

Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy

During 2012/13 NESTRANS has continued to seek and implement initiatives to assist in improving the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of the services delivered. A brief overview of these initiatives has been included.

Shared Services

Shared accommodation, administration and supplies

In 2012/13 NESTRANS has continued to share accommodation with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) and Aberdeen City & Shire Economic Futures (ACSEF). The shared running cost of the office is resulting in a reduction in overall aggregate cost for all three bodies. This represents a more efficient and financially sustainable arrangement for all.

Shared Public Relations Service

Nestrans and ACSEF both had separate contracts for PR and communications services with The Big Partnership. Given the level of collaboration between the 2 regional organisations, the 2 contracts were combined in 2012 to ensure a fully joined-up approach and allow each organisation to benefit from cost-savings.

Legal, Administrative, Financial, ICT and HR Services

The activities of NESTRANS continue to be supported by partner Councils through the provision of specialist assistance and advice. These activities are governed by separate Service Level Agreements. The use of existing support staff is considered to be an efficient and economic use of an existing pool of specialist staff, the cost of which would be significantly higher if an external or dedicated in-house cadre of similarly qualified and experienced staff were to be used.

Legal & Administrative Services

Legal Services etc are provided by Aberdeen City Council. Services include legal advice, contractual advice and provision of clerking for the Board and meetings. The cost of legal and contractual advice in 2012/13 was just over £2,300, whereas the administrative costs of clerking for the Board was just over £20,300.

Treasurer

Accountancy etc support is provided by Aberdeenshire Council. Services provided include invoice and payment processing, financial ledger, regular financial monitoring reporting to the Board, internal audit, liaising with external audit, budget preparation and control, final accounts preparation and pension fund management, general accountancy advice and treasury management. In 2012/13 this has been extended to include financial services relating to the Strategic Transport Fund that has been set up for developer contributions to strategic transport measures. The quality of support is considered to be excellent and the cost of this service in 2012/13 remained at £21,100.

ICT Services

Aberdeen City Council provides and maintains quality Information and Communication Technology Services for Nestrans. The cost of this service in 2012/13 remained at £5,000

HR Services

HR services are provided by Aberdeenshire Council. This includes drafting and review of HR policies and procedures, monitoring any changes in legislation, support in dealing with staff matters, offering advice on related matters and reporting to the Nestrans Board. In 2012/13 this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of an office manager/PA to the Director. The cost of this service in 2012/13 remained at £15,900.

Getabout Partnership

Nestrans is a key member of the Getabout Partnership that also consists of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen University, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen College and the Energy Savings Trust. The joint working of the partnership continues to provide increased efficiency and effectiveness when promoting sustainable travel throughout the region via a single brand. The partnership has achieved economies through individual member organisations supporting getabout events organised by others eg providing staffing, transport and promotional merchandise.

ACTtravelwise Membership

Nestrans negotiated a group membership for all members of the partnership to ACTtravelwise from May 2010 for a period of 3 years. This resulted in a saving of £4,590 amongst the partnership members over the period through discounts for the number of new members and for taking 3 years of membership.

Getabout Cycle Roadshow

The Getabout cycle roadshow consists of a range of bicycles, including novelty and disability accessible cycles. The bikes were purchased by Nestrans and rates have been agreed with locally based Adventure Aberdeen to hold and maintain them and supplement them with other bikes they own. Adventure Aberdeen also transports the bikes to events organised by the getabout partners and provides tutors to assist with each event. The locally sourced and managed equipment dramatically reduces delivery mileage and carbon emissions in getting to events and is achieving considerable savings, whilst allowing priority booking by all getabout members. This is of particular benefit during themed weeks such as Cycle to Work and European Mobility Week when privately hired bike events are usually fully booked. The full cycle roadshow and getabout events kit, comprising of a getabout branded marquee, feather flags, banners and bunting previously purchased by Nestrans has been further supplemented in 2012/13 and is available for hire to private companies when not required by the partners, with any profit being used for the purchase of additional stock.

Liftshare

Nestrans provides a central data base for car sharing throughout the region under contract with Liftshare Ltd. The website address is getabout.liftshare.com to help identify it with the overall getabout brand for sustainable and active travel in the North East. The website operates with a number of sub-groups so that individual organisations can have their own section under the wider umbrella or be involved in the larger scheme. By contracting the licence and hosting costs on a regional basis there are

significant savings compared to each of the partners contracting individually. In addition there are benefits to the customers of being able to access a larger data base for potential matching of trips. A three year licence for the branded car share site and use of the call centre to register users onto a regional site was entered into in March 2009 and has continued to obtain a saving on the otherwise annual fee.

ASAM Regional Transport Model

Developed initially by Transport Scotland, the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) is now managed and maintained by Nestrans. A contract for ASAM support has been renegotiated with MVA Consultants Ltd in 2012/13 to allow Nestrans to obtain the same terms as Transport Scotland has been offered by MVA when they retendered the LATIS Commission on a consultancy framework basis. The ASAM multi modal land use transport model provides the facility for detailed regional transport analysis in the north east. In 2012/13 the model has been used for strategic projects such as the Bridge of Dee Stag Part 1 Appraisal, A90/A96 Haudagain and Third Don crossing model updates and the Locking in the Benefits Study on Anderson Drive. The model has also been used by local authorities for strategic input to local micro simulation models and by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Managing Agent to include the allocations within the now approved Local Development Plans for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Developers have also been granted access to model information when undertaking Transport Assessments, thus ensuring that the local planning authorities requirements are met using the best available means. Access to the model was also granted to the consultants appointed by the Scottish Government to update noise maps.

