
8 Information Bulletin

- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information and updates for the Board on a number of matters not requiring decision.

- Performance Indicators

Nestrans reports its performance against a number of agreed indicators on an annual basis. This year's PIs are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.

Over the year, the following is a summary of the key statistics:

- The Partnership office's full complement of six full-time job equivalents have had fewer than 1% of days lost through sickness or other absence;
- of some 641 letters and other correspondence requiring a response, 98% were dealt with within the target of 10 working days (20 days for Freedom of Information requests); and
- 77% of surface travel was undertaken by public transport.

- Letter to British Airways concerning flight cancellations

During bad weather periods it appears that British Airways have a policy of canceling all internal flights. Cancellation of some flights is likely to be necessary as Heathrow is operating at near capacity and regulations for distances between planes changes in times of bad weather. A letter has been sent to British Airways highlighting the additional disruption caused when Aberdeen flights are cancelled due to the distance involved and the limited number of trains between Aberdeen and London compared to diverted journeys to Manchester, Edinburgh & Glasgow or even Paris. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix 2.

- Economic Regulation of Airports

On the 18 December 2009 the Department for Transport announced its decision on the economic regulation of airports including a summary of responses to the consultation. Nestrans had submitted a response limited to the impact of proposals on the ability of an airport operator to continue to invest in infrastructure to provide the service required of a globally connected international airport.

The decision by the Department for Transport creates a two tier system of licensing. Aberdeen Airport would not, due to volume of passengers, meet the criteria for the requirement of a licence.

The decision can be viewed at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgf/aviation/airports/reviewregulatioukairports/decisiondocument/>

A summary of the decision is:

The preferred set of options is described in full in the main decision document. Briefly, the reforms comprise:

- A single primary duty supported by five supplementary duties (including a financing duty);
- a two-tier licensing regime, in which the CAA is granted concurrent competition law powers and a sliding scale of non-criminal sanctions, which the licence holder would be able to appeal to the First tier Tribunal;
- a finance package comprising of a financing duty, a licence condition requiring operators to maintain a minimum credit worthiness, and a package of licence conditions to introduce ring-fencing;
- appeal rights for all parties with a material interest in Tier 1 decisions, and for airport operators and a passenger representative body for licence modification decisions;
- the option to consider: whether terminal competition would be in the interests of passengers; continued review of Constructive Engagement process; and, whether a wider service quality measures could better align with passengers' overall experience; and
- Passenger Focus taking responsibility for air passenger representation with regard to airline and airport issues.

The Departments change from a 3 Tier system to a 2 Tier system is explained below:

Option 3: Three-tier regime

50. Alongside the three categories outlined for the two-tier regime, a third tier of licence would be introduced under this option:

- Tier 3 licences – No airport would automatically be in this tier. The CAA would be granted the power to introduce licences at airports with less than 5 million passengers per year, and place them in Tier 3. The consultation explained that Tier 3 would be used when the CAA had good cause to do so, for example due to material complaints from passengers, freight users or airlines about poor performance. Assuming no airports were immediately placed in Tier 3 these proposals would initially mean that 42 airports that currently require a permission to levy airports charges would not need an economic licence.

Benefits

51. In light of the fact that there are a range of other powers that the CAA could use to address concerns about small airports, including considering whether they met the criteria for a Tier 1 licence, general competition law and consumer protection powers, it is likely that the third tier would result in negligible incremental benefits.

Costs

52. Since the third tier would rarely be used, it would also impose a negligible incremental resource cost on the CAA. However, it could contribute to uncertainty about future regulation, and could dilute some of the clarity that results from the policy reforms as a whole.

53. Compared to option 2, the net impact of adding a third tier of licence would therefore be likely to be negative overall, though the costs of uncertainty and reduced clarity are intangible. As a result it is not considered desirable to add a third tier and **option 2 is our preferred option**

From paragraph 51 it would appear that the Department of Transport is content that Aberdeen Airports regime of consultation required by the Competition Commission is sufficient to meet the Competition Commissions concerns and that the licensing system wouldn't apply to our Airport.

- High Speed Rail

HS2, the company set up by the Department of Transport to advise on taking high speed rail north from London has submitted its report to the Department. As previously reported the Transport Secretary Lord Adonis will be making an announcement by the end of March 2010 with a public consultation planned in Autumn 2010.

A letter from HS2 is attached as Appendix 3 for information. In an acknowledgement of receipt of the Greenguage 21 report, HS2 have also indicated that their report to the Minister considers an extension to Scotland in broad routing terms. A copy is also attached.

