

Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy

During 2016/17 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) is no longer co-located with Nestrans there is a hot desk within the Nestrans office to allow close and collaborative working with the SDPA and Council staff, as appropriate, to easily and efficiently take place.

Shared Public Relations Service (to 30 June 2016)

Nestrans and ACSEF tendered a combined contract for PR and communications services in 2013 to allow both organisations to benefit from cost savings. This contract expired at the end of June 2016 and the Nestrans Board approved entering into a Service Level Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council for communications and marketing support on behalf Nestrans and Getabout given the high level of service they had provided through the joint contract with ACSEF and in line with other support roles that the Councils provide to the Partnership.

Legal, Administrative, Financial, ICT, HR and Public Relations 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 2016/17 was £4,400, whereas the administrative costs of clerking for the Board remained at £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 2016/17 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 2016/17 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 2016/17 this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of the Cycling Development Officer and Transport Officer posts and a further non-Councillor Member for the Nestrans Board. The cost of this service in 2015/16 remained at £15,900.

Public Relations Services

Since July 2016 public relations, marketing and event management services have been provided under a Service Level Agreement by Aberdeenshire Council. This includes promoting Nestrans and Getabout, liaising with the media, arranging press releases, supporting events – including advising on and seeking of advertising and relevant promotional merchandise, attending Board meetings and preparing communications updates for Members. The cost of this service in 2016/17 was approximately £16,200.

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, North East College, the James Hutton Institute 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 and attraction of Smarter Choices Smarter Places match funding for measures being funded by partners. The partners participated in the refreshing of the getabout website in 2016/17.

ACTtravelwise Membership

Nestrans again negotiated a group membership for all members of the getabout partnership to ACTtravelwise for 2016/17 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. A proportion of the bikes originally purchased by Nestrans for the roadshow were replenished in 2016/17 and locally based Adventure Aberdeen continue to hold and maintain them at agreed rates and supplement the roadshow 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 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 was upgraded in 2016/17 to better suit mobile devices and coordinate with the refresh of the getabout website. It 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 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 2016/17 the model has been used for further consideration of road improvements as part of the Fraserburgh/Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport study. It 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 for the Berryden corridor dualling work. 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.

East Coast Main Line Authorities

Nestrans are partners in the East Coast Main Line consortium. All partners contribute to the consortium, which is a grouping of local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships that aim to work in partnership to promote the case for investment in the line to enable economic growth.

Bus Satisfaction Survey

Nestrans contributed along with other Regional Transport Partnerships to fund a national bus satisfaction survey that was undertaken by Transport Focus.

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 2016/17 the following grant awards (all for 50% of the final cost) were claimed:

- £4,000 to Sport Aberdeen for cycle parking and lockers at the Beach Leisure Centre
- £1,880 to Sport Aberdeen for sheltered cycle and scooter parking at Tullos Swimming Pool/Primary School
- £1,595 to Sport Aberdeen for cycle parking at Bucksburn Swimming Pool
- £3,084 to Huntly Development Trust for a cycle shelter and parking at the Brander Building in Huntly

ASAM Regional Transport Model Upgrade

An upgrade of the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) has been commissioned by Nestrans to ensure it provides a suitably robust basis for transport and land use appraisal. A steering group consisting of officers from Nestrans, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils and Transport Scotland was set up to manage the work, which was competitively tendered through the Scotland Excel framework to ensure best value. Although Nestrans had allocated budget for the ASAM upgrade it was later agreed that it would be funded through the City Region Deal.

Civitas Portis

The north east is included in a collaboration with four other European port cities that were awarded European funding under the Civitas banner for a project titled PORTIS to look at opportunities to enhance transport provision in and around port areas and to provide innovative and sustainable solutions to transport issues. Locally, the project is led by Aberdeen City Council, but also involves Nestrans, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen Harbour Board and Aberdeenshire Council, with the University of Aberdeen involved in the assessment of the project. The project has been awarded almost €20million Euros grant funding over the four year period from September 2016 – August 2020, giving around €1million Euros per annum for each port. Nestrans has already received half of the available award for our involvement over the four year period, which amounts to just over £133,000.

Realtimebus.com

Nestrans funded the initial capital outlay in 2010 for a website giving real time information for First bus services in Aberdeen City based on their preferred stop, bus route and time of day via PCs and mobile devices, with First meeting the annual hosting and maintenance costs. Nestrans funded the 10 year registration of the domain name realtimebus.com and now that the region wide real time information system that was developed by Aberdeenshire Council and Stagecoach in 2016 has gone live it has been linked so that it can also be accessed from the realtimebus.com website. The website is incorporated under the regional getabout branding.

