

## **Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy**

During 2014/15 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**

#### **Collaborative Working**

Although the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (SDPA) are no longer co-located with Nestrans they retain a desk within the Nestrans office to allow close and collaborative working to easily and efficiently take place. Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF) returned to work from the Nestrans office in February 2015.

#### **Shared Public Relations Service**

To ensure best value Nestrans and ACSEF tendered a combined contract for PR and communications services in 2013 to allow both organisations to benefit from cost savings. This has provided full time access to a dedicated marketing and communications officer and the cost to Nestrans in 2014/15 was just over £14,000, which is a considerable saving in comparison with previous years when Nestrans had their own PR contract.

#### **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. Details of each support service are as follows:

##### **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 2014/15 was £3,900, whereas the administrative costs of clerking for the Board was £20,000.

##### **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, assistance with budget preparation and control, final accounts preparation and pension fund management, general accountancy advice and treasury management. Since 2012/13 this has been extended to include financial services relating to the Strategic Transport Fund that was 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 2014/15 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 2014/15 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 2014/15 this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of the Cycling Development Officer post and job evaluation surveys with several of the Nestrans staff. The cost of this service in 2014/15 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, the James Hutton Institute and Home Energy Scotland. 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 again negotiated a group membership for all members of the getabout partnership to ACTtravelwise for 2014/15 that resulted in a saving in comparison with the cost that individual memberships would otherwise have been.

### **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 2014/15 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.

### **Bike Doctor Sessions**

Transport Scotland funded Edinburgh Bike Station to provide 4 sessions of Bike Doctor and Cycle promotion Days in Aberdeen and Nestrans contributed match funding to double the number of sessions to eight. The promotions took place between May and July with week 1 held at Robert Gordon's University and all others in Aberdeen City Centre.

### **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](http://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.

### **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 was previously negotiated with MVA Consultants Ltd (now Systra) to allow Nestrans to obtain the same terms as Transport Scotland has been offered 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 2014/15 the model has been used for strategic projects such as the Bridge of Dee Stag Part 2 and Access to Laurencekirk studies. The model has also been used by local authorities for future year demand predictions and strategic input to local micro simulation models for Aberdeen city centre and Westhill and by the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Managing Agent. Forecast information has also been provided to Aberdeen City Council for Air Quality Management Areas and to Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. Additional information was provided to the Strategic Development Planning Authority to clarify the cumulative transport appraisal modelling work to develop revised supplementary guidance for 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund'. 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.

### **Attracted Funding**

#### **Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme**

Nestrans provides 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. In 2014/15 the following grants, each amounting to a 50% contribution, were awarded:

- £2,250 to Aberdeen City Council for cycle lockers at Kittybrewster
- £4,548 to Robert Gordon's University for additional cycle storage and shelter at Riverside East

### **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**

Since 2013/14 Stagecoach has rebranded the service as Jetconnect and operated it on a commercial basis. They continued to again provide the service without subsidy throughout 2014/15 given the current levels of patronage and Nestrans' commencing to construct a turning circle on the west side of the station.

### **Grasshopper Advertising**

The Grasshopper multi-operator daily and weekly bus tickets were launched in May 2014. Nestrans has contributed along with the local authorities and bus operators towards the advertising in support of this service.

### **Barriers to Bus Use Study**

This study is being led by Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and both Nestrans and First Group have contributed to the study costs and participated in the steering group.

### **Forfar – Edzell Bus Service**

Angus Council awarded a contract to Stagecoach Strathtay for a new direct bus service that launched in January 2015 between the Edzell/Stracathro Hospital/Brechin area and Dundee. This service provides direct access to Dundee and improves connectivity to Stracathro and Dundee Hospitals. The service was extended into Aberdeenshire to meet requests for better service provision in the Edzell Woods area. Nestrans has contributed to this cross Council boundaries service along with Tactran, with the Nestrans funding being used for publicity and infrastructure provision in the Edzell Woods area.

### **Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements**

Nestrans has agreed to fund a cycling development officer for a period of two years, with Sustrans providing a capital contribution of up to £100,000 per annum as match funding of this post and infrastructure measures funded by Nestrans that are not already being used by the Councils to match fund their bids to Sustrans. As a result Nestrans received grant funding from Sustrans of £96,497 in 2014/15 for agreed cycle/pedestrian improvement works.

