to Edinburgh and Glasgow stations where fewer than 25% of passengers are long distance.

Whilst recognising the importance of these long distance trips, many of which carry business and leisure travellers, there is a real opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the services by promoting local journeys.

**Encouraging local trips**

The Nestrans' Rail Action Plan identifies the role of enhancing local services and the possibilities for improved marketing to increase patronage on rail within the north east.

Working with Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, operators and Network Rail, Nestrans and the local authorities pressed for the reopening of Laurencekirk

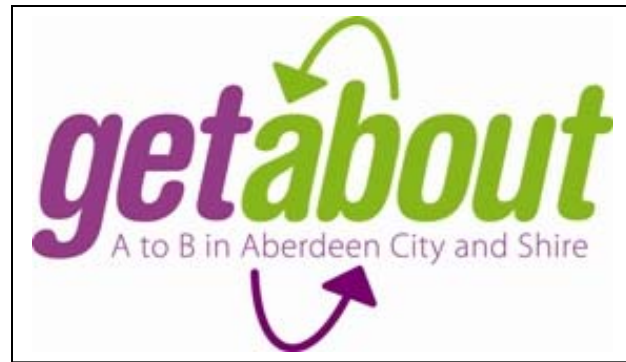


railway station. Closed in 1967, the station reopened in May 2009 after a Transport Scotland/Nestrans funded £3.3 million refurbishment project, returning the former waiting area to its former glory with grants from the Railway Heritage Trust. Patronage has far outstretched expectations, with 64,000 passengers using the station in its first year – some 78% above projections.

ScotRail also recognised the potential for capitalising on the market for cross-Aberdeen trips by extending some trains from the central belt through the City. Initially to Dyce, serving Aberdeen Airport (where Nestrans has initiated a shuttle bus service between the station and the airport terminal, heliports and a major industrial estate), many services now run through to Inverurie. In the first year after introducing additional trains from the south through to Inverurie, passenger numbers at Inverurie station increased by some 42%, to over 22,000 passengers per month.

## Getabout by Rail

The other key element of the attempts to increase local rail use was a marketing campaign, centred on a local timetable, including departure times for all services from every station in the area. The timetables are available electronically on <http://www.get-about.com/rail.asp> and are backed up by a Local Rail Guide with 5,000 printed and on the website providing details on access to stations and facilities.



INVERURIE STATION Aberdeen City and Shire stations timetables valid from 12 December 2010 to 31 May 2011 Trains to Dyce, Aberdeen, Portlethen, Stonehaven, Laurencekirk and South						
Monday to Saturday						
Inverurie	Dyce	Aberdeen	Portlethen	Stonehaven	Laurencekirk	This train goes to:
06:39	06:52	07:04		07:22	07:34	Edinburgh
07:14	07:26	07:40		07:54		Glasgow
08:09	08:21	08:34		08:50		Perth
08:32	08:55	09:04			09:15	Edinburgh
09:15	09:27	09:38		09:59		London
10:38	10:50	11:05		11:21	11:35	Edinburgh
11:01	11:15	11:26				
11:35	11:47	12:02	12:17	12:26		Edinburgh
12:47	13:02	13:13		13:23	13:37	Edinburgh
13:38	13:52	14:00			14:17	London
14:31	14:45	14:54			15:09	Glasgow
15:24	15:38	14:51		16:18	16:32	Edinburgh
16:38	16:54	17:07	17:27	17:39	17:58	Edinburgh
17:16	17:30	17:41		18:13		Edinburgh
18:52	19:06	19:27	19:40	19:49		Glasgow
19:43	19:55	19:59		19:26	19:40	Edinburgh
19:09	19:21	19:25	19:54	20:05		Glasgow
19:40	19:52	20:05		20:23		Edinburgh
20:05	20:19	20:28		20:54		Glasgow
21:24	21:36	21:47	22:00	22:09	22:40	Perth
21:24	21:36	21:47	22:00	22:09	22:40	Perth
22:16	22:28	22:39				