- OFT Refers Local Bus Services to Competition Commission

In 2009, the Office of Fair Trading undertook a market study of local bus services in the UK, excluding London and Northern Ireland. A wide ranging consultation was held as part of this study to which Nestrans provided a response in May 2009 (reported to Board on 29th April 2009).

The study identified a number of features of local bus markets that could prevent, restrict or distort competition. These relate both to commercial services and services subsidized by local transport authorities. Issues include:

- A stable and concentrated national market picture where large national operators appear to largely respect each others' territories;
- The majority of local services, in many different local areas, being operated by a small number of large companies;
- Complaints alleging predatory behaviour of incumbent firms designed to eliminate competition from new entrants; and
- Low numbers of bids for supported service contracts in many areas, with just one bidder for a quarter of tenders.

The study also found evidence that fares are higher in those areas where operators with a strong market position are not challenged by a large, well-resourced rival.

As a result of these findings, the OFT has now referred this issue to the Competition Commission for further investigation.

- Bus Re-Regulation and Changes to Concessionary Fares Bill – Consultation Results

The proposed Bill on the regulation of Bus Services was lodged by Charlie Gordon MSP in November 2008 to provide transport authorities with powers relating to the provision of local bus services and their standards and to widen the National Bus Travel Concession Scheme.

There were 95 responses to the consultation document issued and eight respondents also sent in petitions in support of key elements of the Bill. The proposed Bill did however not gather sufficient support and fell on 6th January 2010.

- Fochabers and Mosstodloch Bypass

Transport Scotland has announced construction work on the Fochabers and Mosstodloch bypass, which will relieve traffic on the heavily congested A96 Aberdeen-Inverness road, will start in early February. The project is expected to take around two-and-a-half years to complete. A new three-mile stretch of single carriageway road will be built between Mosstodloch and Fochabers, avoiding the current route through the High Street.

- Aberdeenshire Council Review of Supported Bus Services

Aberdeenshire Council have recently commissioned a study to review the existing supported public transport provision within and to / from Aberdeenshire and to recommend the most cost-effective pattern of service delivery, whilst prioritising the contribution of individual services. The study will use overarching policies and objectives, including the Nestrans Bus Action Plan, to determine a range of criteria against which to assess supported bus services and Demand Responsive Transport Services. This study fits with Bus Action Plan actions to maintain and develop the existing core network in Aberdeenshire.

- Multi-Modal Freight Hubs

Members will recall that at the last Board meeting, a report on Multi-Modal Freight Hubs was discussed and a number of anomalies and errors pointed out. The report was forwarded to the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise who had commissioned the report and a response was received on 14 January.

A summary is attached below:

“Scottish Enterprise, in association with the Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise commissioned Scott Wilson to undertake this work in September 2007 with the final report being published in September 2009. The aim of the study was to undertake research into the need for, and potential contribution to Scotland's economic competitiveness of, multi modal freight locations.”

Regarding the specific queries raised, the following responses were received:

- on the forecasts used, particularly whether cognisance had been taken of the Government's priority industries and the prospect for growth in key areas, including energy and whether the report recognised the planned growth in the Aberdeen City & Shire area, as contained in the recently approved Structure Plan for the area;

*“The demand forecasts were specifically designed to take into account the Government's priority industries and the prospect for growth in key sectors. As explained in the Freight Model Technical Note in Appendix A of the report (and summarised in Section 2.4), there were nine different freight sectors modelled individually to allow for the different characteristics and plans of each. These sectors were chosen to adequately cover the priority industries, including energy; *Future planning assumptions are also set out in Appendix A. At the request of the steering group, these were defined to tie-in to the STPR assumptions including growths in population, economic outputs, etc”;*

- On the appropriateness of Aberdeen harbour being regarded as a "Regional Gateway" despite volumes through the harbour being very significant and large volumes being imports/exports:

“the categorisation of locations is based on the study brief which defined categories. These definitions are summarised in paragraph 3.4.2 of the report. This has to be compared to other locations / ports in the rest of the country, which naturally are of varying scales and sizes of customer base. In terms of a regional gateway this is defined as mainly serving local/regional markets but it acknowledges there could be international connections with regional gateways. In any case, the definition of a location was only used for nomenclature and presentation purposes in the tables, and has no impact on the rest of the analysis.”

