

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

As reported to the last meeting of the Board, there is an intention to conduct a study focussing on the need for 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 the private car.

The brief for the study was issued to a range of consultants and a consortium of SIAS, Peter Brett Associates and Energised Environments has been appointed to undertake the work. This will involve a stakeholder consultation programme to inform options and opportunities to be developed and assessed over the next twelve months.

Reports will be brought back to the Board to inform members of progress with this study as it moves forward.

o Aberdeen City Region Deal

As members may be aware, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have submitted a proposal to the UK and Scottish Governments for a £2.9 billion package of measures aimed at infrastructure enhancements to support the long-term economic future of the region. A copy of the document is available from the City Council's website at:

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=63430&SID=26262>

In his budget speech on 18 March, the Chancellor George Osborne announced that negotiations were to begin between the local authorities and the two Governments. Although negotiations were held up due to the Westminster election, detailed consideration is now expected to take place over the coming months.

o Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre

Aberdeen City Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee on 19 May agreed to a further consultation on the proposed relocation of the AECC to Dyce and the redevelopment of the existing site at Bridge of Don.

Links to the draft Masterplans are available from the Council's website for the North Rowett site at:

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=64936&sID=2991>

and for the existing AECC site at:

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=64900&sID=2991>

Both documents highlight an intention to deliver a high design quality, promote sustainable transport and give due cognisance to public transport, walking and cycling networks. The principles of Designing Streets to enable high quality living environments are followed.

The Rowett North Masterplan (for the new Exhibition site) contains proposals for two new hotels and Business parks as well as a new Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre as well as leisure uses such as restaurants, bars, etc. and an energy centre. Some 2,250 car parking spaces (1,200 of which will be underground) are proposed to serve the new AECC and a further overspill parking area will be available for additional parking.

The Bridge of Don site proposals include an enlarged Park & Ride facility, increasing in size from current 650 spaces to 999 spaces over two-storeys. This has also been relocated in comparison to a previous indicative outline to be retained in its current location, adjacent to Ellon Road.

The consultation period ends on Monday 6th July.

o **Evaluation of Laurencekirk Rail Station**

On 19 May 2015, Transport Scotland published the results of an evaluation they have conducted into the effectiveness of the reopening of Laurencekirk railway station in May 2009. The full report is available from the Transport Scotland website at:

http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/rrd_reports/uploaded_reports/j346268/j346268.pdf

and a summary of the key findings is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

As members will be aware, the station has out-performed projected patronage with some 92,470 passengers in 2012/13, around 2½ times the 36,000 forecast in the business case. A survey of users indicated that 58% use the station for commuting (more than three-quarters of these travel into Aberdeen; and more than half state that they would have driven to work had the station not been an option), and 24% for business purposes. The station was found to have removed 2.6 million vehicle kilometres from the road network and produced an overall return of £3.20 for every pound spent.

The findings of the evaluation will be used to provide a base for developing a robust business case in support of a funding bid towards the new station at Kintore.

o **Nestrans Press Releases**

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

1 April 2015 [National Connectivity Report recommendations vital to the North-East](#)

The findings of the newly launched National Connectivity Task Force Report have been backed as vital to the success of the north east by Nestrans.

29 April 2015 [Views sought to improve transport between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen](#)

A study considering options for improving transport connections between Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen is seeking public input to understand the problems faced by users.

1 May 2015 [Dyce employees encouraged to take sustainable travel options to work](#)

Employees in Dyce are being encouraged to avoid the rush-hour commute and use public transport or considering walking or cycling options.

8 May 2015 [Five Aberdeenshire towns to get sustainable transport improvements – with your input](#)

Five of Aberdeenshire's key towns will benefit from funding to improve walking, cycling and access to public transport.

o Marketing and Public Relations Update

Nestrans' marketing and PR activities are attached in the form of an infographic as **Appendix 2** to this report. Copies will be circulated to Members at the Board meeting.

o Getabout

Promotion of Sustainable Travel continued with a set of behaviour change activities, including:

- Foyer Exhibition at Wood Group/Centrica offices with Primary school Children visiting from Ashlea School
- Foyer exhibition at First Group HQ in Aberdeen
- 2 Day cycle roadshow at Run Balmoral
- Presentation at the Walking Cycling Connecting Communities conference "Car Free Day the Getabout Way"
- Distributed the new Dyce Commuter leaflet with Scottish Enterprise at industrial estates in the Dyce area
- Participated in the Cycle Forum's Cycle count
- Preparation for 11 events in 9 days during Bike Week (June 13th to June 21st)
- Foyer exhibition at Technip, Westhill

Appendix 3 contains a Marketing & Communications Update on Getabout activity.

o **Cycle Development Update**

Since the last meeting of the board, the Cycling Development Officer has continued to work closely with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Sustrans on the variety of cycling projects submitted to the Community Links Programme.

