

# nestrans

## **Fairer Scotland Duty – Regional Transport Strategy 2040**

### **Introduction**

The Fairer Scotland Duty places a legal responsibility on public bodies in Scotland to actively consider (pay due regard) to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. Whilst Regional Transport Partnerships are not included in the list of public bodies that must carry out a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment, as reducing inequalities is one of our key priorities in this Regional Transport Strategy 2040 and Transport is a key element to accessing work, education, healthcare and leisure, it was deemed that it was an important aspect to consider, alongside the other statutory assessments such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment.

### **Summary of Aims and Expected Outcomes**

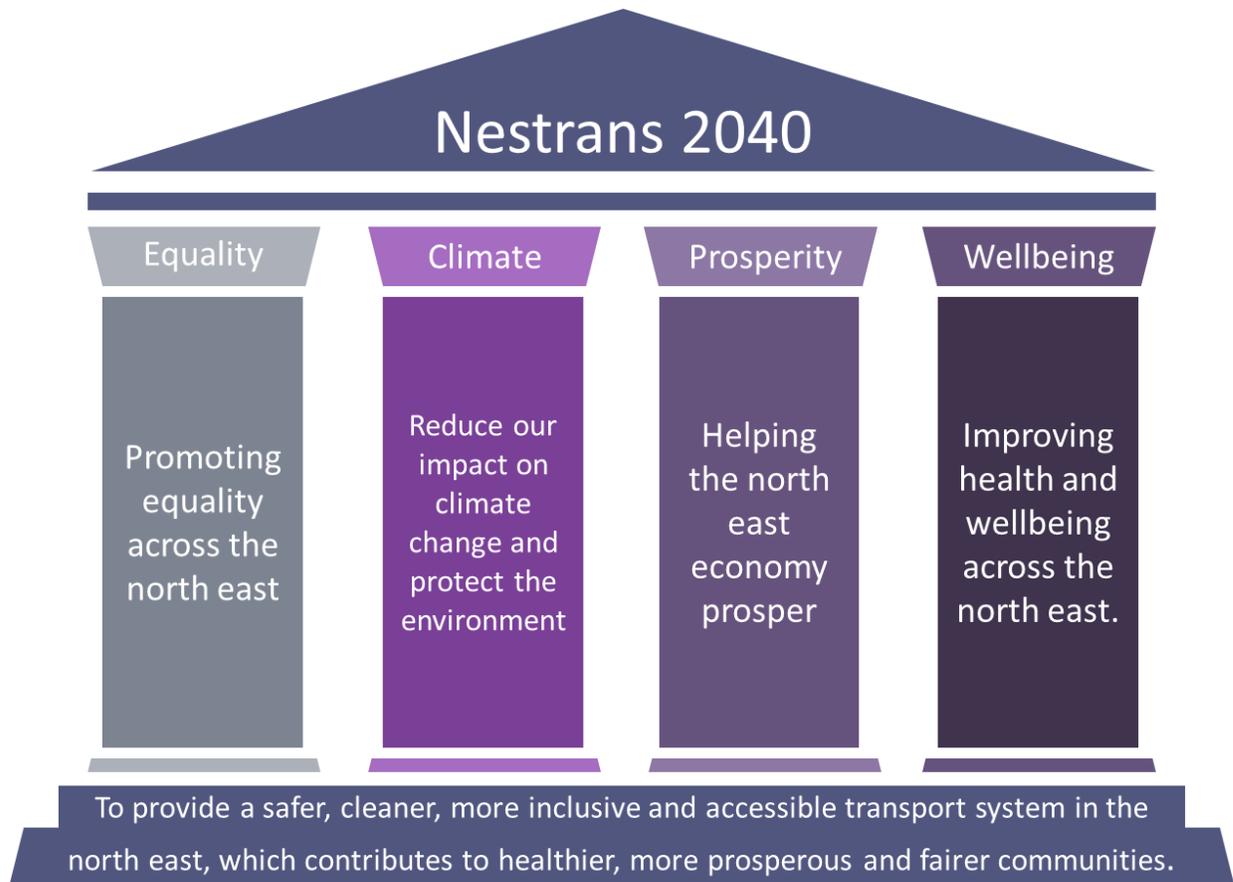
Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy to 2040 is founded on an evidence base in the form of a Strategic Transport Appraisal. Following the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), the appraisal has involved various rounds of consultations and a process which starts with problems and opportunities, considered a long-list of potential interventions and identified a preferred package, the key elements of which form this strategy.

The Strategy also reflects the thrust and direction of the National Transport Strategy (NTS), produced in February 2020. Nestrans RTS 2040 identifies four equal and overlapping pillars that align with and support the pillars of the NTS, by relating them to local priorities:

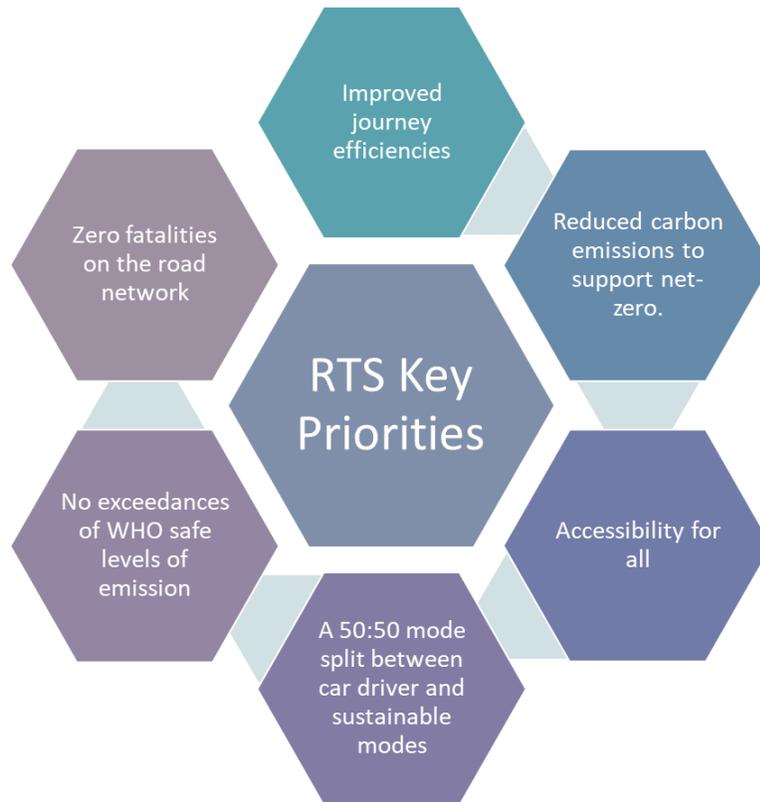
Our Vision is:

***To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and accessible transport system in the north east, which contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities.***

The Four pillars and priorities are highlighted in the images below:



## Our Priorities



The main themes and outcomes of the strategy are discussed below:

### *Active Travel*

Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment through investment in safe and attractive walking and cycling facilities in our towns and cities and on links between them, enhancing the network of continuous and segregated active travel links.

