

Sustainable Economic Growth Statement

Introduction

Section 32(1)(a) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year each listed public body must publish a statement of the steps it has taken during the financial year to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of its functions. Nestrans is a listed body within the Act.

This statement is intended to fulfil the requirement of the Act in relation to Sustainable Economic Growth. This statement should be read in conjunction with the statement on Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy and the financial information provided on the Nestrans website that are also required by the Act.

Government purpose and performance framework

The purpose of the Scottish Government is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. The approach to delivering this Purpose is set out in the [Scotland's Economic Strategy](#) published in March 2015 which combines work to boost economic growth and increase competitiveness with a drive to tackle inequality. The updated Strategy has four priorities, namely:

- [Investing in people and infrastructure](#) in a sustainable way;
- Fostering a culture of [innovation, entrepreneurship](#) and research and development;
- Promoting [inclusive growth](#) and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market and regional cohesion; and
- Promoting Scotland's [international trade, investment, influence and networks](#).

Progress towards the Purpose is being measured through a range of Purpose Targets and National Indicators in the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) that was revised in 2018. The goals of the NPF align with the aims of the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals all countries are trying to achieve by 2030. The NPF Purpose, Values and 11 National Outcomes are shown in the diagram below and there are 81 National Indicators to help track progress.

National Performance Framework Our Purpose, Values and National Outcomes



Aligning to the Purpose and National Objectives

The Nestrans [Regional Transport Strategy](#), approved by Scottish Ministers in 2008, includes, at page 102, an Appendix outlining how the Regional Transport Strategy objectives align with the National Objectives, albeit that a further objective of “Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it” has since been added to the National Objectives.

The four strategic objectives of the RTS relating to Economy; Accessibility, Safety and Social Inclusion; Environment and Spatial Planning were retained within the refresh of the strategy in 2014 and are supportive of many of the National Outcomes.

Regional Transport Strategy to 2040

Nestrans’ primary function is to produce and implement a Regional Transport Strategy. This is a statutory document, with the requirements set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, and associated guidance published in 2006.

It is considered that the RTS to 2040 fulfils all the statutory requirements and complied with the necessity of STAG option appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment and

Equality Impact Assessment. It was developed under four equal and overlapping pillars relating to Equality, Climate, Prosperity and Wellbeing that align with and support the pillars of the National Transport Strategy 2 that was published in February 2020 and many of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes.

Achievements in 2020/21

The Covid-19 lockdown restrictions have resulted in significant changes to society, the economy and our transport networks in the past year. Nestrans has endeavoured to work collaboratively during the period of adaptation and recovery to respond to changing needs, whilst ensuring compatibility with the longer term vision and goals of the developing Regional Transport Strategy.

Action Plans

Nestrans has five Action Plans intended to assist in the implementation of the Regional and Local Transport Strategies.

- **Health and Transport Action Plan**

Working with NHS Grampian, our two Councils, Moray Council, the Scottish Ambulance Service and representation from the third sector, Health & Social Care Partnerships, a member of the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) and a Public Representative we have continued to contribute to a co-ordinator post and focus on the two themes within the Action Plan:

- Transport and Public Health – The HTAP partners worked together to promote and implement latest guidance relating to safe travel during the Covid-19 pandemic, including involvement in developing and delivering Sustrans funded Spaces for People projects and promotion of latest guidance via the Getabout website.
- Access to Health and Social Care – Partnership working helped to respond to the pandemic through increased roll of internet and telephone appointment services and consistent communication across a variety of platforms for the roll out of vaccinations. Nestrans again contributed to the Transport to Healthcare Information Centre (THInC) service that gave travel advice to residents from multiple transport providers for travel to/from test, treatment and vaccination centres throughout Grampian. The latest Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards were held online to support and recognise community transport organisations and volunteer drivers working during the pandemic. The HTAP manager has continued to be part of the Be-Link'D Steering Group that received grant funding from Nestrans in 19/20 and is assisting residents in the Buchan area to access health and other key facilities.

- **Bus Action Plan**

A refresh of the Bus Action Plan was produced that sets out the priority actions of the North East Bus Alliance based on the 'state of the network' report that provides the 2019 baseline from which progress can be monitored to achieve the objectives set out in the Bus Alliance Quality Partnership Agreement. Nestrans funded consultancy support to assist the Bus Alliance to prepare a bid

to the £500 million Bus Partnership Fund announced by the Scottish Government and to investigate the vision for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network, as proposed within the developing draft Regional Transport Strategy to 2040. Nestrans also agreed to fund a number of the measures identified for submission to the Scottish Government's Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund that were not considered suitable for the temporary nature of the bus priority measures being awarded. A number of multi-modal corridor appraisals were also progressed promotional.