Attracted Funding

Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme

Nestrans has developed a Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme, which can provide up to 50% match funding to organisations investing in measures to promote more sustainable travel by their employees or customers. There is an upper limit on any award of £10,000 and in 2012/13 a grant of £934 was awarded to Maud Village Trust to install cycle parking and shelter for use by those working at or visiting the Community Resource Centre.

Realtimebus.com

The website was launched in September 2010 as a joint initiative between Nestrans and First in Aberdeen. The website allows customers to access real time information for First bus services based on their preferred stop, bus route and time of day via PCs and mobile devices. The branding complements that already in place for the getabout partnership. Nestrans funded the initial capital outlay and 10 year registration of the domain name and First in Aberdeen have committed to meeting the ongoing annual hosting and maintenance costs and are advertising the website both within and on the outside of many buses.

Dyce Airlink Shuttlebus Service

Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council reduced the service in 2011 from a two bus operation to a single bus as this reduced costs whilst maintaining a reasonable service in line with train arrival and departure times that is meeting customer

demand. The service was again tendered in 2012 resulting in a significant reduction to support costs for Nestrans. Stagecoach Bluebird was appointed and the service was rebranded as Jet Connect to tie in with the existing Jet service from the City Centre to the Airport. The support costs were subsequently met by funding Transport Scotland provided from developer contributions for sustainable transport measures (in lieu of physical mitigation) in the Dyce Drive area of Aberdeen. Stagecoach has indicated a willingness to continue the operation on a commercial basis without subsidy in 2013/14 given the current levels of patronage and Nestrans' commitment to establish a turning circle on the west side of the station.

Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements

Nestrans funding towards cycle improvements has again been used by the Local Authorities as a basis to attract further match funding. In 2012/13 this resulted in:

Project	Nestrans Funding	Funding from other Organisations		Total Cost
Resurfacing of Deeside Way	£64,100	Sustrans	£60,000	£124,100
Greenbrae Cycle Demonstration Project path	£138,400	Sustrans	£35,962	£174,362
Duthie Park path resurfacing	£102,500	Heritage Lottery Fund	£50,000	£167,500
		Aberdeen City Council	£15,000	
Coastal Path Upgrade	£8,707	Aberdeen Greenspace Trust	£5,138	£13,845
Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town	£175,000	Sustrans	£120,000	£295,000
Total	£488,707		£286,100	£774,807

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Bus Interchange

In accordance with the Nestrans Bus Action Plan a preferred option was developed, in partnership with NHS Grampian, the two Councils and bus operators, for improvements to increase the capacity of the bus interchange at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and improve the flow of buses through the site. Previously the number of buses that could travel through the site was restricted due to the size and layout of the turning circle outside the main entrance. A section of the main road through the site (Foresterhill Road) was also made bus only to further aid the flow of buses, whilst also maintaining access for emergency vehicles. Nestrans agreed to fund 50% of the costs with the other 50% being met by NHS Grampian.

Health and Transport Action Plan

Nestrans continued to fund a third of the costs of a support manager for the Health and Transport Programme with NHS Grampian and the Scottish Government also each funding a third.

Nestrans has also contributed along with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils, NHS Grampian and The Scottish Ambulance Service to deliver the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC). This is initially being run as a pilot and opened in Elgin on 31 January 2013. The THInC helpline will provide a dedicated telephone service offering guidance on accessing suitable transport options for the public to get to and from their appointments, where they may have no personal means of transport.

EU Funding

Nestrans has again been involved with a European project being led by one of our constituent local authorities. In 2012/13 this amounted to a £25,000 contribution to Aberdeenshire for the green freight corridors, GreCor project, which attracted EU match funding.

Strategic Transport Fund

Supplementary guidance on 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund' was adopted in December 2011. This guidance is non-statutory supplementary guidance in support of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 and it is intended that it will be reviewed and adopted as statutory guidance as part of the new Strategic Development Plan. The guidance allow contributions to be sought from housing and non-residential development for the delivery of the strategic transport projects indicated through the Cumulative Transport Appraisal that was previously commissioned by Nestrans. Payment of contributions into the fund comes direct to Nestrans who will manage the fund and the prioritisation and delivery of the strategic transport interventions. By the end of 2012/13 contributions of £1,589,000 have been agreed through section 75 agreements and £111,000 has already been paid into the fund.

Procurement Activity

Framework Agreement

Nestrans, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils renewed their Framework Agreement in 2010 for Consultancy Services for Transportation and Environmental Related Professional Services. This built on the previous framework commissioned in March 2006 that allowed all 3 organisations to engage appropriate consultants on a quality/price basis for services that could not be undertaken in-house or by neighbouring authorities, either due to a skill shortage, the specialist nature of the work, or due to other workload commitments.

The agreement is split into the following packages with up to 2 consultants appointed for each package:

- **Policy Support and Development**
- **Strategic Planning**
- **Development and Delivery**
- **Traffic Signals and IT Solutions**
- **Public Transport Support and Development**
- **Technical Advice on Waste Management**

The new agreement was commissioned in accordance with European Procurement procedures and commenced on 1 April 2010 for a period of 3 years with a possible extension of up to 2 years thereafter. A decision has been taken to at least extend the agreement for a single year to April 2014 at present.

Although there is no guarantee of work being awarded, any use of the framework significantly reduces the cost of procurement of services to Nestrans, the Councils and the consultants. Although there is scope within the Framework Agreement to increase rates on an annual basis in accordance with the general rise of inflation, all consultants appointed under the framework were requested and again agreed to freeze the rates in 2012/13 at previous year levels in view of the current difficult economic climate.