### *Mass transit solutions to deliver mode shift*

Mass transit solutions to deliver mode shift will include proposals to further develop the rail network, including improved journey times to key destinations and consideration of opportunities for additional stations; investigation into the feasibility and proposals for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network; working through the Bus Alliance to improve the region's bus network, in partnership with local authorities and bus operators; and maximising the benefits of park and ride to provide a region-wide option to enable transfer to public transport even for those who may need a car for part of their journey.

### *Demand Management*

Identifying the need to manage the demand for car travel. Giving full and open discussion to the options available, including consideration of the impacts and potential of revenue-raising opportunities such as:

- Car parking controls; and

- Understanding the potential benefits and impacts of introducing workplace parking levies and other fiscal powers.

#### *Air Quality and Carbon Reduction*

Introducing measures to reduce harmful emissions from transport, both locally in terms of pollutants affecting air quality and more widely in terms of greenhouse gases which impact on a global scale and affect the wider climate.

#### *Behaviour Change*

Encouraging behaviour change through education and encouragement towards sustainable travel behaviours, working collaboratively with other local partners through the Getabout partnership and national organisations to ensure an efficient and effective promotion with consistent messaging.

#### *Road Network*

Maintaining and improving the region's road network by focusing on existing networks, identifying where targeted improvements can directly help to achieve the strategy's objectives including safety enhancements and removing pinchpoints or prioritising identified concerns on the network.

#### *Freight*

Facilitating the efficient movement of freight, by working with the Freight Forum to facilitate a channel for discussion and communication, ensuring the needs of business and industry are balanced against environmental and community issues.

#### *Air and Sea Connections*

Facilitating improved external air and sea connections through working with harbour boards and the airport authority to ensure links to and from the north east are optimised and enable efficient surface access to the ports and airport by a range of travel options.

#### *Road Safety*

Prioritising road safety and casualty reduction by working in partnership with Police Scotland, local authorities and others in taking actions which can reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions, with a particular focus on vulnerable users including pedestrians and cyclists.

#### *Transport Accessibility*

Improving accessibility in rural areas through specific measures to enable those living outwith towns and cities to have access to a range of travel options where appropriate.

Improving access to health and social care by working collaboratively with partners including NHS Grampian, local authorities and Health & Social Care Partnerships through the ongoing work of the north east Health & Transport Action Plan.

Addressing issues around the affordability of transport, ensuring as far as is possible that transport poverty is minimised and priority groups have access to reasonably priced travel options.

Improving access to the transport network for all, ensuring that individuals are not compromised due to mobility issues or difficulties in using or accessing transport, and that geographic disadvantages are minimised.

### *Place-making*

Providing a framework for local authorities and development plans to encourage both new developments and existing communities which are planned and designed primarily as places for people, with motorised vehicles as just one part of the overall system.

### *New Technologies*

Provide a framework which can be flexible in responding to new challenges and taking advantage of the future impact of new technologies as they emerge.

## Issues and Opportunities

A significant amount of background work has informed the development of the Regional Transport Strategy 2040 which has highlighted the following key issues and opportunities for transport in the north east.

**A growing and ageing population** - Between 2001 and 2016, the population of Aberdeen City increased from 211,910 to 222,460 (9%), while Aberdeenshire grew by almost double this figure at 16% (226,940 to 261,800). Both growth rates outstripped that of the Scottish national profile of 7%. Population projections indicate that between 2016 and 2041, the population of Aberdeen City will increase by a further 6% and Aberdeenshire by 13%. This compares to a Scottish average of 5%. Whilst a growth in population in the region can be viewed as a positive, in common with national trends, it is expected that the number of people of pensionable age and over will grow by 13% in Aberdeen City and 29% in Aberdeenshire.<sup>1</sup> This will present a significant challenge for the region in terms of health and social care requirements and it is vital that we contribute to people being able to remain in good health and socially active for longer.

The impact that **climate change** will likely have on our region by 2040 will bring rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns and an increase in extreme weather events. We are already seeing some of these impacts today with the last decade being the warmest since records began. Rainfall has been increasing in Scotland over the last thirty years, with more heavy downpours. The global climate is changing and this is expected to accelerate in the coming decades. For transport infrastructure, it is anticipated that this will lead to structures and assets being exposed to higher temperatures, flooding, coastal erosion and subsidence as well as potentially increasingly being exposed to high winds and storms.

**Car availability and usage** – car mode share for travel to work in the region is particularly high. At 63% Aberdeen City has significantly higher car mode share on travel to work journeys than Edinburgh (35%), Glasgow (46%) and Dundee (54%). At 69% Aberdeenshire car mode share for travel to work is higher than in Aberdeen. The Scottish national average is 63%. The number of households with access to two or more cars is also high, particularly in Aberdeenshire (34%).<sup>2</sup>

**Travel distances** – the region has a large geographic area and hence longer than average travel distances – almost half of Aberdeenshire residents travel further than 10km to work. This is an increasing trend - since 2011, total vehicle kilometres travelled annually in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire has increased by 3% and 8% respectively, compared to 5% nationally.

The **mode share** of travel to work by different modes across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire has remained relatively static, with the majority of travel to work journeys undertaken by car drivers, with public transport use remaining relatively low. This is very much

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Records of Scotland, Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2016 based)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, Scottish Household Survey, 2018

influenced by the combination of where people choose to live, the locations of their workplaces and the difficulty of providing a viable and attractive public transport network to meet these complex journey needs. For those journeys that could be undertaken by public transport, a perceived lack of attractive and efficient public transport alternatives, the ready availability of free or cheap parking at destinations and the limited coherent and segregated active travel network all make it challenging to change travel behaviours.

Limited **data on travel patterns** across the north east and the census data quickly going out of date, means that it is difficult to get an accurate picture of how people are travelling across the north east for everyday journeys beyond simply travel to work and education.

**Perceptions of public transport** are often poor with it seen as an unattractive option due to long and unreliable journey times compared to the car and lack of quality interchanges. Confidence in the reliability of bus services and the disproportionate impact on buses when there is any form of network disruption is off-putting for many potential bus users. Mode share for travel to work by bus in Aberdeen in 2016 was lower than other cities in Scotland at 11% compared to Glasgow 16%, Edinburgh 25% and Dundee at 14%<sup>3</sup>.

The **rural nature of much of the region** makes it particularly challenging to serve by public transport and car travel will remain a requirement for many.

**Challenges for the bus industry** which include congestion, declining patronage and rising costs, make it difficult for bus operators to provide attractive and reliable services. Reducing budgets available for local authorities to support services combine to result in a vicious circle of declining level of service and rising fares making services less attractive.

The **relative remoteness of the city region** to key markets in the central belt and further afield make efficient and effective connections for businesses vital.

The **cumulative impact of development** - continuing demands for growth and economic development require further investment in the transport networks which sometimes cannot be justified in advance of development and may often be contrary to attempts to influence mode choice. The cumulative impact of a large number of developments across a wider area can create the requirements for infrastructure improvements physically remote from that development but linked by a common transport corridor. Some infrastructure improvements can be funded through the planning system and developer contributions, however there are significant challenges in delivering improvements that are required due to the cumulative impact of a number of developments over time.