INVERURIE STATION Aberdeen City and Shire stations timetables valid from 12 December 2010 to 31 May 2011 Trains to Inverurie, Huntly and North					
Monday to Saturday					
Inverurie	Inverurie	Huntly	This train goes to:		
08:41	08:58	09:19	Inverurie		
09:49	09:51	09:17	Inverurie		
09:48	09:43	09:19	Inverurie		
10:35	10:47	11:03	Inverurie		
12:29	12:32	12:45	Inverurie		
14:05	14:17	14:33	Inverurie		
15:59	16:02	16:18	Inverurie		
17:41	17:53	18:09	Inverurie		
18:41	18:52	18:59	Inverurie		
20:22	20:44	21:00	Inverurie		
22:17	22:29	22:46	Inverurie		

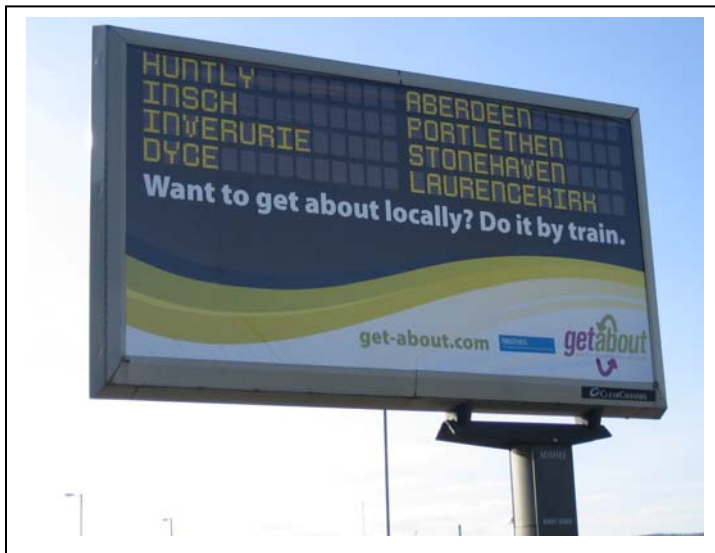
  

Sunday						
Inverurie	Dyce	Aberdeen	Portlethen	Stonehaven	Laurencekirk	This train goes to:
11:47	11:59	12:08		12:41	13:17	Glasgow
14:28	14:32	14:45	15:00	15:16		Edinburgh
15:14	15:20	15:45		16:04	16:16	Glasgow
19:05	19:17	19:28	19:39	19:51		Glasgow
22:47	22:59	23:18				

Times and stations in this blue colour are connection arrival times and stations after changing trains

## Marketing

The campaign was launched in May 2010, supported by a poster campaign in the style of a railways departure board, utilising billboards and bus shelters alongside major roads close to the railway.





There was widespread distribution of the guides particularly targeting areas where viewers may not already be rail users, such as education centres including universities, advice centres and even door-to-door in Stonehaven. This led to a launch of the guides and local rail timetables with partners Union Square and ScotRail in Aberdeen with a cake cutting – to reflect the slogan “Getabout by local rail – it’s a piece of cake!”



## Ongoing

The timetables are rewritten at each change by Journey Call and posted on the website to ensure that they are always up-to-date. A further PR campaign is being implemented with sponsorship of a local football match featuring *Inverurie Loco Works* later in the season and a larger region-wide campaign planned for the spring.

## Results

All of the north east’s railway stations are showing signs of continued and dramatic growth. With the opening of Laurencekirk, there are now eight stations and annual rail journeys to, from and within the region exceed 2 million with an estimated 181 million passenger miles travelled. Nestrans has set targets of increasing patronage by 5% per year to 2011, 3% per year between 2012 and 2016 and by at least 2% per year thereafter. Latest monitoring indicates that these targets are being met and exceeded – over the past four years, passenger numbers have grown by 33% at Aberdeen station; with growth of over 80% at Dyce and Portlethen. Impressive results from Laurencekirk and Inverurie are indicated above; Inch, Huntly and Stonehaven have grown by 17%, 21% and 28% respectively.