

Statement on Improving Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy

During 2019/20 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

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 was £2,560 in 2019/20, 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 has remained fixed at £21,100 per annum.

ICT Services

Aberdeen City Council provides and maintains quality Information and Communication Technology Services. The cost is based on the hardware, software and support costs per member of staff per annum and resulted in a charge of just under £5,600 in 2019/20.

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 the last year this also included assistance with the advertisement and appointment of the Director and a temporary Transport Officer post and a further non-Councillor Member for the Nestrans Board. The cost of this service has remained at £15,900 per annum.

Public Relations Services

Since July 2016 public relations, marketing and event management services have been provided under a Service Level Agreement by Aberdeenshire Council. A dedicated Nestrans communications officer is located two days per week within the Nestrans office, with access to the wider team within the Council out with these days. The various duties provided include 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, arranging design work and preparing communications updates for Members. The Service Level Agreement for this service was renewed in July 2019. The previous cost of £16,500 per annum, which was in place to end June 2019, rose under the new agreement to £17,750 per annum, resulting in a total cost of £17,436 for this service in 2019/20.

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 achieves 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.

ACTtravelwise Membership

Nestrans again negotiated a group membership for all members of the Getabout partnership to ACTtravelwise for 2019/20 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. 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 cycle roadshow has been supplemented by the purchase of 2KMX bikes, a penny farthing and a wheelchair accessible bike. 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. 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

The Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) is a multi-modal strategic model for the North East of Scotland, which is managed and maintained by Nestrans. An upgrade of the software and data was undertaken to create ASAM14 to ensure it remains a robust and effective tool in the development of future transport strategies and land use plans in the North East and was funded via the Aberdeen City Region Deal. Transport Scotland now provide administration support for requests to use the latest ASAM model via the LATIS website. In the last year, the model has been used for further Cumulative Transport Appraisal work to consider amendments to the level of development content in the final Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Proposed Plan and identify transport intervention proposals to mitigate predicted impacts. It has also been used by local authorities for future year demand predictions and strategic input to local micro simulation models for Ellon and Inverurie, for the Berryden corridor dualling work and to inform the Wellington Road multi-modal corridor study. Access to the model was also granted to Jacobs consultants for the purposes of the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) they have been commissioned to undertake by Transport Scotland. 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.

Traffic Signal Monitoring and Control Upgrade and Digital Communications Migration

Nestrans allocated further funding to Aberdeen City Council to complete phase 2 of the replacement and upgrading of the existing Outstation Monitoring Units (OMU's) with Outstation Transmission Units (OTU's) at traffic signal installations currently operating on the Remote Monitoring System (RMS) across both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire that only allows for dial-up monitoring activities. Upgrading the remaining 72 traffic installations, will allow for improved monitoring and fault finding to be carried out and give the ability to carry out alterations to the operation of the traffic signals in a more proactive manner. In addition, it will provide the potential for corridors not currently operating under Urban Traffic Control/Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (UTC/SCOOT) control to be brought under control to improve public transport operations and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

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 Stagecoach towards a bus satisfaction survey that was undertaken in 2019/20 to gather data for the North East given the national survey is only undertaken on a biennial basis.

Attracted Funding and Cost Savings

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 2019/20 a grant of £3,282.50 was awarded by Nestrans to Huntly Development Trust (HDT) and used along with £1,000 from HDT and a grant of £4,350 from the Energy Savings Trust to enable the purchase of three Ebikes and cycling accessories, which will be made available for hire via their Green Travel Hub.

ASAM Regional Transport Model Update

An update of the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) was commissioned by Nestrans to ensure it continues to provide a suitably robust basis for transport and land use appraisal and reflects any change in travel patterns following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and Balmedie to Tippierty dualling that was completed in February 2019. 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. The update will build upon the ASAM14 upgrade, by creating a 2019 base year and will involve a significant data collection programme.

Survey data from a number of organisations has been provided at no cost to enhance the robustness of the model and this includes Trunk road data collected by Transport Scotland, data held by the Councils such as traffic counts, planning development and car parking data and travel information from bus operators, National Records Scotland and the Civil Aviation Authority. Data collected for modelling the development of options for a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in Aberdeen that was funded by Transport Scotland and for the A96 dualling model has also been shared. The further data surveys commissioned for the ASAM19 update will likewise be made available for the LEZ development work and provided to Transport Scotland for sharing via their Land Use and Transport Integrations in Scotland ([LATIS](#)) data service. It has been agreed that ASAM be listed within the section on Regional Transport models on the LATIS section of the Transport Scotland website along with a copy of the model development report. Transport Scotland continue to administer the application process for access to the ASAM model or data via the LATIS website.

The ASAM update has also benefited from the sharing of methodologies developed for other regional strategic models. Although Nestrans manages ASAM, the cost of the update is being met through the Aberdeen City Region Deal funding as the model will be used to appraise transport options. The cost recharged in 2019/20 for completion of ASAM14 and surveys, model development and audit work associated with ASAM19 amounted to £320,334.