**Digital connectivity** is a particular problem for large areas across Aberdeenshire. Although there has been significant and ongoing investment in improving digital connectivity across the region in recent years, there are still areas where poor connectivity makes remote and flexible working much more challenging.

### Opportunities

**Revolution in Rail improvements** – investment in dualling the railway line between Aberdeen and Inverurie, and signalling improvements south of Aberdeen, have facilitated the opportunity to separate local rail services from InterCity services. New and refurbished rolling stock have enabled a step change in local rail services, with a dedicated local service calling at all stations between Inverurie, Aberdeen and Montrose and separate services providing an express service between Aberdeen and major markets.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Travel to work and other purposes, Scottish Government Statistics, [www.statistics.gov.scot](http://www.statistics.gov.scot)

The completion of the **Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route**, funded by Transport Scotland and the local authorities, has enabled traffic to distribute around the city and avoid passing through it. This provides the opportunity to reassess the roads hierarchy within the city, lock in the benefits by ensuring public transport, walking and cycling facilities are prioritised and bring forward City Centre Master Plan schemes.

The **high quality of life** within the region is evident in the low levels of deprivation. The number of locations within the 20% most deprived in Scotland (SIMD, 2020) for Aberdeen City are 29 and Aberdeenshire 9. However, in rural areas, deprivation can be experienced on a household by household basis, rather than on an area by area basis and is therefore less easily tracked and can be hidden.

**Tourism** numbers for the region have grown year on year and the region is one of the most visited in the UK. Aberdeen is ranked 7th of all places in the UK as a location to have a weekend break (Laterooms 2017). The region boasts Europe's largest whisky trail, over 300 castles / country houses and historic ruins, 55 golf courses, a National Park, five snow sports centres, Royal Deeside and over 165 miles of coastline containing some of the best locations for dolphin watching. Recent investment in The Events Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Aberdeen Art Gallery and new hotels, along with international standard events including Nuart and the Tour of Britain cycling event, provide the region with a secure footing for tourism being a major industry over the next two decades.

**Aberdeen South Harbour** – development of the new harbour at Bay of Nigg on the south side of Aberdeen will provide a wide range of new and expanded opportunities for maritime developments. Cruise liners will fit with the tourism potential and industries such as decommissioning and Energy Transition will be able to focus on the new facilities.

## Summary of Evidence

As part of preparing this Fairer Scotland Duty, other assessments that were carried out in parallel to writing the strategy were: Health Inequalities Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Nestrans has conducted a number of consultation activities in developing the RTS 2040. This has included speaking to various stakeholders and groups and proactively attending events and meetings to talk about and receive feedback on our draft plans. There has also been a workshop with the North East Scotland Transport Consultative Forum and a website [www.nestrans2040.org.uk](http://www.nestrans2040.org.uk) was developed to allow people to read and comment on discussion papers. [www.nestrans2040.org.uk](http://www.nestrans2040.org.uk) gives a good overview of the consultation work that has been done.

Nestrans also monitors many aspects of travel and transport as part of its annual monitoring report. This report is published on the Nestrans website [www.nestrans.org.uk](http://www.nestrans.org.uk). As part of this annual monitoring report, there are several items monitored in the report that are very relevant to the Fairer Scotland Duty. The targets relate to the original RTS and will be updated to reflect the new RTS 2040. The numbering relates to the Indicators in the full Monitoring Report.

These are highlighted in the following graphs and commentary.

### Rail:

There are currently eight railway stations in the north east. This increased from seven with the opening of Laurencekirk station in May 2009. Progress is being made towards the opening of a new station at Kintore and this project is now being developed in partnership by Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council, Transport Scotland and Network Rail and is scheduled to open later in 2020.

Indicator 1 provides an estimate of the population within walking distance (1.6 kilometres) of a railway station and within 5 kilometres. With developments focussed on having good accessibility and opening of additional stations, it is the intention that these proportions will increase over time.

<b>Indicator 1: Number of rail stations in the North East and population with access to a station</b>			
	<b>Number of stations</b>	<b>Population within 1.6km of a station</b> (and proportion of total North East population)	<b>Population within 5km of a station</b> (and proportion of total North East population)
<b>2001 baseline</b>	7	81,550 (19%)	230,986 (53%)
<b>2012</b>	8	95,259 (20%)	254,431 (53%)
<b>2017</b>	8	108,222 (23%)	246,183 (52%)
<b>2019</b>	8	109,679 (22%)	247,745 (51%)
<b>2020</b>	8	108,740 (22.2%)	246,222 (50.3%)
<b>Target 1a:</b> <i>To open a new railway station in the north east every three years, to a total of 12 by 2021.</i>			
<b>Target 1b:</b> <i>To increase the proportion of the north east population with access to a station to at least 25% within 1.6 km and at least 60% within 5 km by 2021.</i>			

Source: Strategic Development Planning Authority Main Issues Report Monitoring Statement (2011), Councils' Small Area Population Statistics (2019).

As the above shows, almost half of the population in the North East of Scotland do not live within 5km of a railway station so this reducing their ability to access the railway network.

Due to this the access to bus is important for public transport in the North East of Scotland.

