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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.

- AWPR decision

As members will be aware, the Supreme Court in London on 17 October pronounced that it had rejected the Roadsense appeal against the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and that the project could now progress. The AWPR is considered to be a key element of the Regional Transport Strategy as well as being a building block on which the Strategic Development Plan and other economic development, planning and transportation policies are predicated.

The RTS however is a balanced strategy, combining the benefits of by-passing the city with complementary measures to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the region. Nestrans and its partners have always argued that Locking in the Benefits of the AWPR for the long-term was a key element of the development and that by-passing the City provided the opportunity for commensurate public transport, walking and cycling opportunities which should be implemented along with the route. Already, Park & Ride sites and complementary road improvements at Balmedie-Tipperty and Haudagain are being promoted as part of the scheme and other aspects such as reprioritising flows to favour bus routes and radials are being studied. Previous work looking into the prospects for High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes concluded that these could not be implemented prior to the AWPR, but it would now seem appropriate to revisit these.

Other aspects of delivering the Regional Transport Strategy and associated development plans can now proceed with the comfort that the key piece of infrastructure will be being progressed over the next few years.

Nestrans will continue to work with partners to ensure appropriate delivery of complementary measures and seek to maximise the opportunity afforded by the development of the AWPR.

- Dyce station update

Members will recall at previous meetings that a series of proposals to upgrade Dyce station and opportunities for access to improve the operation of the Nestrans' supported shuttle bus were being promoted. The shuttle bus continues to show good patronage figures, with an average of nearly 250 journeys per day.

Colleagues in Aberdeen City Council have been progressing designs for a bus turning circle to access the station from the west. The designs are now completed and a Planning application has been submitted, which should enable construction to go ahead next financial year.

Network Rail are also progressing their design for the upgrading of the station as part of the Access for All programme to enable fully Disability Discrimination Act compliance. A first

drawing, including a new overbridge and lifts has been received and used to ensure compatibility with the design for the turning circle and bus access mentioned above.

Construction of the upgraded station is anticipated to commence during 2013.

After discussion at the Board meeting on 20 June 2012, Nestrans commissioned a survey of shuttle bus users to ensure that the service is being run optimally. Surveys were carried out on the Dyce Shuttle Bus (Jet Connect), Dyce Station Car Park, and Dyce rail boarding/alighting surveys on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October. The surveys were managed by AECOM, and undertaken by Streetwise, through the North East Transport Consultancy Services Framework. The final report will shortly be made available on the Nestrans Web Site, with the results shared with Aberdeen Airport, Stagecoach and First ScotRail.

Key findings from the survey results are as follows:

### **Dyce Shuttle Bus**

User surveys demonstrated generally high levels of satisfaction with the bus service, although crowding on the 08.10 departure from Dyce, and difficulties keeping to timetable in the PM peak (leading to missed connections with the train service) were commented upon as concerns.

On the day of the survey, 255 passengers were recorded as boarding the bus, with the majority of users (64%) boarding at Dyce Rail Station, with most accessing employment locations to the north of the airport. A far smaller proportion (circa 20% of trips) made the reverse trip. 36 passengers (16%) boarded at Aberdeen Airport.

On the day of the survey, the service experienced significant difficulty keeping to its scheduled timetable between 16.30 and 18.00, resulting in two scheduled round trips being abandoned. It would appear that congestion in the pm peak significantly affects the attractiveness of the bus as a means of return access the rail station in the evening for workers at Kirkhill, as demonstrated by low usage on the return leg to Dyce Station, and a high proportion of single (rather than return tickets) being sold.

### **Rail Station Boarding Surveys**

An all day observation and count of passengers boarding and alighting at Dyce Rail station was also undertaken, following up on previous surveys undertaken in 2009 and 2010. The outcomes emphasised the importance of the station as a destination station for commuters, with total boardings and alightings at the station between 07:26 and 18:29 totalling 1,945 passengers. Of these 67% walked to from the station, 14% drove/got a lift, 10% used a taxi, 7% used the Dyce Shuttle Bus, and 2% either cycled or used employer minibuses. It is notable however, that passengers alighting trains at Dyce were far more likely to use the shuttle bus (12% of alighting rail passengers), than those boarding trains (3% of boarding rail passengers).