This included attendance along with Sustrans at the recent Integrated Travel Town public consultation events held by Aberdeenshire Council in Portlethen, Fraserburgh, Ellon, Inverurie and Huntly.

The Cycling Development Budget of £100,000 has been renewed for the current financial year by Sustrans. The previous year's budget was spent on 4 projects in Aberdeen City totalling £96,497.46. The remainder £3502.54 was handed back to Sustrans as underspend.

Nestrans will continue to work with both Local Authorities and partners to identify suitable cycling infrastructure projects to fund through this budget.

o **National Walking Strategic Plan**

At the last meeting of the Board, members instructed that a letter be sent to the Cabinet Secretary regarding the National Walking and Cycling Network Project Plan.

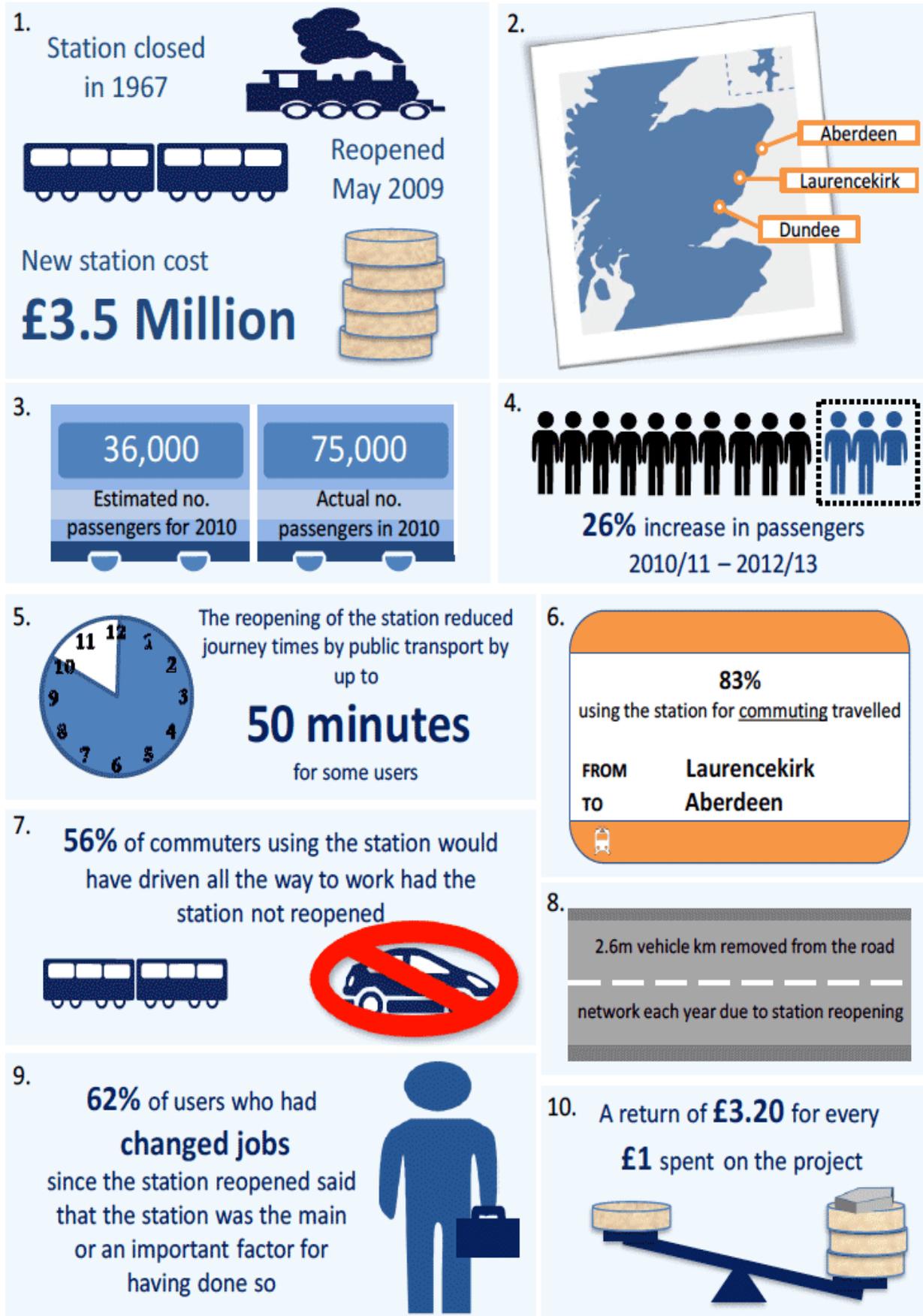
A response to this has now been received from the Cabinet Secretary and a copy is attached as **Appendix 4** to this report. The letter indicates that although the routes listed in the published Project Plan are now considered a national development as part of the National Planning Framework, the Government is still open to suggestions coming forward for other routes and route proposals which can be added to the list of priority routes albeit without national development status.