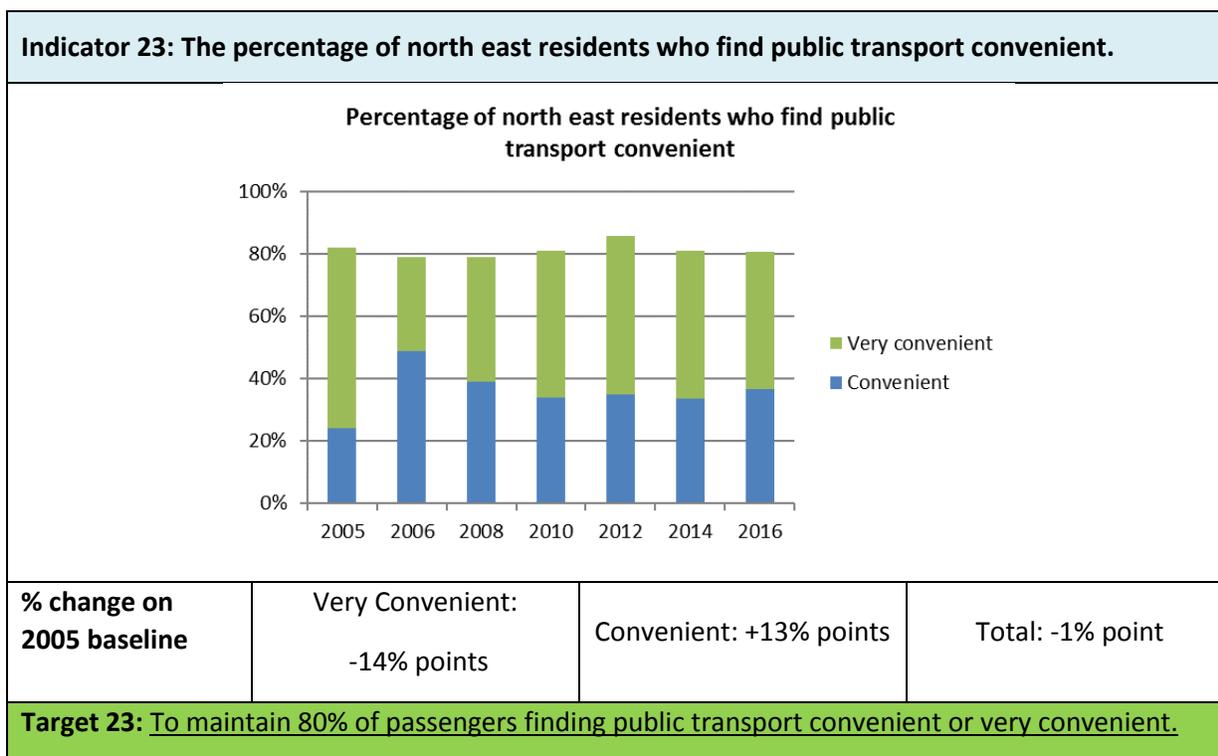
### **Bus Usage**

Nestrans continues to work with the two major bus operators and two local authorities as part of a voluntary quality partnership agreement. Due to a change in the way the figures are recorded through the quality partnership, in order to avoid double counting, it is not possible to directly compare bus patronage figures for years prior to 2015/16. There has however been a reduction in paying passengers between 2015/16 and 2017/18.

The Local Authority and Bus Operators Forum relaunched the Voluntary Quality Partnership in August 2018, forming the Bus Alliance. A baseline document, the State of the Network report was published in 2019, with a five-year action plan published in spring 2020. Actions primarily aim to reverse the trend of declining patronage, although may require some re-evaluation depending on the impacts realised following the COVID-19 outbreak.

<b>Indicator 22: The number of people using buses in the north east.</b>			
	Paying customers	Concessions	Total
2015/16	19.4 million	10.4 million	29.9 million
2016/17	18.1 million	10.5 million	28.6 million
2017/18	16.3 million	10.2 million	26.5 million
% change since 2015/16	-15.9%	-2.4%	-11.2%
<b>Target 22: To increase the number of bus passenger journeys by 2021.</b>			

Source: First, Stagecoach, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council



Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, Scottish Household Survey

### **Reliability and punctuality of buses**

Both First and Stagecoach publish data relating to reliability and punctuality. The table below shows that although reliability (i.e. the number of services operated) remains high for both operators, punctuality (i.e. those running on time) is currently below the target of 95% of buses departing on time set by the Traffic Commissioner<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> On time is defined by the Traffic Commissioner as being within the window of tolerance of 1 minute early to 5 minutes late.

<b>Indicator 25: Reliability and Punctuality</b>				
	<b>Reliability (% of miles operated)</b>		<b>Punctuality (% buses starting their route on time)</b>	
	<b>First</b>	<b>Stagecoach</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Stagecoach</b>
<b>2010</b>	99.5%	99.9%	86%	89%
<b>2016</b>	99.8%	99.7%	95%	84%
<b>2017</b>	97.3% <sup>5</sup>	99.3%	94%	86%
<b>Target 25a:</b> <i>To secure 99% reliability of bus services run in the north east through to 2021.</i>				
<b>Target 25b:</b> <i>To secure 95% punctuality (no more than one minute early or five minutes late) for bus services within the north east through to 2021.</i>				

Looking at the table above, it should be noted that the technical figures provided by the operators and the perception of passengers are not always in sync. The table below shows that passenger satisfaction rates the punctuality and waiting time of buses as lower than the standards being recorded by the operator. This could be due to reductions in frequency leading to longer waiting times at the bus stop or expectations greater than the Commissioner’s standard. However, it should be noted that indicator 25 will require updating before a full comparison between the technical figures and satisfaction figures can be compared to assess whether there is a correlation in recent years.

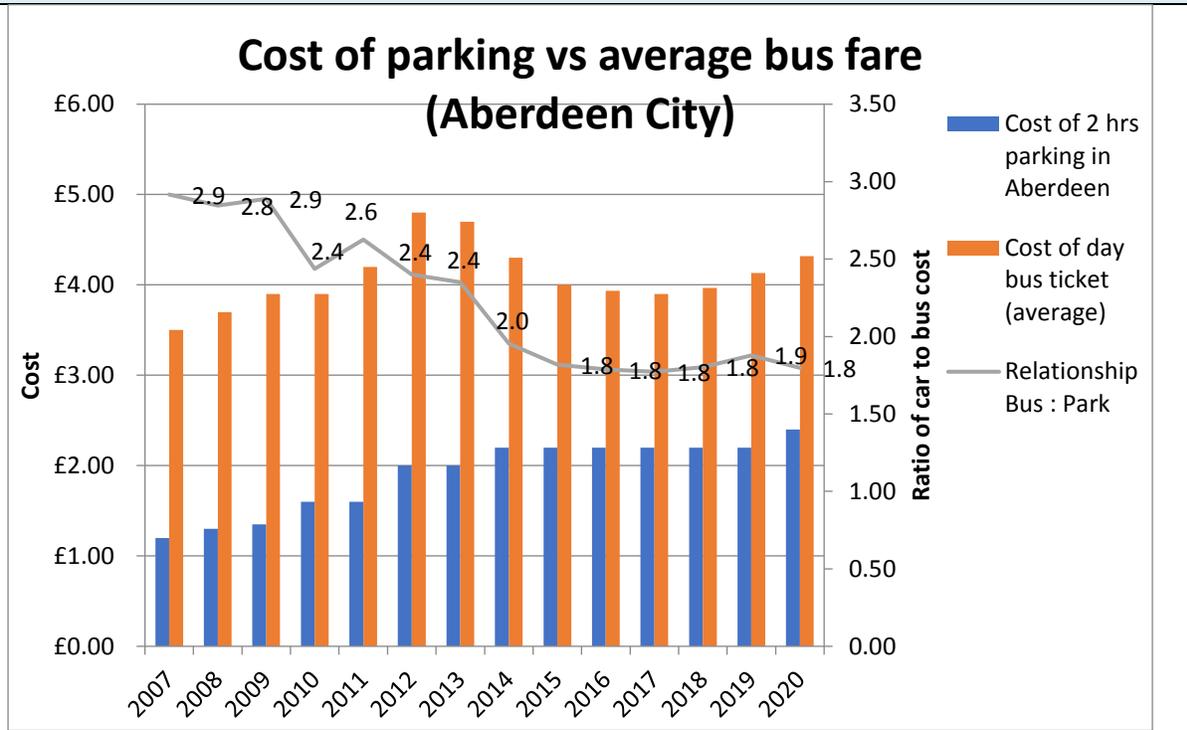
**Cost of bus services**

As a key determinant of mode choice, this report monitors the respective prices of City Centre parking and of average daily bus fares. Indicator 26 shows that whilst daily bus fares have become more competitive since 2012, car parking charges have remained relatively static. Although the relative cost of bus:parking reduced between 2007 and 2015, this has since stalled. Car parking prices were increased in 2020 to £2.40 for a two-hour stay in the main city centre car parks. It should be noted that a cheaper bus fare for First Bus is available if purchased through the m-ticket app. However, this does not reduce the overall ratio between bus fares and car parking.