### **Dyce Rail Station Car Park Survey**

Occupancy and turnover surveys were also conducted at the rail station car park. The most significant finding from this work was that around 40% of available capacity was occupied by long stay parking – that is cars that were present at the commencement of the survey period (07.00), and present in the same location at the end of the survey period (20.00). It was also found that the car park became over 90% occupied between 10.00 and 16.00, reaching 98% occupancy between 12.00 and 13.00.

- A947 Parkhill-Banff Route Study Report

Members will recall from the previous Board meeting that work has started towards a series of safety upgrades on the A947 Dyce-Banff route. In addition to the signing and overtaking lay-byes which have been implemented and the higher degree of policing in place, a series of discussions are taking place regarding other ways casualty numbers on the route can be reduced.

A public meeting took place at Meldrum Academy in Oldmeldrum on 28 November at which Nestrans was represented by Rab Dickson and around 25 attendees. A further meeting will take place at Banff Academy on 10 December.

- Aviation Update

Members will recall that at the time of the last Board meeting, a draft response on the Aviation Policy Framework was being developed. After the meeting with DfT referred to in item 3a, a formal response was circulated for comment and then submitted in advance of the deadline of the end of October. A copy of the final submission is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

On 2 Nov 2012, Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that a panel of six experts were to form the Airports Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davies to take forward the work to examine how the UK's status as a leading global aviation hub can be maintained.

The list of Commissioners and Terms of Reference are attached below for members' interest:

<http://www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/ffi/DNWA-8ZKQWJ>

Appendix 2 to this report contains a copy of a response from the Secretary of State for Transport to the letter from the Chairs of Nestrans and Hitrans regarding the Terms of Reference for the Commission and its objectives.

The Civil Aviation Bill was debated in the House of Lords on Wednesday 7 November and an amendment seeking to ensure that the Civil Aviation Authority's duties included a requirement to have regard to economic and social impact of services on the UK as a whole, was placed by Lord Stephen based on information supplied by Nestrans. The amendment can be found at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2012-2013/0036/amend/am036-e.htm>

and the Hansard note of the debate is available under item 5 at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/121107-0001.htm#12110780000527>

Members will see from the note of debate that Lord Stephen agreed to withdraw his amendment in favour of meeting the Minister to seek a technical way of resolving the issues. A Private Members' Bill by Lord Empey, calling for an amendment to the Airports Bill may provide further opportunity for ensuring that Aberdeen Airport's access to Heathrow requirements are assured.

- New Aberdeen-London Heathrow Service

On 19 November, Virgin Atlantic announced that it has been offered all of the Heathrow short haul slots available following International Airline Group's acquisition of bmi, ensuring competition on the key Aberdeen-Heathrow link.

A timetable is likely to be provided in detail before the end of the calendar year, with an intention to run multiple daily flights from both Edinburgh and Aberdeen to London Heathrow.

Flights will commence around 31st March 2013 using narrow body Airbus A320 aircraft to operate these short haul flights.

- HGV road user levy

On 24 October, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Stephen Hammond, announced a Road User Levy Bill which proposes that all vehicles over 12 Tonnes should pay a charge to use the UK road network.

Members will recall that the Nestrans Board on 15 February 2012 agreed to support this proposal with the view that the levy will be cost neutral to UK hauliers but will ensure that overseas operators pay their fair share.

The levy will be time based and will vary according to the vehicle type, weight and number of axles. This seeks to ensure that the charging scale is linked to the amount of damage a HGV causes to a road. The levy will be a maximum of £1,000 per year or £10 per day for the largest vehicles.

Changes will be included in the forthcoming Finance Bill 2014.

