8 Information Bulletin

o 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.

o Cross City Connections Study

In 2013, Aberdeen City Council published its Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP). The SIP focusses on the delivery of the Strategic and Local Development Plans and identifies five key infrastructure goals around housing supply, digital connectivity, skills and labour, transport and providing a better image for Aberdeen.

In relation to transport, the SIP identifies a new project: Cross City Transport Connections and states that:

"The construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will assist in addressing some of the City's transport challenges. The Council is already working with Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council to look at how best to 'lock in' the benefits of the AWPR, including opportunities for improving internal connectivity once the AWPR is open.

The current Local Development Plan will see the development of significant new housing and business park developments in the coming years. As we look around the world and Europe in particular, we see more and more successful cities of Aberdeen's size developing rapid transport systems or light transport systems, which connect communities to major strategic sites including universities, business parks, harbours, airports, stations and city centres. These solutions are being put in place across Europe to tackle issues of congestion, pollution and good connectivity.

We will carry out a feasibility study and start to investigate ways to maximise connectivity between new developments arising from the Local Development Plan, including continuing discussions with Nestrans and Transport Scotland in relation to planning and funding."

This study is focussed on considering transport connections between new areas of development (both housing and employment) on the periphery of Aberdeen, and in areas of Aberdeenshire close to the Aberdeen City boundary, with the aim of providing viable, attractive and direct linkages, as alternatives to private car. Using STAG methodologies, the study will consider the most efficient and effective network of connections between these areas, based on alternative modes of sustainable transport. Key issues are likely to be determining patterns of demand, technical and operational feasibility of alternative modes, and commercial viability.

A brief for this study is currently being finalised by Aberdeen City Council to be issued in February 2015. A further update will be reported to the Board once consultants have been commissioned.

o Smarter Choices, Smarter Places (SCSP)

Following the announcement from the Scottish Government that Paths for All would be administering the £5 million Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding, two workshops for Local Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships where held in Aberdeen and Glasgow.

The workshop in Aberdeen was attended by Rab Dickson and Kathryn MacKay from Nestrans and officers from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Submission for bids to SCSP funding closed on 30 January 2014. The total funding applied for in the North East (which is match-funded by the Councils, Nestrans or third parties) was £444,000.

Aberdeen City Council have applied for grant funding from the SCSP programme to extend travel planning and sustainable travel choices under the regional transport brand 'Getabout'. Aberdeen City Council will undertake a general campaign across the city for the public and target three areas of the City with travel planning programmes. The areas targeted include NHS Grampian and nearby businesses at Hill of Rubislaw, as well as two industrial sites, Altens/Tullos and Dyce.

Smarter Choices Smarter Places bid - £208,000

Aberdeenshire Council have applied for grant funding from the SCSP programme which will allow the delivery of complementary behaviour change work into the Integrated Travel Towns (ITTs) already identified at Portlethen, Inverurie, Huntly, Ellon and Fraserburgh. Smarter Choices funding will be concentrated in a number of areas: Local Communities within ITTs, Local Businesses in Westhill, Peterhead and within Aberdeenshire Council, Schools within ITTs and a small number of stand alone projects.

Smarter Choices Smarter Places bid - £236,000

o Access to Laurencekirk Study

A drop-in event was held at Dickson Memorial Hall in Laurencekirk on Wednesday 21 January 2015 to provide elected Members, community groups, and interested parties the opportunity to view the work undertaken to date on the Access to Laurencekirk study and provide feedback on potential options for junction improvements for the A90 and A937 in the vicinity of Laurencekirk. All exhibition material and the feedback form can be viewed on Aberdeenshire Council's website http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/transportation/TransportationStudies.asp

The event was very well attended, with just over 300 people viewing the outcomes of the appraisal to date. Feedback on the options is invited and should be returned by 28 February 2015. This will be collated and used to complete the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) report. The report is expected to be completed in spring 2015 and will be used to inform any decision on which improvements will be taken forward to the next stage of assessment. Outcomes of the report and subsequent decisions shall be reported to a future meeting of the Nestrans Board.

o Nestrans Press Releases

Since the last meeting of the Board, Nestrans has issued the following press releases (please click on the heading to access details from the Nestrans' website).

3 December 2014 Access to Laurencekirk consultation event to take place in January

10 December 2014	Final Active Travel Action Plan approved by Nestrans Board
10 December 2014	Nestrans welcomes start of construction work at Inveramsay Bridge
15 December 2014	Reminder that Access to Laurencekirk consultation event to take place in January
21 January 2015	Feedback invited for Access to Laurencekirk study

o Marketing and Public Relations Update

Nestrans' marketing and PR activities will be presented in the form of an infographic. It is intended to circulate this to Members at the Board meeting.

o Getabout

Since the last meeting of the Board, Nestrans has been involved in various activities under the "Getabout" brand, in partnership with local authorities and others. Recent highlights have included:

- Nestrans has renewed its contract for advertisements on Original 106 radio for another year. The current focus is on promoting car share, although a new ad will run from March featuring a Getabout Travel report, "There are no reports of any delays with walking and cycling", etc.;
- Nestrans' Travel Planning Executive visited BP and Marathon Oil with Liftshare to promote the car charing concept and talk about boosting their numbers;
- Don and Kathryn visited Kellands School in Inverurie with Aberdeenshire Council's Schools Travel Planning Officer to start organising a bike event for this summer;
- Nestrans' officers attended the Shell bike day with colleagues from the City Council;
- Travel tools leaflet currently undergoing a revision;
- Don and Kathryn met with City Colleagues a delegation from Telemark Province in Norway to discuss different approaches to promoting active travel and consider any potential for joint working in the future;
- All the Getabout partners held a review meeting to discuss the way forward in a session facilitated by JMP consultants. The key recommendation was that an executive group of the main funders should be set up comprising of Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian.

Recommendation

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

RD/JA/DK/KC/KMac 28 February 2015