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<sup>5</sup> This may be in part due to drivers strike in early 2018.

**Indicator 26: To monitor the price of car parking in Aberdeen City Centre relative to bus fares, by comparing a ratio of 2hrs off-street parking in a Council multi-storey car park: cost of peak daily ticket on city buses.**



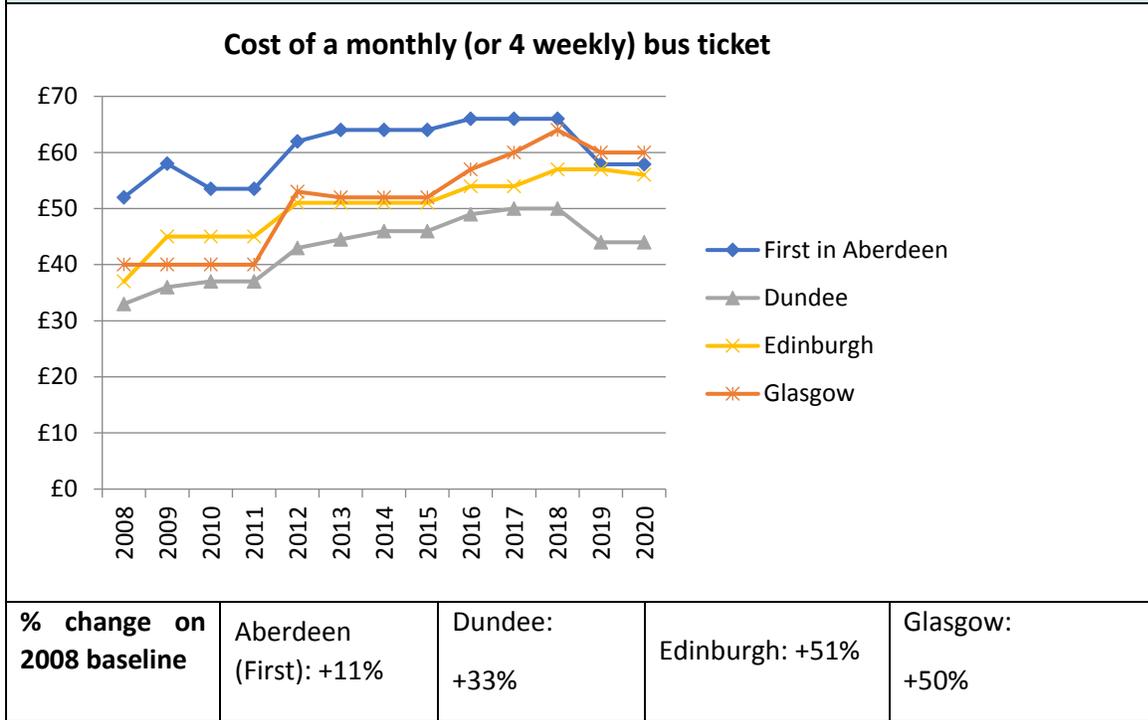
<b>% change in cost on 2007 base</b>	Cost of 2 hrs parking: +100%	Cost of bus day ticket: +23%
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**Target 26:** To reduce the differential between the cost of parking and bus travel to a factor of no more than 1.5 by 2021.

Source: Aberdeen City Council, Stagecoach, First Aberdeen & Grasshopper

Monthly bus season tickets are also compared to Scotland’s other main cities. Whilst Aberdeen remains amongst the most expensive for a monthly ticket, the gap between the cities has narrowed with the Aberdeen ticket reducing in real terms. As of 2020, with all cities now offering direct debit, online and/or m-ticket options, the graph below now represents the cheapest ticket offering for each area. Taking this into account, Aberdeen is cheaper than Glasgow and is similar to Edinburgh for ticket price.

**Indicator 27: To compare cost of monthly (or four weekly) bus ticket in Aberdeen with other Scottish cities.**



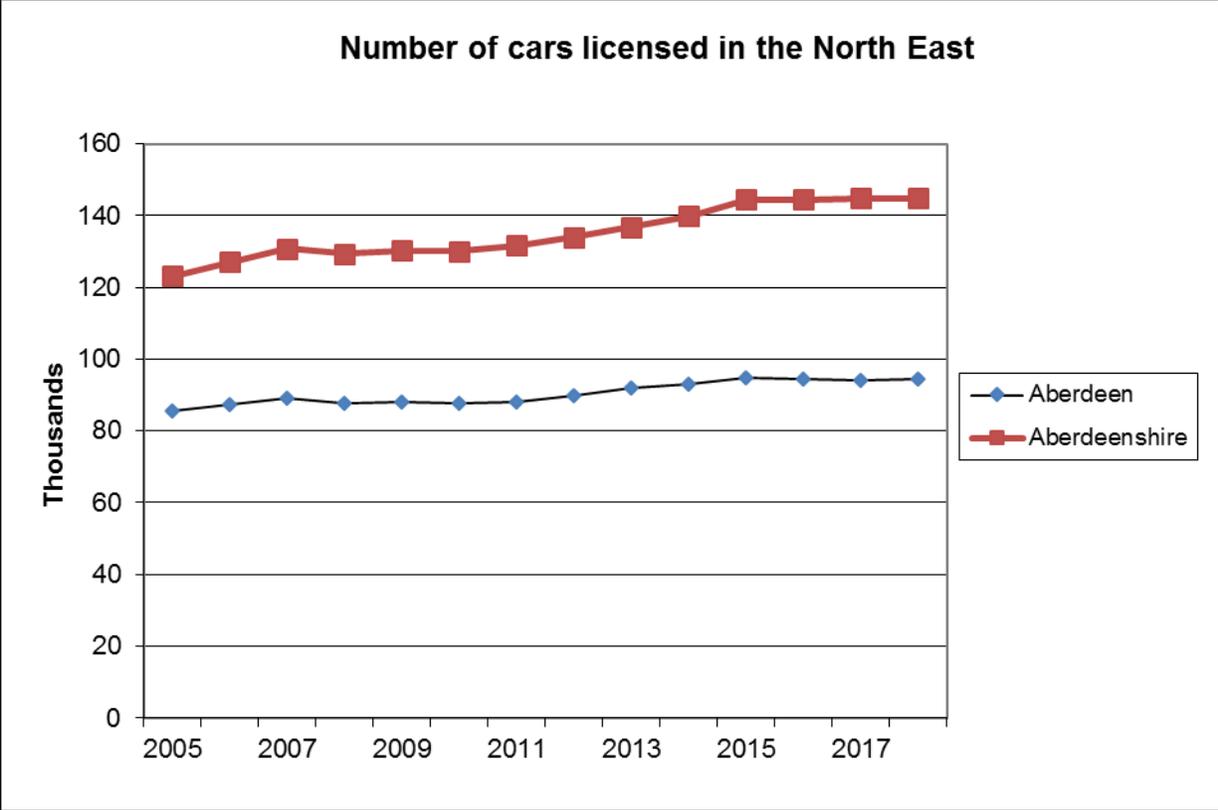
Source: First Aberdeen, Stagecoach, Travel Dundee, Lothian Buses and First Glasgow

Reliability and cost of bus transport are key part to having a Transport system that is fair and accessible for all. As the above data shows, there is still a way to go in regard to affordability of bus transport compared to other modes. This new RTS 2040 aims to try and reduce this.