o **Recommendation**

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

RD /1st June 2015

Evaluation of Laurencekirk Railway Station



Nestrans Communications Report

April 2015 – May 2015

Social Media

At present (end May 2015) the joint @ACSEF_Nestrans account has a total of 348 followers, an increase of 16% on the previous total in March 2015.

Tweeting and retweeting about topics including:

- Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study (and survey link)
 - Tweeting around Business Survey also
- A96 dualling public exhibitions
- Integrated travel towns
- Commuting to Dyce leaflet
- Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvements
- Routes Europe



Nestrans Media Releases & Statements Issued

Date	Type	Details
2/4/15	Press Release	“National Connectivity Report recommendations vital to the North East”
9/4/15	Statement	Statement from Nestrans Director on Nestrans’ response to the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (statement version of the formal consultation response which was at previous Board meeting)
28/4/15	Press Release	Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study
20/5/15	Statement	Statement from Chair on the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study / what happens next.



Press Enquiries

Date	Media	Details
6/4/15	Evening Express	Reporter picked up on the Concessionary Travel Pilot for Drug and Alcohol Service Recovery Users (mentioned in HTAP report to previous Nestrans Board). Contacted both Transport Scotland and NHS to flag up the interest. Transport Scotland responded to query.
8/4/15	Evening Express	Reporter asking for Nestrans’ view on Aberdeen City Local Development Plan. Statement prepared and issued.

30/4/15	Evening Express	Reporter following up on Formartine & Buchan railway story/Nestrans budget
19/5/15	Evening Express	Reporter querying whether the new hospital car park, funded by Sir Ian Wood, would go against transport policy.
21/5/15	Buchan Observer	Following up on Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen STS (as it was discussed at the community council). Statement prepared and issued.



o News Coverage

Date	Media	Details
2/4/15	Evening Express	Letter – “We must find ways to welcome car drivers”. Letter follows comment by Nestrans Director in the issue the previous day on the City Centre Masterplan. The reader criticises the current bus service offering. Says to find the ‘right balance’ that Mr Murray discusses, then decent public transport infrastructure must be in place.
10/4/15	Evening Express	Story around Transport Scotland’s Concessionary Travel pilot scheme with Aberdeenshire Drug and Alcohol Partnership.
13/4/15	Evening Express	Letter – “Bus scheme is way forward”. Positive letter from reader who thinks the Concessionary Travel pilot was a ‘great idea’.
14/5/15	Evening Express	Scott Begbie’s column agrees with the concessionary bus pilot and thinks it is wrong to criticise the scheme.
15/4/15	Evening Express	“Gridlocked Roads must be sorted”. Call has been made to put the brakes on development until transport catches up. Nestrans Chair is quoted in his role as Convener of Aberdeen City Council’s planning management committee. Nestrans Director is quoted as part of Nestrans response to the LDP.
15/4/15	Evening Express	“Reducing car journeys from new developments is seen as key to tackling pollution”. Story on City Council’s Air Quality Action Plan. Nestrans Director quoted as part of Nestrans response to LDP.
15/4/15	Evening Express	“Councillor rejects bus lane proposal”. Story on Nestrans’ Wellington Road Multi-Modal Transport Study which includes an option on shared bus lanes. Cllr Young says it is “unlikely that the council will support such an idea”. Nestrans spokesman quoted as deferring the consideration of the study until ACC have conducted a strategic overview of the project.

