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## 8 Information Bulletin

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- 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.

- Letter from Keith Brown, Transport Minister

The RTP Chairs wrote to the Transport Minister to highlight the need to ensure that Scotland's economic prospects were not reduced by restricting access from Scotland to London and its hub airport at Heathrow. This access was clearly under threat given the capacity issues at the South East airports and the recent withdrawal of BMI services from Glasgow to London. The Nestrans Board has previously raised these issues with the Scottish and UK Governments.

The Transport Minister has replied to the RTP Chairs letter indicating that he has raised this issue with counterparts in London. A copy of the Minister's letter is attached as Appendix A.

- Rail Update

The latest ScotRail timetabling conference was held on Thursday 26 May 2011 and was attended by Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager.

ScotRail announced some progress on the two main issues for the Nestrans' area which we have been promoting as considerations for future timetable changes. Firstly, on Sunday enhancements on the Aberdeen-Inverness line, ScotRail have now been able to undertake analysis and believe that enhancements may be cost-effective. It is suggested that five additional services between Inverurie and Aberdeen and two additional services between Elgin and Inverness would fill many of the existing gaps, but extra drivers and crew need to be sourced to make this work. ScotRail will write to both Nestrans and Hitrans in the coming weeks to confirm their understanding of the proposals and indicate any potential funding shortfall.

Secondly, Nestrans has been pressing for additional morning services between Stonehaven-Portlethen-Aberdeen to fill a peak hour gap of over one hour, there being no northbound departure from Stonehaven to Aberdeen between 0822 and 0934. ScotRail have assessed options for filling this gap and the main opportunity is to take a train from Aberdeen to start at Stonehaven for the journey north. However, due to timings of available sets and crew and the need for maneuvering at Stonehaven, the earliest this train could realistically depart from there is 0925, just ten minutes ahead of the existing service. Therefore, although this proposal remains on the list of potential schemes, it is unlikely to be delivered in the short-term.

- Competition Commission report on buses

The Competition Commission (CC) has published (6 May 2011) its provisional findings and possible remedies following its investigation into Local Bus services. There is an extremely short timescale for comment on a very complex issue with responses requested by 27 May

2011. A paper has been prepared for the RTP Chairs meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 summarising the main issues. This paper is attached as Appendix B.

- **M74 Extension Completion**

The M74 completion project in Glasgow linking the end of the existing M74 with the M8 southwest of the Kingston Bridge will be opening to vehicles from 28 June 2011. Work on the new section of motorway began in 2008 and will open almost 9 months ahead of schedule. The £657m cost of the project is being funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and Glasgow, South Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Councils. The work was carried out by Interlink M74, a joint venture comprising Balfour Beatty, Morgan Est, Morrison Construction and Sir Robert McAlpine.

- **Nestrans Press Releases**

Since the last Board meeting in April, there have been no press releases issued.

- **Getabout events**

### **Greenbrae/Dubford consultation**

The winners of Aberdeen City Council's Community Cycle Challenge, supported by funding from Nestrans, was the Dubford/Greenbrae School area in Bridge of Don. It is intended to consult with the local community and draw up a 5 year plan identifying cycling improvements in the area. Two days of consultation at the school and outside the church were held in May, supported by Nestrans staff and the Getabout events kit. The residents and children were asked to identify what their priorities were and what were the major problems. More sessions and events will be delivered over the coming months until the first infrastructure can be installed and a rolling programme written to deliver a series of actions to develop cycling opportunities in the area.

### **Cyclefest 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Grampian Transport Museum in Alford held a major cycling festival on 22 May 2011. Nestrans supported the event by contributing £2,000 towards the cycle stunt team "The Clan" and providing other support into Cyclefest. There was also a series of cycling adverts carried on Waves Radio for two weeks running up to the festival. The adverts were complemented by prizes of family tickets for entry to the Cyclefest as competition prizes. The featured radio adverts focused on:

- A cycle to work and school advert;
- A Peterhead No Excuse Zone advert; and
- A cycle tourism in Aberdeenshire advert.

### **Bus Backs**

Bus back advertising has been running on First and Stagecoach buses for a couple of months. Featuring promotions for Park & Ride, Getabout and Nestrans a photo shoot of the buses was held on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

### **Park & Ride leaflet**

A leaflet promoting Park & Ride opportunities was released on 1<sup>st</sup> June – copies will be available at the Board meeting for members.

- Recommendation

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

RGM/RD/DK/30 May 2011