**Car Ownership**

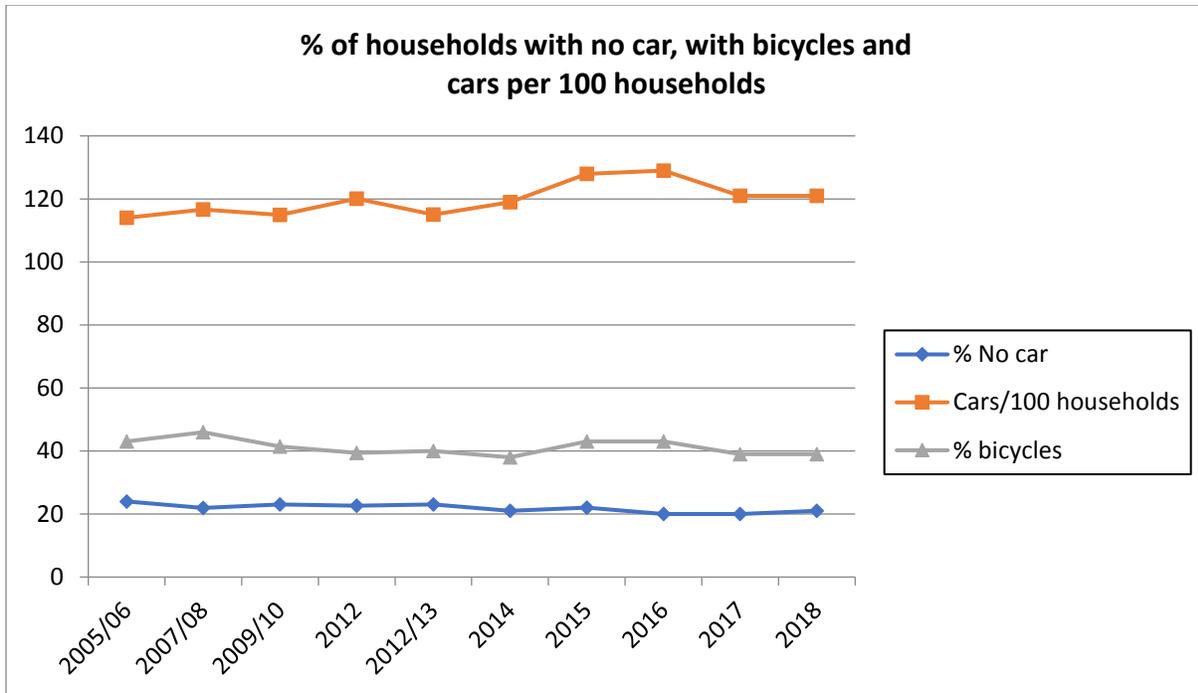
**With over 239,000 cars, the north east has more cars and vans than households, yet 21% of households do not have access to a vehicle.**

There were 94,400 cars registered in Aberdeen and 144,900 registered in Aberdeenshire at end December 2018 (Source: Scottish Transport Statistics). Over the entire North East, this represents a total increase of 15% on 2005.



Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, 2019

Car ownership is high in the north east, with around 80% of households having access to a car. Aberdeenshire has the joint second highest rate of car ownership in Scotland, with 86% of households having access to at least one vehicle. Car ownership in Aberdeen City has increased from 65% of households in 2005/06 to around 70% in 2018, although has reduced from 73% in 2017. Despite this, some 30% of households in the City and 13% of households in Aberdeenshire do not have access to a car or van. Over the last 5 years, the proportion of households without access to a car in Aberdeen City has remained relatively static at around 27-32%. (Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018).



Source: *Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018*

Indicator 32: The proportion of households in the north east without access to a car or van.			
	Aberdeen	Aberdeenshire	North East
<b>2005/06</b>	34%	14%	24%
<b>2012</b>	29%	17%	23%
<b>2014</b>	27%	15%	21%
<b>2015</b>	30%	13%	22%
<b>2016</b>	32%	9%	20%
<b>2017</b>	27%	13%	20%
<b>2018</b>	30%	13%	21%

Source: *Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018*

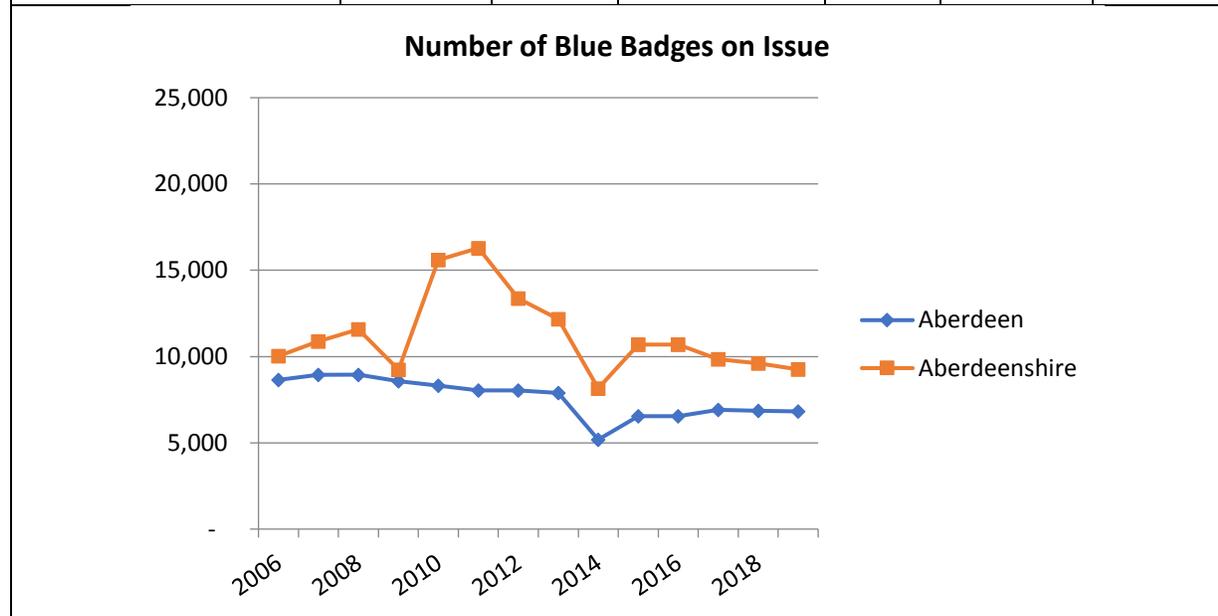
Access to a car or van or a bicycle is lower in areas of multiple deprivation and homes with lower incomes. This new RTS 2040 aims to try and ensure that access to a bicycle is easier to allow for more active travel and having access to a car, whether via a car club or car sharing, where public transport isn't available or inaccessible is improved.