Strategic Transport Appraisal

Following the completion of the pre-appraisal commissioned by Transport Scotland that included an assessment of problems, opportunities, development of objectives, and option generation and sifting, Nestrans issued a consultancy brief for the Aberdeen City Region Deal - Strategic Transport Appraisal, initial STAG Appraisal of regional transport projects. This work will inform not only the most effective projects to take forward for further development and appraisal through the City Region Deal, but will also assist with the development of the next Regional Transport Strategy (RTS2040) and provide an enhanced and consolidated evidence base to be made available for Transport Scotland's work on Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2). The cost recharged to Aberdeen City Region Deal in 2019/20 associated with this work amounted to £76,361.

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. The available award to Nestrans for our involvement over the four-year period amounts to just over £266,000. Nestrans has used £98,657 of this funding in 2019/20.

Grasshopper Advertising

The Grasshopper smart multi-operator ticket is available over 6 zones across the North East and permits travel on services from nine operators. Nestrans contributed almost £1,500 in 2019/20 to major advertising campaigns in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, First Aberdeen and Stagecoach bus operators to maximise awareness. The "Where's Claire" Original 106fm radio competition and marketing campaign undertaken in August 2019 led to a 6% increase in sales.

Cycle Infrastructure and Core Path Improvements

Nestrans continues to fund a cycling development officer post, 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. In 2019/20 a sum of £82,000 was claimed to fund path improvements on the Deeside Way between Mills of Drum and Crathes and from Aboyne to Dinnet

RTP Active Travel Grant

In 2019/20 the Scottish Government again offered an Active Travel Grant to Regional Transport Partnerships. Nestrans was awarded £220,000, with the deadline for claims again extended to end June. The 2019/20 grant was claimed in full and used for further feasibility and design works for the A944 cycle and pedestrian path, the completion of generic design of replacement bridges on the Formartine & Buchan Way and purchase of four timber kit bridges for the F&B Way at Middle Tack, Upper Tack, North Kinmundy and Buckie Farm. Additional 2018/19 grant funding of £254,000 offered on 29 March

2019 for usage by end June 2019 was also claimed and used for Schoolhill public realm improvements and Union Terrace Gardens design and development.

Local Rail Development Fund

Nestrans was successful in applying to Transport Scotland's Local Rail Development Fund in 2018 to undertake an option appraisal for improving access, particularly for passengers with mobility difficulties, at Inch station and this work continued in 2019/20 with Nestrans funding £16,313 and a further £20,800 funded via the grant. A new bid was submitted in 2019 for LRDF grant to investigate local rail options for the south of Aberdeen and £80,000 was granted in August 2019 that can be claimed up until to 31 March 2021 to undertake a multi-modal STAG appraisal between Aberdeen and Laurencekirk.

Smarter Choices Smarter Places Open Fund

In February 2020 Nestrans secured match funding through the Paths for All, Smarter Choices Smarter Places Open Fund towards a comprehensive travel survey as a baseline for the emerging Regional Transport Strategy to 2040 and to enable monitoring of the impact of the Strategy. The survey will also investigate what interventions may influence and enable change by collecting stated preference data, which will support development of future year scenarios for the Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM). The grant is available until autumn 2020 and the Nestrans Board approved the allocation of match funding within the draft 20/21 budget, subject to funding levels being confirmed, when they met in February 2020.

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 2019/20.

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) and for promotional items to advertise it. 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.

The Health and Transport programme manager arranged a Public Health Event in 2019 that was part funded by Nestrans and received match funding from Aberdeen City Council through their Civitas Portis project funding allocation. The Be-LinkD pilot project where Buchan Dial-A-Community Bus provides transport to take residents in Maud to health appointments, wellbeing activities, foodbanks, employability services and home again was supported by a £4,050 grant from Nestrans and also attracted Fairer Scotland funding.

Procurement Activity

Scotland Excel Engineering and Technical Consultancy Services Framework Agreement

Nestrans continues to be an associate member of Scotland Excel and as such can 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 2019/20 Nestrans held mini competitions through the framework to award the following projects:

ASAM19 post AWPR update

Aberdeen City Region Deal - Strategic Transport Appraisal, Initial Stag Appraisal of Regional Transport Projects

Fabrication of 4 timber bridge kits for Formartine and Buchan Way.

Land Use and Transport Integrations in Scotland ([LATIS](#)) framework.

Nestrans made use of the Transport Scotland Latis framework, which can also be used by Regional Transport Partnerships. The work to undertake the ASAM19 audit was awarded under Lot 4 of the framework.

E-cargo bikes

Transport Scotland issued an invitation for expressions of interest from Local Authorities in bidding for additional funding for LEZ related works from a £10.3M fund available in the 2019/20 financial year. Nestrans suggested various items to Aberdeen City Council for their bid and an award of just over £25,000 was made to the Council for the purchase of electric cargo bikes for a pilot scheme to encourage last mile deliveries in Aberdeen City Centre. As the Council was unable to resource the purchasing, agreement was obtained from Transport Scotland that Nestrans could undertake the tendering and procurement and operation of the E-cargo bike trial and six bikes and accessories were purchased. Information on the bikes and how to apply to take part in the trial can be viewed on the Nestrans [website](#).