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 previously supported by Nestrans without subsidy throughout 2016/17 as a result of patronage levels and construction of a bus turning circle to the west of the rail station to provide ease of access and allow larger vehicles to be used.

Grasshopper Advertising and Smart Ticketing for Small Bus Operators

The Grasshopper multi-operator daily and weekly bus tickets became available as a smartcard from August 2017. This is Scotland's first smart multi-operator ticket and is available over 6 zones across the north east and permits travel on services from nine operators. Nestrans contributed £5,000 in 2016/17 to an overall advertising campaign amounting to £48,000 in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, First Aberdeen and Stagecoach bus operators, Paths for All and Smarter Choices Smarter Places funding.

Nestrans provided budget to Aberdeenshire Council's public transport unit to arrange the replacement of ticketing machines and software for small operators to enable them to introduce smart ticketing. This attracted additional grant funding of £60,000 from Transport Scotland.

Integrated Traffic Systems

Nestrans provided funding of just over £200,000 towards a new common database and deployment of an Internet Protocol closed-circuit television (IPCCTV) equipment at traffic signals, along strategic transport corridors and this was used by Aberdeen City Council to release a further £80,000 through the Smart Cities ERDF and increase the scope of the project. The common database interfaces with current traffic systems in a more streamlined manner and will allow for easier integration with transport systems to the internet, better links and strategies for traffic signals, Variable Message Signs, journey time monitoring, bus strategies and comparison of journey times against private cars.

A96 Craibstone Park & Ride

Nestrans funding of over £180,000 towards a parking control system, information totem and bus lane enforcement camera was used by Aberdeen City Council to release £94,000 through their Smarter Choices Smarter Places available funding in 2016/17.

Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements

Nestrans continued to fund a cycling development officer post in 2016/17, with Sustrans providing a capital contribution of up to £125,000 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 approximately £78,129 in 2016/17 for agreed cycle/pedestrian improvement works, with the remaining grant still available to draw down until end May 2017 and several projects progressing to enable this funding opportunity to be maximised.

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 2016/17 this resulted in:

Project	Nestrans Funding	Funding from other Organisations		Total Cost
Meethill Road Ph2, Peterhead	£51,500	Aberdeenshire Council	£35,000	£86,500
A96 Inverurie to Kintore	£65,860	Sustrans	£139,830	£205,690
Feasibility and design of future cycle schemes in 5 Integrated Travel Towns	£60,500	Sustrans	£60,500	£121,000
Dyce Drive cycle route and Dyce Dr/ Dyce Av signal upgrade to include ped stage	£23,000	Sustrans	£160,250	£333,250
		CWSS	£50,000	
		Bus lane enforcement surplus	£100,000	
Parkway Extension (Balgownie – Fairview)	£45,000	Sustrans	£45,000	£90,000
River Don Southside path by Grandhome	£30,250	Sustrans	£60,500	£121,000
		Aberdeen City Council	£30,250	
Various cycle path feasibility and design in Aberdeen	£23,000	Sustrans	£23,000	£46,000
Wellheads Cycle Link design	£4,600	ACC Smarter Choices Smart Places grant	£8,000	£12,600
Total	£303,710		£712,330	£1,016,040

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 2016/17.

Nestrans has also continued to contribute along with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils and NHS Grampian to deliver the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC). The public transport unit within Aberdeenshire Council operates this dedicated telephone service to provide information on transport options for access to all NHS Grampian sites. Nestrans also contributed a third of the cost to continue provision of a community bus service for access to health and social care

appointments within Aberdeen between January – March 2017 in partnership with Aberdeen City Council Joint Social Care/Health Transport.

Strategic Transport Fund

Supplementary guidance on 'Delivering Identified Projects through a Strategic Transport Fund' was reviewed in connection with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014) and statutory Supplementary Guidance was adopted and came into force on 28 August 2015. This guidance 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.

Although the guidance was quashed in April 2016, an appeal against the decision has been progressed by the Strategic Development Planning Authority and will be heard by the Supreme Court in June 2017. In the meantime Nestrans continues to hold and administer the Strategic Transport Fund and prior to the challenge contributions of over £23.5 million had been agreed, of which over £1.8 million is already held.

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 cannot 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 2016/17 Nestrans held a mini-competition through the framework to award the following projects:

Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) Upgrade

B9119 Queens Road/Skene Road Study

Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study – rail elements

Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study – road elements

The framework was also used to make a direct award for audit services for the ASAM upgrade.