## Drivers with a Disability

There were 16,072 Blue Badge holders in the north east at the end of March 2019. This represents 5% of cars registered in the region. After a number of years of increases in the number of Blue Badge holders across the north east, there have been reductions in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire since 2011 – a 34% reduction in six years.

**Indicator 33: The number of blue badge holders (and proportion relative to cars registered) in the north east.**

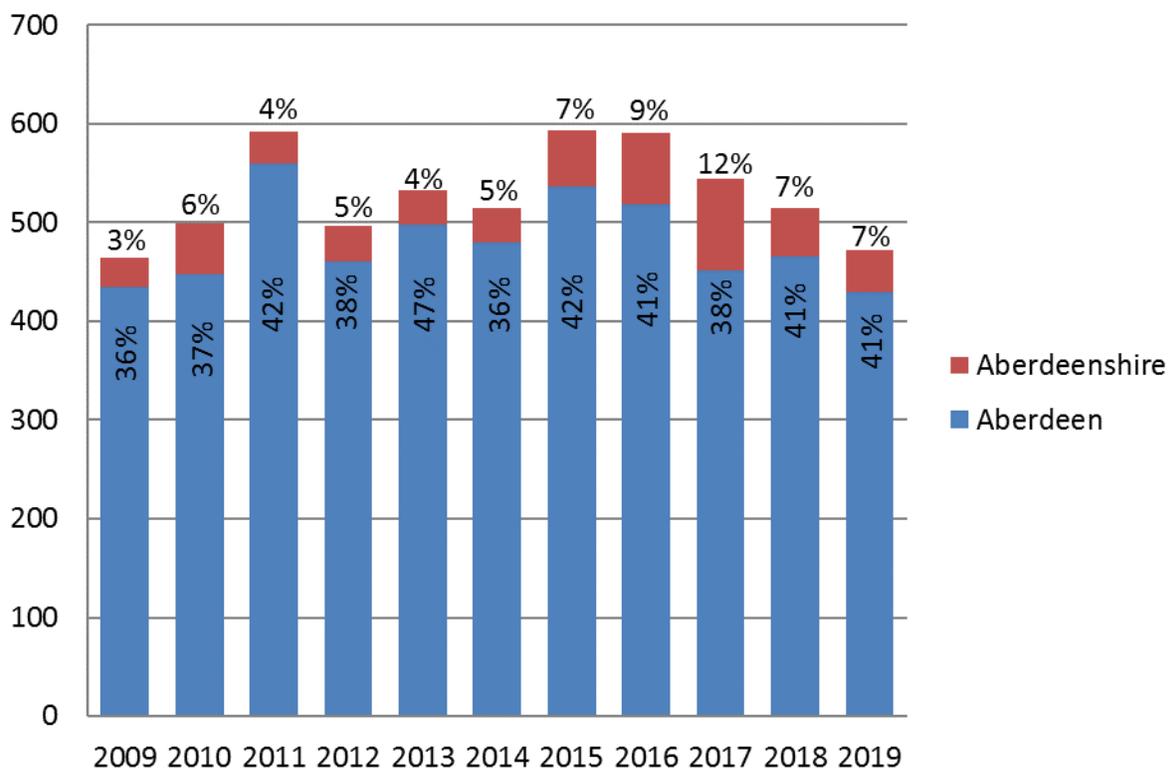
	Aberdeen		Aberdeenshire		North East	
	Blue badges	% of all cars	Blue badges	% of all cars	Blue badges	% of all cars
<b>March 2006</b>	8,645	10%	10,024	8%	18,669	9%
<b>March 2011</b>	8,044	8%	16,288	12%	24,332	11%
<b>March 2016</b>	6,643	6%	10,210	5%	16,853	6%
<b>March 2017</b>	6,908	6%	9,838	5%	16,746	6%
<b>March 2018</b>	6,863	6%	9,604	5%	16,467	6%
<b>March 2019</b>	6,820	6%	9,252	5%	16,072	5%



Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, 2019

**Indicator 34: The proportion of taxis which are capable of carrying wheelchairs**

**Number of wheelchair accessible taxis and % of all taxis**



**Target 34:** To increase the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis across the north east from 39% in 2009 to at least 50% by 2021

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2019

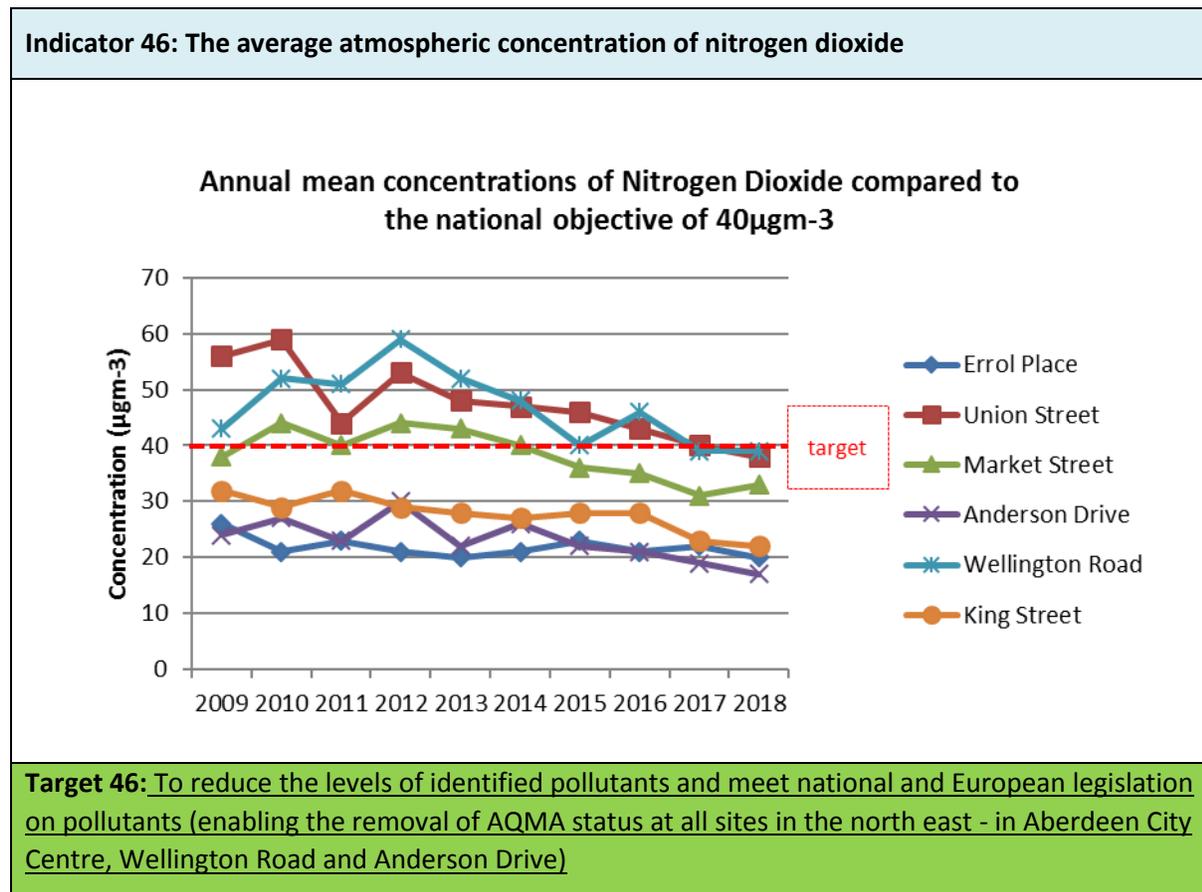
	2009		2015		2019		% change no. of taxis 2009-2019	% change accessible 2009-2019
	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible		
Aberdeen	1,198	435	1,288	537	1,055	430	-12%	-1%
Aberdeenshire	834	29	807	56	622	42	-25%	45%
Total NE	2,032	464	2,095	593	1,677	472	-17%	2%