- On the effectiveness of the Steering Group and the role of Regional Transport partnerships:

“Whilst Scottish Enterprise led on this work, the project was managed by a study group consisting of representatives of both the private and public sector. We updated the Freight Steering Group regularly on the progress of the work. (There was one representative of)... the RTP's on this group and therefore received progress reports. The project management of this study was clearly designed to ensure that key stakeholders were represented and were able to contribute throughout the lifespan of the study”.

- East Coast Rail Franchise

As members will be aware, the Government took control of the East Coast main Line franchise from November 2009, which had previously been operated by National Express. The Department for Transport has indicated that it will seek bids to operate the franchise in mid 2010 to operate from end 2011 to 2016.

Although there have been some changes to pathing south of the Central Belt and a number of timetable alterations are being considered to the Aberdeen-London service, there are no major changes likely to be imposed which impact adversely on this area.

A letter received from Karen Boswell, managing Director of East Coast main Line Company assures that the company is “firmly and fully committed to Scotland, ...including retention of our direct services to Aberdeen and Inverness”.

Eastt Coast are currently undertaking a number of consultation events across the length of the line, one of which will be in Aberdeen on Friday 5th February. Nestrans and a number of Board members have been invited to that event. Oral feedback can be provided to the Board meeting if members wish.

- Sustainable Travel Grants Scheme

Since the last meeting of the Board, three applications for Sustainable Travel Grants have been received and approved by the powers delegated to the Strategic Transport Officers' Liaison Group. The grant awards were for:

- £3,000 to Aberdeen City Council as 50% grant towards cycling facilities at Council workplaces.
- £6,890 to Aberdeenshire Council as 50% grant towards production of cycling maps in areas of the north east.
- £1,435.50 to Aberdeenshire Council as 50% grant towards cycle facilities at Inverurie station.

All of these awards are made subject to the publicity containing references to Nestrans and logos being included as appropriate.

- Nestrans Press Releases

18/12 Driving change for you, Aberdeen City & Shire (Non-Councillor Board Member)

21/12 Nestrans welcomes AWPR announcement

22/12 80 Dyce Airlink festive timetable

22/12 Festive newsletter

07/01 Consultation on Aberdeen City Council's Bus Information Strategy

11/01 Nestrans starts process to appoint new Board Member

- Dyce Shuttle Bus

As discussed at the last Board meeting Members were due to receive updated usage numbers for the shuttle bus. Due to the extreme weather conditions in early January, affecting the trains and road traffic, it is suggested that Members receive figures at the next Board meeting which (hopefully) will not be distorted by bad weather.

- Getabout Events

Park and Ride

The programme of publicity for the Park and Ride Services on the run up to Christmas came to an end on the 1st of January. This included radio adverts on Northsound and Waves featuring "Marilyn, Elvis and Tommy Cooper" Billboard and bus shelter posters and a series of "celebrity" posters on bus backs most of which are still on at the end of January.

iTrace

The implementation of the final part of the Travel Plan Strategy, iTrace travel plan monitoring system went live in January with staff training. This will allow the easy monitoring of travel plans across the region and will compliment the Travel Plan builder which has been running for 6 months and has approx 15 plans under construction. The North East now has a fully electronic process from writing the plan to monitoring it in the future. The board will now be able to receive reports detailing the modal shift created by individual or groups of plans in both education and Workplace/residential/leisure/retail environments. This is the first time in Britain that the builder and iTrace have been used this way.

Police

Getabout is working with Grampian police and local community planning partnerships to help create cycle patrols for Aberdeenshire towns and villages. The police now have 23 special Police cycles and the scheme will be launched at Inverurie Police Station at 15:00 on Friday 12th March 2010 to which board members are invited.

Shell

Work is progressing with Shell as the lead company to create a travel plan partnership in the Altens/Tullos area including a bus brokerage scheme.

Aberdeenshire Live

Work is progressing to create adverts to go on this system

Local Rail Guide

The local rail guide and timetable information is almost complete. This will compose of a booklet detailing every station and its facilities which will also be on the Getabout website and a departure times for trains from each station currently on the website. The launch will be marked in March with a poster campaign in Aberdeen, Dyce, Portlethen and Inverurie. Draft guide and poster design (neither finalised yet), attached.