15/4/15	Evening Express	Letter – Reader welcomes Scott Begbie’s article on the concessionary travel pilot.
28/4/15	Evening Express	City cycle paths to benefit from almost £1m of Sustrans funding.
29/4/15	Press and Journal	Public urged to have their say on links (Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study)
30/4/15	Evening Express	Historic Rail Link Could Be Back On Track (Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study)
30/4/15	Fraserburgh Herald	Views sought to improve transport (Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study)
1/5/15	Scottish Construction Now	Views sought on transport improvements between Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen
1/5/15	Press & Journal / Evening Express	Minister agrees talks with A90 Campaigner (Access to Laurencekirk)
6/5/15	Press & Journal / Evening Express	Aberdeenshire Cllrs Ford and Johnston call for Aberdeenshire residents to make their views known as part of the strategic transport study. They are calling for the Buchan line between Dyce and Ellon to be reopened if the proposed £2.9bn City Region Deal is accepted by government.
5/5/15	Fraserburgh Herald	A study has been commissioned by Nestrans to consider options for improving transport connections between Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen, public input is sought to understand the problems faced by users of the corridor
13/5/15	Press & Journal	Five towns in Aberdeenshire are set to get new walking and cycle routes (Integrated Travel Towns)
21/5/15	Press & Journal	“Forgotten north-east rail route could be revived” – Nestrans to consult on how to improve transport links, including bringing back the rail link between Aberdeen, Fraserburgh and Peterhead
23/5/15	STV Online	“Transport group considers re-opening trains from Aberdeen to Fraserburgh”
26/5/15	Press & Journal	“Bikers get on track with tour of Buchan railway route”. Aberdeenshire Cllrs Ford & Johnston put their campaign to reopen the former Formartine & Buchan railway line in motion.
27/5/15	Fraserburgh Herald	“Could Formartine & Buchan railway line be reopening?” Quotes from Nestrans Chair, Ewan Wallace from Aberdeenshire and Cllr Tait.

28/5/15	Inverurie Herald	“Rail link reopening proposal ‘on track’” – Cllrs Ford and Johnston cycle the section of the Formartine and Buchan Way to review the condition of the track bed for possible re-instatement and to highlight the benefits of their proposal.
29/5/15	Press & Journal	“Campaign to Dual A90 Fully” – Transport Scotland will be attending public meetings in Peterhead and Longhaven next week. Cllr Owen who spearheads the ‘Why Stop at Ellon’ campaign urges people to make their voices heard.
29/5/15	Press & Journal / BBC News	Date for Danger Junction Report – The First Minister says a report on the Laurencekirk junction of the A90 will be published next month.



The recent focus for Getabout has featured on Walk to Work Week (11th – 15th May 2015).

The Nestrans Marketing & Communications Officer took part in the week, walking 30,834 steps and covering 16½ miles. A week-long series of blogs were published, focusing on different walking topics each day (the local area, walking & fitness, walking gadgets etc.). The blog received 196 views and reached 1,174 people via Facebook. The link was also shared via Twitter and LinkedIn.

Via the radio contract with Original 106, the most recent advert promoted choosing active travel in order to beat the traffic jams through the “Getabout Traffic & Travel Report”.

Into June, the focus will switch towards Bike Week (13th – 21st June), including a series of radio adverts and bus back advertising, ‘Rediscover your Love for Cycling’. The campaign will run in the three weeks leading up to Bike Week, plus the week itself. A number of events will be taking place across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, including the Getabout Roadshow tour.



Following Bike Week, the focus will switch towards promoting bus travel as a transport option for day trips in the summer holidays. A “Day Trips on the Bus” leaflet is being produced and the radio and print advertising will also switch to this theme.

The Getabout website group has also reconvened to look at developing a new website which better suits users’ needs.