In 2012, Aberdeen City Council announced a cap in the number of taxi licences and committed to a 100% wheelchair accessible fleet. The original deadline to achieve this was by 2017. Following a consultation in 2018, the deadline has been extended, although Aberdeen City Council remain committed to a fully wheelchair accessible fleet by 2023.

## **Air Quality**

Air Quality can have a big impact on public health and air quality is affected by transport emissions. Three Air Quality Management Areas have been identified in Aberdeen: the City Centre; Anderson Drive; and Wellington Road. These areas have been identified for projected exceedances in permitted levels of both Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>) and the City Council has produced a plan of action for reducing emissions to within European-defined maximum levels in these areas.

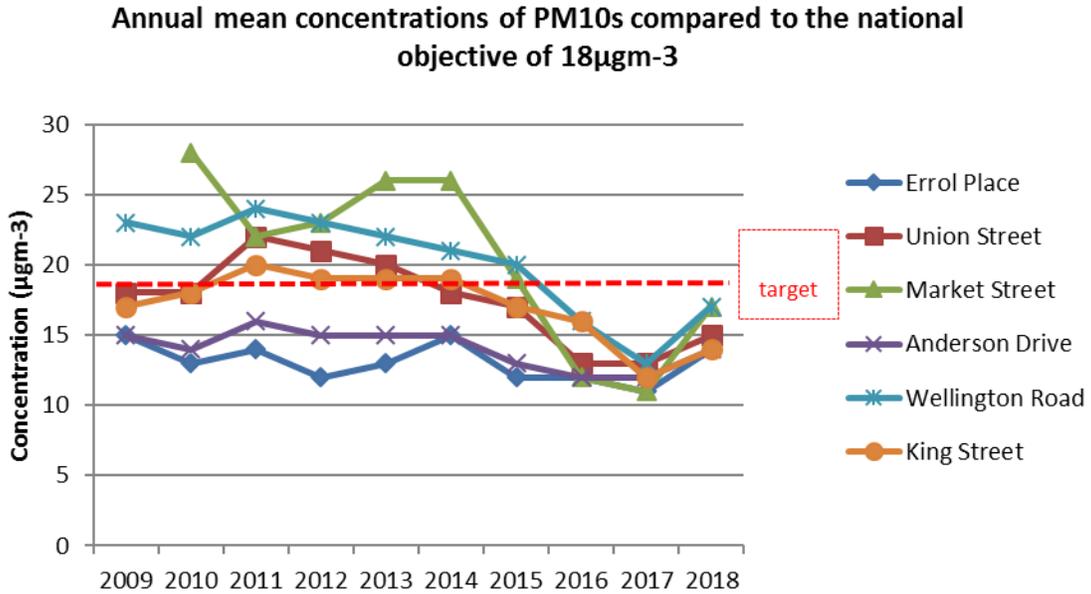
Monitoring stations are in place at six locations and provide data on the current situation as well as annual average concentrations of pollutants. Indicator 46 shows that, as of 2018, all monitoring sites are within the annual mean objective, with Union Street dropping below the target of 40µgm<sup>-3</sup> for the first time. Market Street was the only site to see a small increase in NO<sub>2</sub> levels.



Source: [www.scottishairquality.co.uk](http://www.scottishairquality.co.uk) and Aberdeen City Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Progress Report

Between 2017 and 2018, the annual mean objective for particulates increased across the board, but all sites remain within target and all are reduced on Baseline.

**Indicator 47: The average atmospheric concentration of particulates (PM10s)**



**Target 47:** To reduce the levels of identified pollutants and meet national and European legislation on pollutants (across the three AQMAs in Aberdeen).

Source: [www.scottishairquality.co.uk](http://www.scottishairquality.co.uk) and Aberdeen City Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Progress Report

## Summary of Fairer Scotland Assessment

Transport Poverty, low income to pay for buying and running a car or bicycle or paying for a ticket on public transport is a concern for many and the RTS strategy aims to reduce the impact of this.

Material deprivation such as not having access to broadband or a computer/smart phone, may mean that people on a lower income may not be able to access the best deals for public transport as online tickets are often cheaper or buying a season ticket, which you pay for a long period of time such as weekly, monthly or annually but then your individual journeys are cheaper is too expensive to pay in advance for people on low incomes.

Communities of Place – Area of Deprivation. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) highlights a number of areas of deprivation in the north east of Scotland. Out of 283 data zones in Aberdeen, 29 are in the 20% most deprived category. In Aberdeenshire, out of 340 data zones, 9 are in the 20% most deprived. Aberdeenshire also has a large rural population, which means that journeys are often longer. Due to less frequent public transport being available, this leads to fewer choices for travel. This can often result in isolation or people being unable to attend work, education or healthcare appointments easily.

Communities of interest - During our consultations and events with various groups, access to public transport and frequency in rural areas was a key issue, as was affordability of transport. Some people are entitled to concessionary fares on public transport due to age or disability. However, others on a low income are not eligible, which can lead to further inequalities.

## Conclusion

Reducing inequalities is at the heart of the RTS 2040. Overall, Nestrans feel that the RTS 2040 provides a positive framework to reduce inequalities and improve equality. Nestrans is aware that access to transport and affordability of transport are key issues that impact on people's lives and that those with lower incomes are affected by these issues more than those with higher incomes. The new Regional Transport Strategy 2040 continues the work that Nestrans has been doing to reduce these inequalities and puts the policies and priorities in place to reduce these further. This includes working in partnership with others including the Bus Alliance, Getabout Partnership, the Health and Transport Action Plan, working together through Community Planning Partnerships, and continuing to work with Transport Scotland, public transport operators, local authorities, other Regional Transport Partnerships and the third sector.

## Recommendations and next steps

Continue to work with Grampian Regional Equalities Council, our partners on the Health and Transport Action Plan and Getabout to promote sustainable transport messages and provide a signposting for grants and services that may be available to help people with access needs and requiring advice on affordability of travel and transport.

Continue to consult widely across the whole of the North East of Scotland, including as many groups and communities of interest as possible and update and mitigate the inequalities in transport where possible.