The usual festive campaign to encourage use of public transport options to Aberdeen City Centre was replaced with a campaign to promote safe use of public transport in accordance with latest national Covid-19 guidance. Nestrans again contributed to the maintenance costs of the regional real time information system and further upgrades to bus stop infrastructure and information throughout the region were implemented.

- **Freight Action Plan**

Nestrans is lead partner in the freight elements of the Civitas Portis project. The freight adviser previously appointed through this project continued to assist with developing relationships with businesses in the freight industry and final assessments of freight in Aberdeen and evaluation reports for the freight gateway interconnectivity and minimising large vehicles in Aberdeen City Centre and encouraging clean vehicles measures are published on the Nestrans website. Nestrans also continued to manage the E-cargo bikes pilot for last mile deliveries in Aberdeen City Centre. The Wellington Road multi-modal corridor study and transport links to/from the new Aberdeen South Harbour study that include consideration of freight were progressed.

- **Rail Action Plan**

Construction works for Kintore Rail Station resumed after a period of lockdown and the new station entered service on Thursday 15 October 2020. Nestrans has continued to work with Transport Scotland, ScotRail and Network Rail to ensure that the aspirations of the North East are taken into account in developing our railways. Nestrans continues to be a member of the East Coast Mainline Authorities grouping, who aim to highlight the economic importance of the line and need for investment and participate in the overview team for the Aberdeen to Central Belt rail journey time and capacity improvements. The feasibility study into options for improving accessibility at Inch Station using funding from Nestrans and a grant via the Local Rail Development Fund (LRDF) was completed and submitted to Transport Scotland at the end of March 2021. Consultants have been appointed to undertake an Aberdeen to Laurencekirk multi-modal corridor study that will be funded through a further LRDF grant.

- **Active Travel Action Plan**

Nestrans continues to employ a Cycling Development Officer in partnership with Sustrans, which attracts capital grant funding from the Sustrans of up to £100,000 per annum that has been agreed to use to fund pedestrian and cycle counters and purchase of bikes for Sport Aberdeen and Live Life Aberdeenshire, although this work will now continue into next financial year as a result of the impact of Covid-19 lockdowns. It has been agreed that Cycling

Scotland will arrange the counter installation and they will directly fund a further nine sites taking the overall total to 21 new counters. Improvement works have been agreed for sections of the Deeside Way using a 100% grant award of up to £250,000 through the Sustrans National Cycle Network Development fund. The deadline for usage of this grant has been extended into 2021/22 due to the impact of the pandemic. The Scottish Government again offered a grant to Regional Transport Partnerships towards active travel in 2020/21. Nestrans was awarded a grant of up to £220,000 to complete the A944 pedestrian/cycle path feasibility study and for further improvements on the Formartine & Buchan Way that will be used to resurface the Ellon Viaduct and undertake a number of path improvements in the area. Nestrans has again contributed funding towards feasibility studies and the development and construction of a number of pedestrian and cyclist improvements. A Sustainable Travel Grant scheme continued to be offered, which provides match grant funding to support implementation of successful applications for sustainable transport schemes. The Getabout partnership continues to promote active and sustainable travel throughout the North East and this focussed on the promotion of safe travel advice during the pandemic in accordance with latest government guidance.

Partnership Working

Nestrans has continued to proactively support the Aberdeen City Region Deal and project manage the consultancy work to update the strategic Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) to a 2019 base. The Strategic Transport Appraisal – Preliminary Options Appraisal was completed and formed a supporting document for the next Regional Transport Strategy to 2040. It will feed into the national Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and will inform the region's input to the next National Planning Framework, NPF4. The detailed appraisal of external links to Aberdeen South Harbour being funded through the City Region Deal was completed and a preferred option approved by Aberdeen City Council in February 2021.

Nestrans continued to input to the STPR2 process via the Regional Transport Working Group that is chaired by Nestrans and provided feedback on the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 recommendations published by Transport Scotland in February 2021.

Nestrans also continues to participate and contribute financially to both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnerships. The European Civitas Portis Project looking at opportunities to enhance transport provision in and around port areas and to provide innovative and sustainable solutions to transport issues that Nestrans participated in was concluded in November 2020 and the full grant allocation claimed.