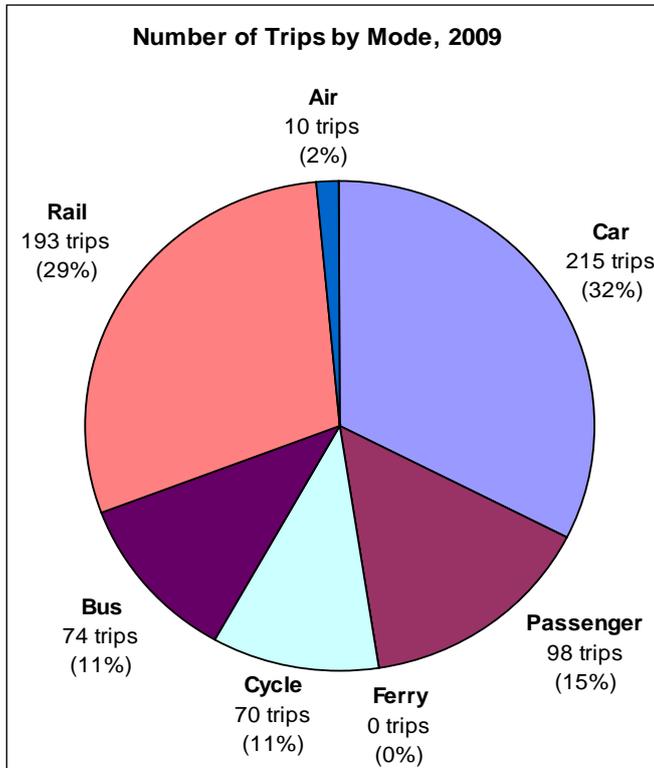
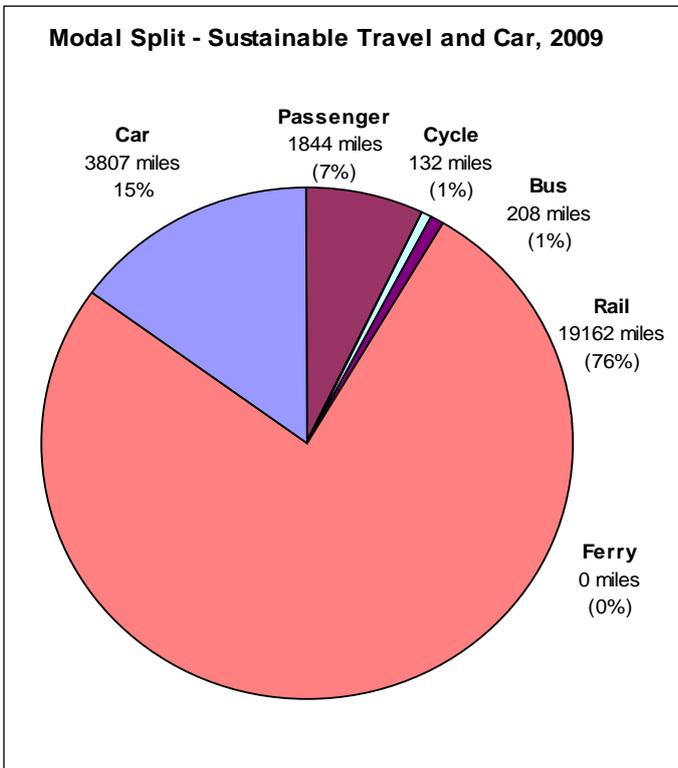
- Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

RGM/9 December 2009

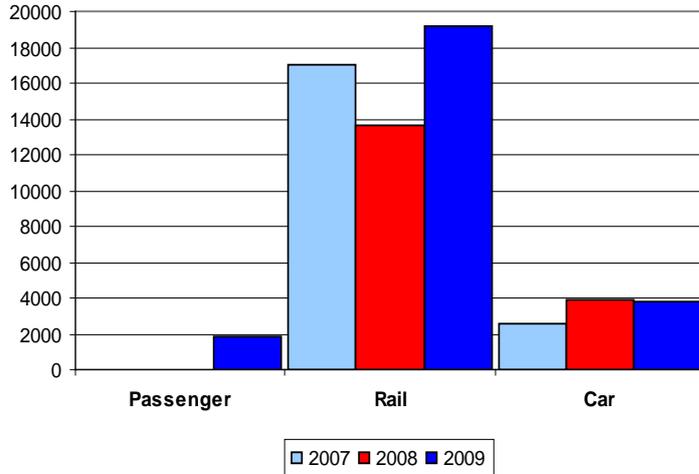
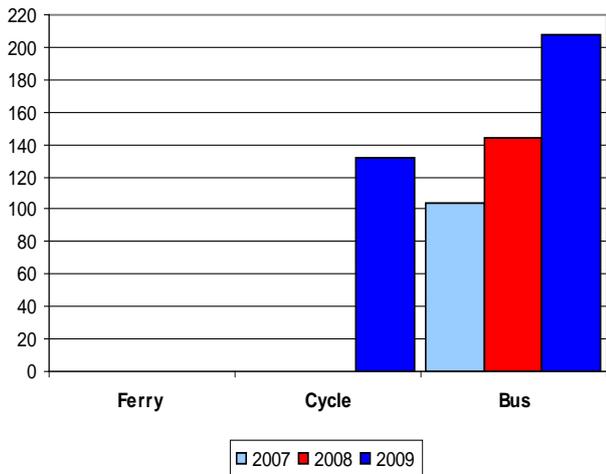
Performance Indicator Graphs