- Nestrans Press Releases

Since the last meeting of the Board in October, there have been press releases on the following (more details can be accessed by clicking on the title):

**[Consultation on Regional Transport Strategy underway](#)**

05/10/2012

**[AWPR decision welcomed by Nestrans](#)**

18/10/2012

**[Transport Scotland starts work on AWPR](#)**

19/10/2012

**[City Centre Transport Masterplan needs your views](#)**

22/10/2012

**[Nestrans Launches Festive Travel Guide](#)**

30/11/2012

- Getabout events

Getabout activity in recent weeks has been focussed on the Christmas Park and Ride promotions.

The Christmas park and ride campaign is now underway. This year it features:

- Radio Advertisements on Original 106;

- Three Billboards on radial routes into Aberdeen (see picture);
- Bus back advertisements;
- New leaflet with interactive web based version:  
(<http://www.get-about.com/pdfs/park-ride-leaflet.pdf>);
- Social Media Marketing on Facebook and Twitter.



### Granite Expo

With our partners at Aberdeen City Council, we ran a stand at the Granite City Expo at the Hilton Tree Tops Hotel on Thursday 1 November promoting Travel plans for Businesses.



### Tour de Rayne 2

On Friday 2 November, the second Tour De Rayne was a huge success with the pupils of Rayne North School completing a 10 mile ride and younger pupils cycling 1 mile. There was heavy participation by parents as well as school staff.

Planning for 2013 is already underway.



Petrofac

Getabout/Nestrans staff are assisting Petrofac with their new travel plan and promoting their car share scheme.

- Recommendation

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

RD/DK/26 November 2012

## Aviation Policy Framework consultation

30 October 2012

To:  
Aviation Policy Framework  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House (1/24)  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR  
[aviation.policyframework@dft.gov.uk](mailto:aviation.policyframework@dft.gov.uk)

From:  
Nestrans  
Archibald Simpson House  
27 – 29 King Street  
Aberdeen  
AB24 5AA  
[derickmurray@nestrans.org.uk](mailto:derickmurray@nestrans.org.uk)

Response from North East Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS)

### **Summary and Key Issues**

- Aviation Policy needs to recognise the economic and social contributions of all the regions of the UK taking into account the needs of the whole of the country, not just London and the South East
- The North East of Scotland makes a growing and disproportionate contribution to UK GDP which requires global air service connectivity
- Any new Aviation policy should provide the UK regions guaranteed access to the UK hub airport whether through new capacity or where necessary PSO protection to the hub airport
- The remit of the CAA must be updated to recognise the broader economic contribution of air transport, not merely a model to maximise throughput on constrained runways

### **Introduction**

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland covering the geographical area of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. This represents 10% of Scotland's population and approximately 10% of its land mass. It has a Board consisting of Councillor Appointees from its constituent Councils and of non-elected appointees approved by the Scottish Ministers. Nestrans principal function is to develop and implement a regional transport strategy which has Scottish Ministers approval. Air transport is a key component of that.

### **The benefits of aviation**

#### **The economic context for the NE**

##### Anchoring oil & gas

For around 40 years, the North East of Scotland has been the UK's gateway to enjoying a number of the benefits derived from the oil and gas industry. This industry sits alongside other more indigenous sectors in our region such as food and drink, tourism, life sciences and research and has provided an excellent source of employment and growth to counterbalance the loss of the onetime major employment areas of shipbuilding and repair and fishing.

The energy industry has provided prosperity for our region which extends well beyond our immediate boundaries. Whilst much of the project management, decision making, innovation and expertise is undertaken in the North East of Scotland, currently estimated at around 40,000 jobs - many of the functions flowing from the work undertaken here results in job creation in other areas of the country and economy - currently estimated at a total of 120,000 jobs throughout Scotland and a total of 480,000 oil and gas related jobs UK wide - where there are

the appropriate skills, plant and people. There are therefore many jobs throughout the country directly linked to the economy, development and connectivity of North East of Scotland, and the decisions taken by companies, in our region, which benefit other areas of the UK including the Highlands, Fife, Glasgow, Tyneside, London, South East England and the South coast.