Projects

In 2020/21, Nestrans provided funding towards the following, although a number of these projects will now continue into 2021/22 as a result of the impact of the pandemic:

Strategic Investment Programme

- Rail
Kintore Station – Further progress works for new station, including car park and access roads, with construction completed and the station entering service in October 2020
Insch Accessibility Study – Nestrans contribution to study being part funded via a Local Rail Development Grant.
- Strategic Roads – Capacity
Strategic Network Monitoring Phase 4, Queens Road corridor – Procurement and installation of Internet Protocol closed-circuit television (IPCCTV) equipment at traffic signals to monitor and better manage changes in traffic flow
Osprey Upgrade – To enable Aberdeen City Council’s traffic systems unit to create strategies more easily for use at events
- Strategic Roads - Safety
Further A947 minor road safety improvements such as signage, hazard marker replacements and texture remediation works
Bend mitigation and skid resistance improvement on strategic routes
Renewal of reflective road studs on various strategic routes
- Strategic prioritised maintenance
Riverview Drive, Dyce resurfacing between Overton Circle and Netherview Avenue
Great Southern Road resurfacing between Provost Watt Drive and Bridge of Dee

Bus Improvements

Ellon Park & Ride - completing the specification for the tender process for construction of car park extension, bus turning circle upgrade and improved waiting facilities

A93 Crathes mini-hub – further design and land negotiation

Oldmeldrum Interchange Hub – Further design and land negotiation

New e-scheduling system for AC Public Transport Unit – Final payment towards system purchase and implementation

Bus stop information initiatives - Reactive programme resulting for bus stop changes through the year and any remedial works identified through inspections

A90/A92 Blackdog access to Bus Services – Contribution to construction of a footpath to assist access to bus services

Kingswells Park & Ride - Resurfacing section of used by buses Phase 1

Bus Lane Camera Infrastructure – Replacement of existing bus lane enforcement system hardware and software that is becoming obsolete.

- Walking and Cycling:
B9002 Kennethmont footway – Land purchase and footway construction
Maconochie Rd, Fraserburgh – Construction of a Shared Use Footway / Cycleway between Fraserburgh Community & Sports Centre to Seaforth Street
Sauchen/Cluny - Construction of a Shared Use Cycleway / Footway
North/South Link to Inverurie Academy – Design of a shared used footway which extends to the new academy campus via Kellands Park to Port Elphinstone onto the A96 Inverurie to Kintore Strategic link.

Westburn/Lang Stracht /Anderson Drive junction - Detailed design of options for alterations with a focus on improvements for Active travel

Craigshaw cycle route – further development and design of options for a cycle link
Wellheads Drive cycle link – completion of design of an extension to the Wellheads cycle route to Farburn Terrace and progressing land acquisition

Cycle gate installation – Contribution towards cost for cycle gate installation recommended as part of Diamond Bridge review

River Don Path repairs – Repair work to sections of path damaged by floods and avoid future damage at west of Diamond Bridge and on section leading to Brig O Balgownie

Using RTP Active Travel Grant from Scottish Government:

Formartine & Buchan Way – Resurfacing of Ellon Viaduct and a number of path improvements in the area

A944 Cycle Path – Completion of study into option feasibility and design.

Using National Cycle Network Development Grant from Sustrans:

Deeside Way path improvements from Boghead to Cambus O May to Ballater

- Carbon Reduction and Air Quality

EV charge points in Aberdeenshire – Installation of EV charger at new Inverurie Community Campus.

Aberdeen Low Emission Zone – contribution to fund modelling of the LEZ boundary options with the City Centre Masterplan transport interventions in place

- Various

A944/B9119 multi-modal corridor study

Wellington Road multi-modal corridor study

Ellon to Aberdeen City Centre to Garthdee multi-modal corridor study

A96 multi-modal corridor study

Aberdeen Rapid Transit Vision and Bus Partnership Fund bid consultancy support

Automatic Number Plate Recognition Monitoring Sites

Using Local Rail Development Fund grant from Scottish Government:

Insch Railway Station Accessibility Study

Aberdeen to Laurencekirk multi-modal corridor study

Co-ordination & Project Development Programme

- Bus Action Plan

Real Time Information E-paper displays and bus stop infrastructure in Aberdeenshire

- General

Travel attitude and behaviour surveys (part funded via Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund award)

- Project Feasibility and Design

City Gateway Paramics Modelling (Ellon)

- Travel Planning
Sustainable Travel Grant Scheme
Get about safe and sustainable travel promotion and travel planning support