• Travel

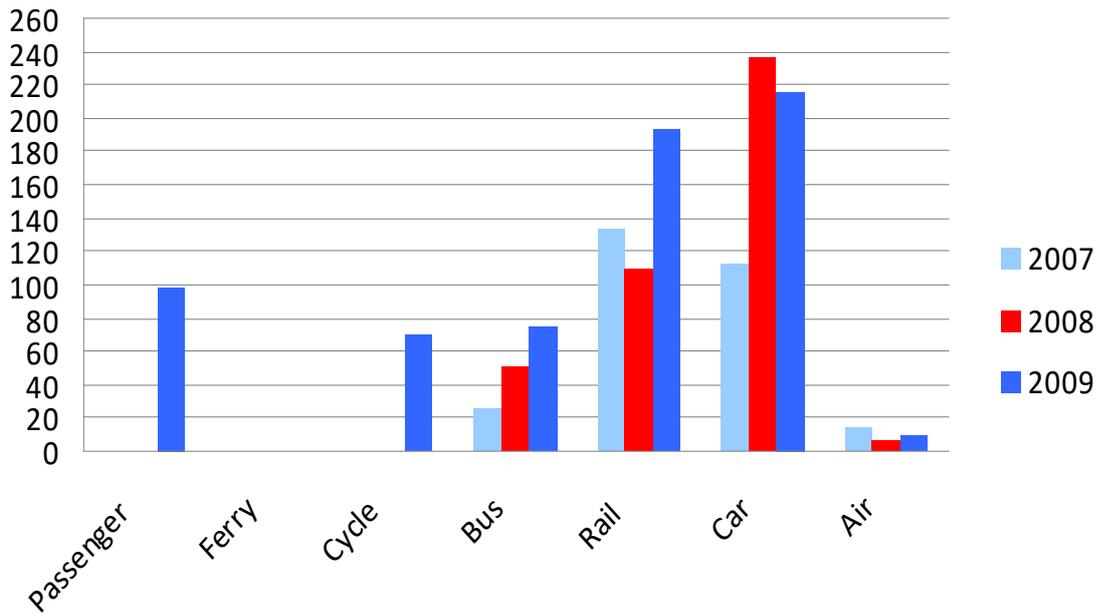


Travel trend over time, 2007-2009

Modal Split - Sustainable Travel and Car by Miles

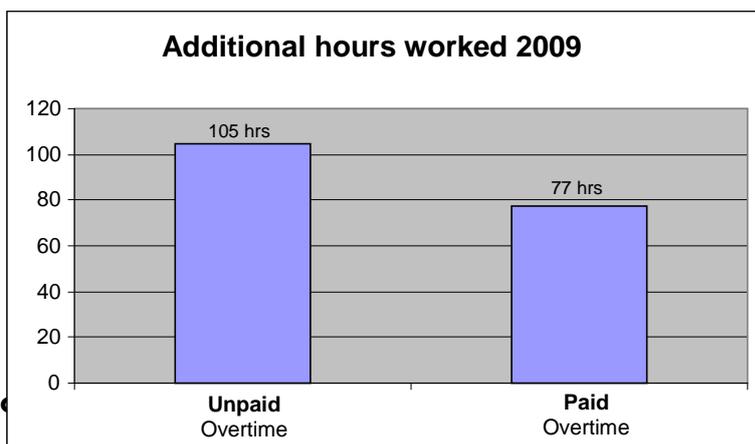
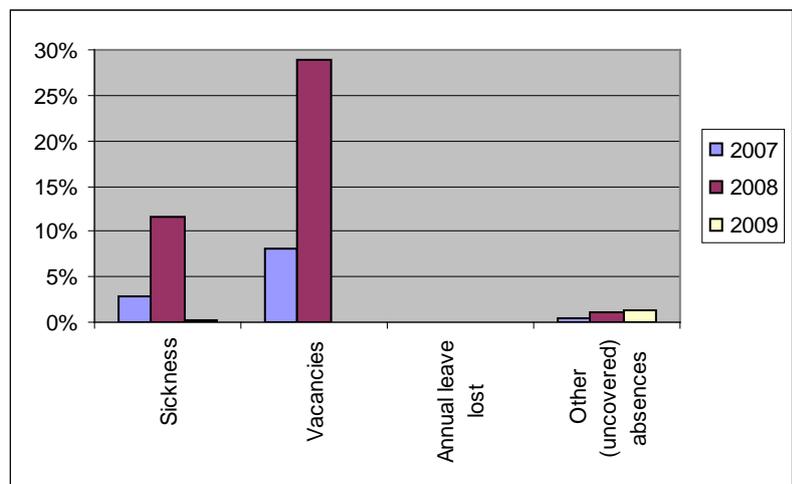
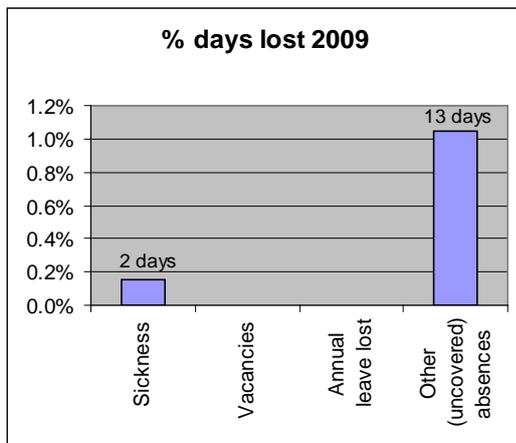