The work, experience and opportunities generated in our region has in the past been built upon the oil and gas reserves in the North Sea. As the fields have matured and the extraction of oil and gas reserves has become more complex, we have seen the development of many companies whose gained knowledge and innovation has created world class and world leading centres of excellence. This is particularly so in the fields of subsea engineering and in supply chain and logistics.

Whilst there has been a growing acknowledgement amongst companies that the North Sea still offers a significant number of years worth of future employment it does nevertheless have a limited lifespan. Companies and the local authorities have been looking to the future and have through the public private sector partnership Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) developed a plan to secure the future of the North East of Scotland and with it the very significant export income, the inward investment and the jobs across the UK that currently depend on the North East of Scotland's continuing involvement in the Energy sector.

This Plan involves, amongst other things, internationalising the work in the areas where we are world leaders and diversifying into the renewable energy sector where many of the skills required are transferable. In the supply chain and logistics sector this internationalisation has been very successful to date with, in 2010-11, almost half or some £7.6 billion worth of the total of £16.3 billion worth of annual work being overseas, with sales activity in over 100 countries. A high percentage of this activity is from the North East of Scotland. There are targets for increasing this overseas work further including a target to increase overall sales by the Scottish-based supply chain to £30bn by 2020 and the proportion of exports to 60% (or some £18bn). This of course creates jobs in the rest of the UK but to do so requires secure and comprehensive air services with guaranteed connectivity to the UK hub.

## The Prize

The prize for the UK is to create an industry in the North East of Scotland that services the global energy centres by being the world leader in these chosen fields of expertise for a period that long outlasts the extraction of oil and gas from the North Sea. The Plan envisages achieving this prize by anchoring in those parts of the industry and creating the critical mass where companies in similar fields can be located together to work and feed off each other.

Success will ensure that the UK will continue to enjoy the benefits born from the discovery of oil and gas in the North Sea long after the last oil is removed from it.

Putting this into an annual monetary context the current contribution made by the energy industry to the UK economy is as follows:

- £32 billion to the balance of payments
- £7 billion in exports
- £13 billion in Corporation tax on production
- £6 billion in Corporate and Payroll tax from the wider supply chain

## Competition

The Plan recognises that to be a world leader you have to be a player on the world stage. Our competition comes from the likes of Perth in Australia, Calgary in Canada, Doha in Qatar, Houston in America and others. If the North East of Scotland does not secure this work for the

future, the UK will lose jobs to these types of locations rather than seeing any redistribution of jobs within the UK.

In attracting companies to establish headquarters in our region and help us in building the critical mass to keep the industry here, ACSEF has carried out extensive consultation with companies to see what would attract and keep them here. From these consultations it is clear that two issues are high on the list of prime requirement for choosing a headquarter location: quality of life and transport.

The consultation describes the need to have a unique selling point and for the North East of Scotland that has been clearly identified as our quality of life. The British way of life and the advantages that our corner of the country can provide with mountains, coastal areas and city culture all within easy reach are good selling points.

### Connectivity requirements

Of equal importance is transport. This has been identified as an issue both within our region and our external connectivity. We are addressing the issues and have well advanced plans to improve both road and rail systems across our area as part of a Regional Transport Strategy designed to deliver a fully integrated transport system for our region. This includes projects estimated be worth around £1.5 billion in both public and private sector investment. Our ports and airport have been upgraded, including a recent runway extension, and commitment to improve our road and rail infrastructure secured, amounting to around 2/3 of the identified expenditure.

The recent Supreme Court judgement on the 28 mile dual carriageway Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route has allowed the Scottish Government to announce that this project can now proceed with an opening date of 2018. This very significant project permits progress on a number of other transport projects which, when taken together, will provide the conditions for a marked improvement in transport across our region. This investment will also significantly improve surface access to Aberdeen Airport, a key requirement of the strategy.

However, if we are to expand our global activities, providing services to the world's energy centres from our area we need to be able to access those regions easily and effectively.