A significant amount of Nestrans funding towards cycle and core path improvements has also been used by the Local Authorities as a basis to attract further match funding. In 2014/15 this resulted in:

Project	Nestrans Funding	Funding from other Organisations		Total Cost
Ellon Cycle Infrastructure to new Academy	£11,570	Sustrans	£11,570	£23,140
Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town, Meethill Rd phase 2	£3,357	Sustrans	£3,357	£6,714
Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town, A950 link	£105,000	Sustrans	£109,200	£218,400
		Aberdeenshire Council	£4,200	
Muchalls to Stonehaven Design	£14,488	Sustrans	£14,488	£28,976
Meldrum Meg Way	£2,768	Sustrans	£2,797	£5,565
Inverallochie to Cairnbulg	£50,000	Aberdeenshire Council	£71,782	£121,782
Ellon Road cycle path	£125,000	Sustrans	£192,500	£317,500
Deeside Way surfacing	£24,549	Sustrans	£24,549	£49,098
F&B Way – Surfacing Dyce Station to Parkhill	£91,160	Sustrans	£102,314	£225,474
		Aberdeenshire Council	£32,000	
Riverside Drive Cycle path	£167,665	Sustrans	£120,000	£287,665
Stoneywood Cycle path	£39,332	Sustrans	£180,000	£394,332
		Developer	£175,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£634,889</b>		<b>£1,043,757</b>	<b>£1,678,646</b>

### Health and Transport Action Plan

Nestrans continued to fund 50% of the costs of a support manager for the Health and Transport Programme in partnership with NHS Grampian in 2014/15.

Nestrans has also continued to contribute along with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils, NHS Grampian and The Scottish Ambulance Service to deliver the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC). The public transport unity within Aberdeenshire Council now provides this dedicated telephone service to provide information on transport options for access to all NHS Grampian sites.

Nestrans also funded an update to the leaflet with information on how to travel to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary by bus, with NHS Grampian meeting the costs of printing 10,000 copies of the leaflet and their subsequent distribution.

### **Access to Laurencekirk Study**

Nestrans commissioned CH2MHill in December 2013 to develop a robust evidence case for a preferred solution to improve access to/from the A90 Trunk road in the vicinity of Laurencekirk. The study is continuing to be progressed in partnership with Transport Scotland, Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils and Tactran. A contribution of £100,000 towards the overall cost was previously supplied by Transport Scotland in 2013/14 and they also commissioned and funded all audit costs for the Paramics modelling and draft STAG report in 2014/15.

### **EU Funding**

Nestrans has again been involved with a European project being led by one of our constituent local authorities. In 2014/15 this amounted to a £25,000 contribution to Aberdeenshire Council for the green freight corridors, GreCor project, which attracted EU match funding to look at freight access to hub ports.

### **Aviation Evidence Note**

The update to the previous regional air access evidence work that was undertaken in 2012 was completed in early 2014. Nestrans commissioned the update on behalf of ourselves and Hitrans, who have met 50% of the cost.

### **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 allows 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. It is intended that this mechanism be reviewed and adopted as statutory guidance as part of the new Strategic Development Plan 2014 as soon as possible. Nestrans continues to assist in the review and development of revised guidance and commissioned further clarification of the previous cumulative transport appraisal modelling, with SDPA meeting the full cost of this work.

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 2014/15 contributions of £20,599,047 have been agreed and of which £1,473,162 is currently held by Nestrans.

### **Procurement Activity**

#### **Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement**

Nestrans continues to be an associate member of Scotland Excel and as such are able to acquire consultancy services under the above framework agreement. Nestrans can use the framework to appoint consultants for services that can 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.

Although there is no guarantee of work being awarded, any use of the framework significantly reduces the cost of procurement of services to Nestrans and the consultants. To award a work package there is the option of directly selecting a consultant within the relevant lot(s) or conducting a mini-competition amongst relevant consultants. Work can be awarded on a priced contract (lump sum), target contract or time based contract basis. In 2014/15 Nestrans used the framework to make direct awards for the following projects:

Wellington Road multi-modal STAG pre-appraisal  
Wellington Road footprint identification  
Dyce Station Extension Investigation  
Freight Action Plan assistance

Nestrans also held a mini-competition through the framework to award the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study.