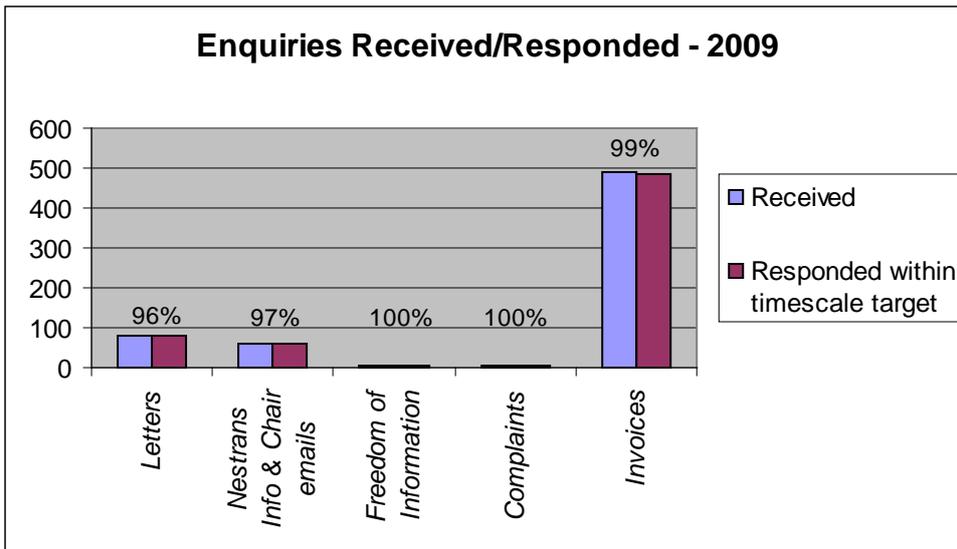
Number of Trips by Mode



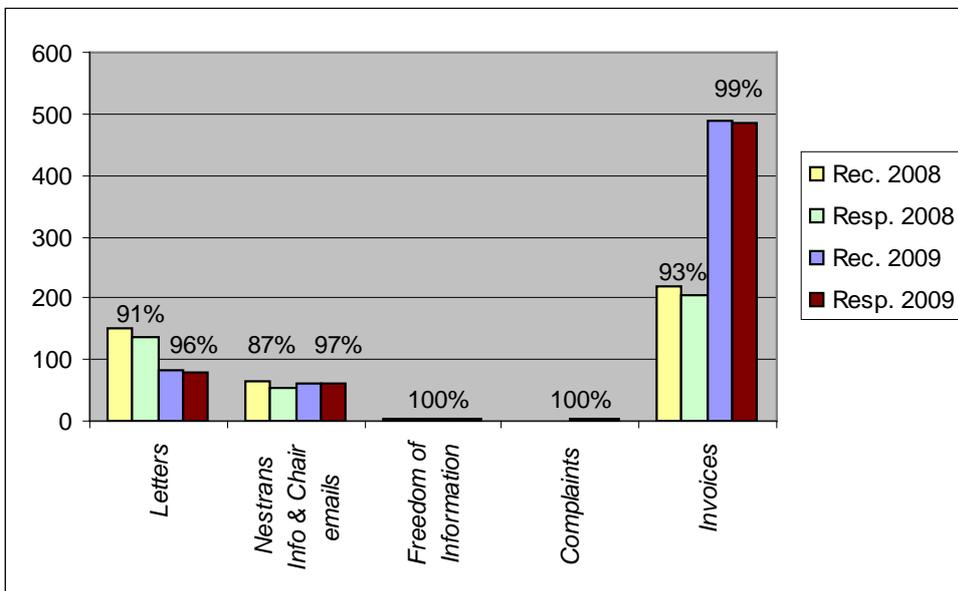
- Staffing/Personnel

Days lost trend over time, 2007-2009

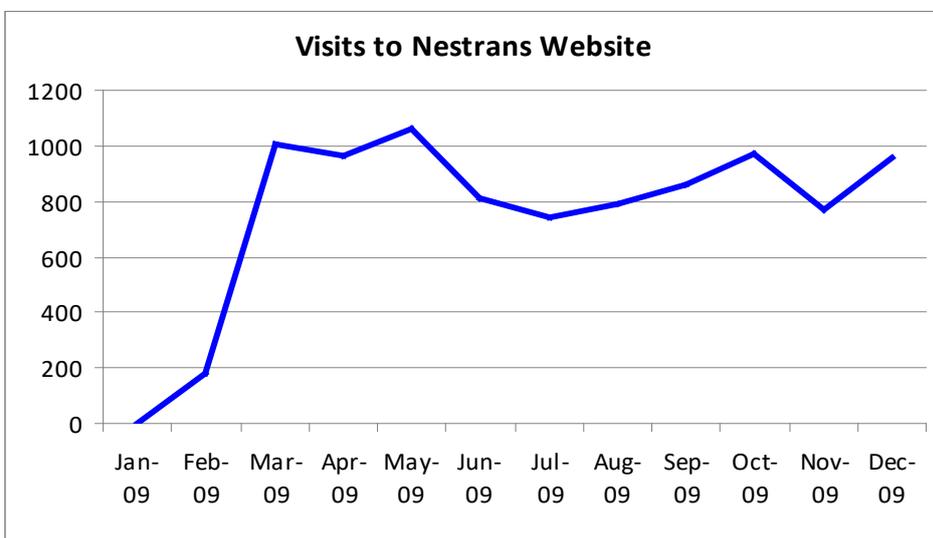




Enquiries trend over time, 2008-2009



- Nestrans Website - Number of Hits



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nestrans

11 January 2010

Our Ref RGM/N13/8
Your Ref

Willie Walsh
Chief Executive
British Airways Plc
Waterside (HBB3)
PO Box 365
Harmondsworth
UB7 0GB

Dear Sir

Aberdeen to London Flights – Effects of bad weather

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland covering the areas of Aberdeen City and Shire Councils. Our main airport and access to London and the world is Aberdeen Airport.

Our economy in the North East of Scotland is a global economy being based in large part on the energy industry. Consequently access to London and Heathrow as the UK's hub to the rest of the world is extremely important to us. That is why the services provided by British Airways from Aberdeen to London are so prized by our community as you will know from previous correspondence on protecting landing slots at Heathrow.

We can fully appreciate that in times of severe weather there will be disruption to services. Indeed with Heathrow operating at near capacity and weather causing operational difficulties that increase the times between aircraft movements the airport can in effect have more flights scheduled that it can safely accommodate. This will necessitate a consequent cancellation of some flights.

The experience of our regular users of this service is that the Aberdeen flights are often the flights that are cancelled. This appears to be as part of a plan for such circumstances where the general rule seems to be that internal flights are cancelled first to ensure that the longer haul flights can be maintained. There does seem to be a logic to this in that the view seems to be that there are alternative forms of transport for internal flight passengers.

Whilst not disagreeing with this general view we would wish to address the specific issue of travel between Aberdeen and London. We would agree that passengers between London and Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow for example can transfer to a train journey and whilst this is inconvenient it would not be as inconvenient as the major disruption caused to overseas passengers.

Travelling to Aberdeen on the other hand, due to the distance involved and the lack of alternatives is significantly more disruptive. There are only three trains in each direction between Aberdeen and London with the last train leaving Aberdeen at 14:50 and the last train leaving Kings Cross at 16:00. These trains take over seven hours to complete the journey not including the time taken to get from Heathrow to Kings Cross.