### **Current conditions for flying**

When looking at the current connectivity that the North East of Scotland has to the rest of the UK and to the world the most striking element is the geographic location of our part of the country. We are a peripheral region in a peripheral country on the edge of Europe.

We are over 2 ½ hours from the central belt of Scotland and over 7 hours by train from London. Building a high speed rail line between Scotland (Edinburgh or Glasgow) and London will still leave the North East of Scotland with a rail journey of around 6 hours with the inconvenience of not only changing trains in Scotland but also the possibility of additional train changes to access Heathrow.

For business this is unacceptable. It is therefore likely that business travellers wanting access to destinations outside Scotland will choose to fly. Aberdeen Airport is currently very well connected within the UK and has good access to a number of the European hubs including Amsterdam, Paris and Frankfurt. However, by far the main airport for connection to Aberdeen is Heathrow. There are more passengers choosing to fly to or via Heathrow than to or via all the other hub airports combined. In attempting to understand the reasons behind this Nestrans and our colleagues at Hitrans commissioned a report to see if we could establish why Heathrow is so essential to business travellers. This work can be found at:

[http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db\\_docs/20120531\\_Air\\_Links\\_to\\_London\\_from\\_the\\_North\\_of\\_Scotland\\_and\\_Final\\_Report\\_1.pdf](http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/20120531_Air_Links_to_London_from_the_North_of_Scotland_and_Final_Report_1.pdf)

The key findings from the report are:

- The number of business passengers flying from Aberdeen Airport is double that (54%) of either Edinburgh (known as a busy business airport) or Glasgow
- The number of passengers flying on from Heathrow is high, at greater than 40%
- The destinations served by Heathrow, although less in number than some competitor hubs, meets the needs of the Energy market
- The connectivity that Heathrow offers (frequency of flights) is crucially important to business travellers
- Growth in travel to other European hubs has been matched by growth in traffic to Heathrow

History of regional access to Heathrow

However the history of air services at Heathrow shows a worrying trend. Heathrow now serves significantly fewer domestic airports than previously, 6 compared with over 20 around 30 years ago. Runway slots at the airport previously used for domestic connections have been given over to larger planes serving longer haul traffic, even though the domestic services were themselves profitable.

As Heathrow has approached capacity this trend has become ever more serious. Recent Government decisions on limiting expansion at the airport have created a constrained market. In looking for growth, both the airports and airlines are attracted to using higher capacity aircraft to increase revenue: this is good for the airlines and airports but not necessarily good for the country or for securing regional access.

The Government's primary response has been to improve surface access to the airport with high speed rail extending the reach of the airport to many more surface access passengers including from some of the regions. However as previously discussed this solution doesn't reach the more peripheral parts of the country, including Aberdeen. The more peripheral regions have a greater reliance on air access to the national hub.

Fragility of current services

Further, recent developments have provided evidence of how fragile such domestic connections are. Glasgow lost its BMI connection to Heathrow leaving the West of Scotland with no competition on the route. More recently Edinburgh and Aberdeen have also lost BMI connections to Heathrow with the sale to IAG. Although this may be compensated for in Edinburgh and Aberdeen's cases by the possible introduction of a new carrier for these routes, this was only achieved by a concerted lobbying attempt to invoke competition rules and there is no guarantee of service beyond 6 years.

The recent decision by the Civil Aviation Authority to find that proposed changes to charging policies which appear to discriminate against smaller aircraft landing at Gatwick are acceptable further undermines confidence that these trends which work against regional access to the capital's main airports, including the national hub, won't be further eroded.

Confidence is further undermined as this trend is extended by the loss of the Aberdeen to Gatwick service run by Flybe. Whilst this and the loss of Aberdeen to Heathrow services by BMI may be in part offset by new services to London City Airport, recent history does little to inspire confidence in investors when they are deciding on whether to invest millions of pounds in new facilities in the North East of Scotland. Inward investors need the certainty that their personnel will be able to travel easily, frequently and effectively to where they are needed.

## Distance and peripherality

There are a number of ways in which the Government can intervene to ensure the country has the connectivity and access it needs to operate effectively so that all parts can contribute to economic development and achieve social cohesion. Improving surface access will help considerably, but as we also discussed this doesn't apply equally to all locations because of the geography of the country. We believe that the peripheral nature of parts of the country and the significant and economically disproportionate contribution that some parts of the country make to the UK economy should be recognised.

However, the Civil Aviation Authority maintains that it does not have the legal powers to take these social and economic factors into account in providing their advice to Government. The prize, as described above, not only the North East of Scotland but also for the wider UK economy and the 10's of thousands of the knock on jobs in related employment, is too great to dismiss. Government intervention, affecting the growth of South East airports, is constraining the market and this requires counterbalancing intervention to mitigate the worst impacts on economically important but peripheral regions of the UK. That requires either agreement for additional runway capacity at the national hub airport or securing vital air service connections through the designation of core air services under Public service Obligation (PSO) protection to London Heathrow. Such a policy is deployed widely in the rest of Europe and should be adopted to protect our vital regional links in the UK.

### **Current CAA remit**

The CAA currently takes its remit, rightly, from instructions it receives from Parliament: its duty is to look after the interests of all passengers. The CAA believes that a reasonable proxy for all passengers is the maximum fare box i.e. the maximum number of passengers. It is the CAA's position taking the macro economic view, that as the market will meet demand from passengers, it follows therefore the best economic advantage will be gained from the commercial decisions of the aviation industry.

It is our view that in an unconstrained market this position may well be correct. However, through Government intervention, the market is constrained and this constraint requires to be managed to ensure that the whole country derives maximum economic benefit from the aviation industry.

The position of taking the maximum fare box as a reasonable proxy for all passengers when operating in a constrained environment is in our view an oversimplification. The CAA position takes into account the maximum number of passengers able to fly but doesn't take into account those passengers unable to fly due to the constrained market. In particular it favours passengers flying in larger aircraft from the constrained airports but dismisses those from the regional airports less able to access constrained hubs by alternative surface access or guaranteed air access via PSO.

The CAA position also assumes that the needs of all passengers are fully served by being able to fly and are of equal worth when flying. In our view this is also overly simplistic. When no suitable surface access is available and passengers can't access the constrained hubs by flying, then business within the regions is constrained. An Aberdeen originating business passenger en-route to Houston to sell specialist oil services is of significantly greater economic value to the UK compared with a UK tourist travelling to Las Vegas. Aberdeen Airport has a very high business passenger percentage and a high interlining factor.

These factors, together with the high value business being carried out, could very significantly damage the economy of the North East of Scotland. This would in turn have a consequent knock on effect for jobs in other parts of the country. It does not seem reasonable for this

interest not to be taken into account by the CAA in the application of their role and making policy advice to Government.

### **What we want to see**

In responding to this consultation we have tried to put our concerns into an overall economic context for the UK as a whole. Clearly we have the interests of the North East of Scotland foremost in our consideration but have tried to demonstrate the economic impact should the connectivity that our region currently enjoys be put at risk by a failure to consider these issues in UK aviation policy. The consequences will not be limited to our region as the follow on impact on jobs across the UK, many in high unemployment areas, would be significant.

To ensure that this threat to jobs does not happen we are keen to implement our regional Plan to anchor the energy industry into the UK. This requires that UK aviation policy provides existing companies and prospective inward-investing companies with reassurance that the connectivity vital to their ongoing or new business is maintained and secured. The volume of travellers and number of destinations requires a hub airport that meets these connectivity needs. Data on passenger choices clearly demonstrates that Heathrow provides the connectivity that business requires.

Therefore, we would urge that UK aviation policy recognises that the industry is currently working in a constrained market place - a constraint made by the Government - and that complementary mitigation measures are required to counter the effects of that policy. Whilst the Davies Commission will consider some of these issues, it will not report fully until 2015 and any remedial actions will take many years to implement. We need to use the current upsurge in North Sea activity as the catalyst to attract and keep companies here to generate the critical mass necessary for the long term future. We therefore need UK aviation policy to recognise the current constraints and ensure that over the next 20 years these Plans are not put at undue risk by fears over connectivity.