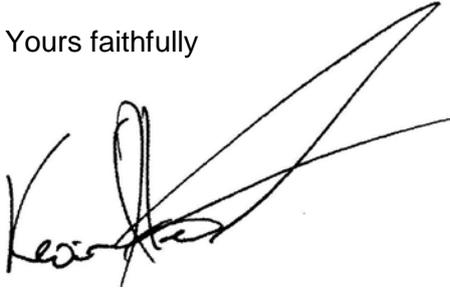
Cancellation of these Aberdeen flights does therefore lead to significant passenger disruption and inconvenience. We would ask that BA review its policy in regard to the cancellation of flights due to bad weather and take into account the different disruption to

passengers, the alternative transport options and the view that the disruption to Aberdeen passengers can be as disruptive as that for some European passengers.

This is not to say that all Aberdeen flights be exempt from cancellation but ask that some Aberdeen flights be given the priority for slots commensurate with the increased disruption compared to that of other flights to shorter haul destinations.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Stewart', with a large, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Councillor Kevin Stewart
Nestrans Chair

31 December 2009

Dear Colleague,

HIGH SPEED 2 – NEWSLETTER, December 2009

I had expected to provide you in November with one further newsletter on HS2. However, I delayed this until now so that I could confirm delivery of our final report to Ministers. This has now happened.

As I am sure you will appreciate, the Government set HS2 an extremely challenging task to complete our report in less than 12 months. The report we have submitted provides a detailed assessment of the London to West Midlands route and possible extensions further north at a broader and less detailed level of assessment. This is underpinned by a vast amount of information, in particular substantial reports on the Appraisal of Sustainability and the route engineering work.

The report acknowledges the very constructive engagement we have had with a wide range of interested stakeholders from London right up to Scotland. I am very grateful to everyone who has contributed to our work, provided evidence for us to consider or shown a keen interest. It is a pleasure to have been involved in a project for which there has been so much enthusiasm.

Earlier this month Lord Adonis indicated how he would like to take HS2 forward assuming he agrees with our conclusions. The first step will be a Government response to our report by the end of March next year. It is likely our report would be published as part of this announcement. This would be followed by a public consultation in the Autumn of 2010 which will give everyone with an interest the opportunity to submit their views formally. In the meantime we will continue to report any key developments on our website. When our report is published, the website will contain the full suite of documentation which accompanies it.

Finally can I thank you for your support and interest in HS2 and wish you a successful 2010.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Rowlands". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**SIR DAVID ROWLANDS
CHAIRMAN**

SUMMARY OF THE REMIT AND OBJECTIVES OF HIGH SPEED TWO

On 15 January 2009 the Secretary of State for Transport announced in 'Britain's Transport Infrastructure: High Speed Two', the setting up of a new company to look at a possible new railway line between London and the West Midlands.

HS2 was set up shortly after as a private company limited by guarantee. It is chaired by Sir David Rowlands and Alison Munro was seconded from the Department of Transport as Chief Executive. The rest of the HS2 team comprises further secondees from the DfT and from Network Rail

HS2's remit is to develop proposals for a new railway line from London to the West Midlands taking account of environmental, social and economic assessments. It will also provide advice to Ministers on the potential development of a high speed line beyond the West Midlands at the level of 'broad corridors, considering in particular the potent to extend to Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the North East, and Scotland.

HS2 will make recommendations on options for a terminus station or stations serving London and possible options for an intermediate parkway station between London and the West Midlands. It will also provide a proposal for an interchange station between HS2, the Great Western Main Line and Crossrail with convenient access to Heathrow airport. HS2 will also provide suggested means of linking to HS1 and the existing rail network. .

HS2 will produce a confidential report to Ministers by the end of 2009 that should be sufficiently developed to form the basis for public consultation in 2010 should Ministers decide to take this project forward. The advice will also include financing and construction proposals as well as a proposition for how best to move through the planning process within an indicative outline timetable

Greengauge 21: Fast Forward report
The Northern Way: Moving Forward

Statement by High Speed Two 16 September 2009

Welcoming both Greengauge 21's report and The Northern Way's High Speed rail positioning statement, Sir David Rowlands, Chairman of High Speed Two, said:

"These are useful contributions to the much more detailed work which HS2 is doing on identifying a buildable route with station options from London to the West Midlands, including possible connections to Heathrow and High Speed One. We will be submitting a report to Ministers at the end of this year, which will also include a comprehensive business case covering the costs, benefits and environmental impact. It will also consider broad route options beyond to Scotland."