Given the history of the loss of UK regional links to London Heathrow and the increasing pressure on runway slots there, we would like to see our services to the UK primary hub airport guaranteed. That can be achieved either by the development of or permission to use additional runway capacity at or adjacent to London Heathrow and / or the guarantee of the current Aberdeen – Heathrow air services through their designation under PSO protection. A service to Stansted, London City, Gatwick or Luton is not a substitute to provide the vital direct connectivity to the Heathrow hub and the economic activity it secures for our region and the UK.

Following the recent consultation event in Glasgow it is clear that Air Passenger Duty, being a Treasury issue, is not a question for this consultation. Whilst we believe that Air Passenger Duty does have a significant impact on the air transport market thus on Aviation Policy, given the advice received at the consultation, we will not make further reference to APD in this response.

### **Climate Change Impacts and Noise and Other Local Environmental Impacts**

Nestrans does not have the technical expertise to be able to provide detailed opinion on these issues. Where we would wish to make comment is in the area of balance between the environmental, economic and sustainability issues.

As we have highlighted in the Economy section above, flying is an essential element of the country being able to function. A very large number of jobs depend on not only the important international travel that our national and regional airports provide but also on the connectivity within the UK. The Government is making progress on delivering improved surface connectivity within the UK by improving rail travel including its proposals for High Speed Rail. However it has to be noted that where that surface connectivity is over a time threshold, of around 3½ hours,

then for most journeys flying is the only logical choice. Not all domestic and short haul flights are bad.

To extend this argument on domestic flights, in the North of Scotland and amongst the island communities, flying becomes more than a business need. It becomes a lifeline necessity.

Flying does, of course, have environmental impacts. These impacts have to be taken fully into account in a proportionate way to the extent of the impact. There has been recent discussion about the benefits of noise improvement at the cost of greenhouse gas production or vice versa. These arguments need to be extended to include the balance of the environmental impacts and the economic benefits of flying that air services generate.

Nestrans believes there is a strong role for Government to take. There has been significant progress in engine development over the years and Government (or world governments) should be creating the conditions for even further technological improvements. For example priority access to airports for greener and quieter aircraft, incentives which limits the number of older aircraft permitted to use specific airports, particularly hub airports and a timescale for further phasing out of older aircraft through fiscal or other incentives and encouraging application of additional thresholds for noise and pollution.

Nestrans also understands that there is a scope for examining the angle that aircraft can take on approach to landing which could increase the aircraft height at any point on the trajectory and thereby help in reducing noise impacts.

It is our belief that any policy must find the right balance, one which recognises the needs and benefits of flying but mitigates as far as practicable the global and local environmental impacts.

In Aberdeen there is, along with the fixed wing aircraft, an extremely busy helicopter airport. There is concern over the noise of this type of aircraft but again a reasonable balance has to be struck between local environmental conditions and the absolute need for those flights. These issues are being pursued in Aberdeen through dialogue between the local community, the airport consultative committee and the airport.

### **Working together**

There appears to be a good record of consultation and discussion between Aberdeen Airport and the Aberdeen Airport Consultative Committee: Nestrans would commend proposals to build upon this situation.

Nestrans also believes that the current Airport Masterplanning process is of great value. In our experience this process is not only good for the airport in making it set out clearly its vision for the future but also in the engagement with its stakeholders and communities as these proposals are developed. The way that this process has been developed and implemented for Aberdeen Airport has been extremely useful in information exchange and understanding. Nestrans endorses proposals to assist in this process.

### **Planning**

Surface access strategies are considered essential by Nestrans. These permit strong dialogue between airports, local authorities and transport providers. It is only by working together to an agreed strategy that surface access to airports can be improved for the benefit of the passenger.

It is also essential that zoning and safeguarding around airports do not permit residential development in areas that subsequently allow new residents in properties impacted by airport operation to object to such operation and associated air transport services.