

nestrans | 2040



**THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
FOR THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND**
Strategic Environmental Assessment
Environment Report:
Non-Technical Summary
July 2020

Non-Technical Summary

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Nestrans is now consulting on a Draft Regional Transport Strategy (draft RTS), setting out a transport vision for the north east of Scotland up to 2040. This has been developed following an extensive review and assessment process. Specifically, the contents of the draft RTS work has been informed by a Strategic Transport Appraisal (STA) funded by the region's City Region Deal.
- 1.2 This Non-Technical Summary provides an overview of the key points arising from the Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA) of the draft RTS. It sets out the next steps in the RTS and SEA process, and also confirms how it can be commented upon. Fundamentally, it provides a summarised and abridged version of the full SEA Environmental Report (ER). The full ER is also available for comment, and should be referred to for full details of the appraisal that has been undertaken.

2 What is the Draft RTS?

- 2.1 Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for north east Scotland, covering the local authority areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. It has a statutory duty to produce and deliver a long-term RTS for the area. The draft RTS (Nestrans RTS 2040) that has now been produced builds upon the previous Nestrans RTS Refresh (2013), setting out an updated vision, priorities and actions for transport in the region for the next 20 years.
- 2.2 Nestrans RTS 2040 will help to implement the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2, published in February 2020 by Transport Scotland) at a regional level, taking into account the nature of the region and its unique challenges, issues, constraints, opportunities and assets. A high-level vision for the new RTS was developed to reflect the national vision set out in NTS2 alongside the characteristics of the region:

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

- 2.3 In support of this vision, the Draft RTS has been developed under four equal and overlapping pillars which align with and support the pillars of the NTS2.

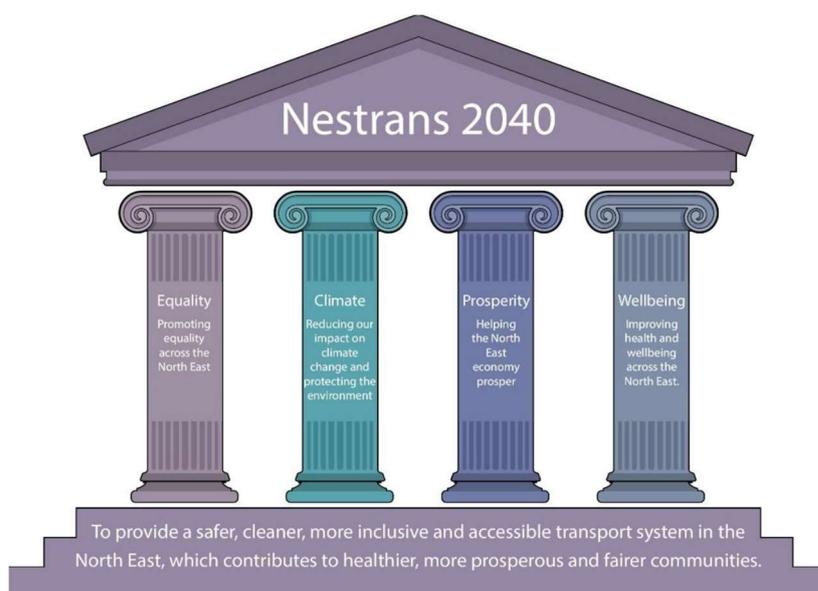


Figure 2.1 – Nestrans 2040 Pillars

- 2.4 The Draft RTS is also underpinned by six Key Priorities which set the tone of the Draft RTS overall. These relate to each of the four pillars and provide a clear statement of intent regarding what the strategy is aiming to achieve, in order to then guide the development of implementing policies and actions.

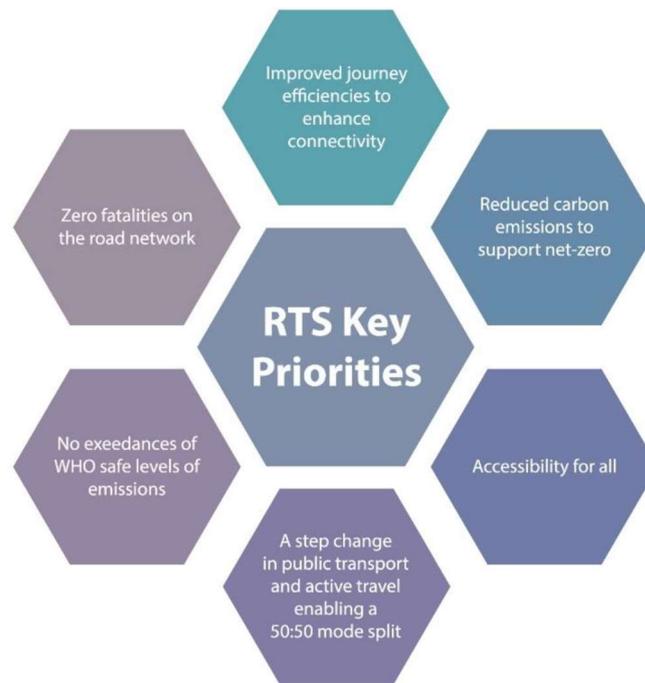


Figure 2.2 – Draft RTS Key Priorities

- 2.5 Policies and actions have been established, sitting under eighteen different headings, ranging from improving active travel, bus and rail networks, through to consideration of rural accessibility and the impact of future technology.

3 What is the SEA Environmental Report and How was it Undertaken?

- 3.1 The Environmental Report has been prepared to accompany the Draft RTS for public consultation. In accordance with statutory requirements, the ER documents the findings of the SEA carried out in respect of the Draft RTS, and the Strategic Transport Appraisal. SEA is being carried out as a plan-making tool to help shape the emerging Draft RTS throughout its development rather than only for retrospective reporting.
- 3.2 The SEA has been carried out by Nestrans officers involved with the preparation of the Plan itself. Nestrans officers undertook SEA Scoping in early 2019, with further work then undertaken to refine consider the environmental implications of emerging RTS components as they developed. Other relevant SEA's in the region and the NTS2 SEA were reviewed to ensure that all relevant environmental issues, problems and concerns were included and considered in this SEA.
- 3.3 Formal assessment of the draft version of the Draft RTS took place in Spring 2020. The assessment was initially prepared by Nestrans officers and then subject to an independent assurance review by consultants Stantec UK's dedicated SEA team alongside finalisation of the Aberdeen City Region Deal STA Part 1 Appraisal report. The final version of this ER has therefore been prepared through collaborative working between Nestrans officers and Stantec UK.
- 3.4 The purpose of SEA review undertaken by Stantec UK was to provide independent 'critical friend' support to firstly consider compliance with statutory SEA requirements and secondly to provide advice regarding potential SEA focused improvements to the Draft RTS and associated ER.

4. What is the Current State of the Environment, and Associated Issues with the Transport System?

4.1 Based upon the Nestrans RTS SEA Scoping Report (March 2019) and taking account of subsequent comments provided by the SEA Consultation Authorities, the Table 4.1 below presents an updated and summarised review of the key environmental issues which have informed the development of the RTS. Constraints maps have been included in Appendix 5 of the main Environmental Report and have also informed consideration of the current state of the environment.

Table 4.1 – Baseline Environmental Issues and Associated Implications for Draft RTS

SEA Topic	Key Issues	Implications for Nestrans RTS 2040
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of NO₂ and PM₁₀ resulting in poorer air quality particularly in Aberdeen City, where there are three air quality management Areas, (City centre, Anderson Drive and Wellington Road) much of this poorer air quality has been evidenced, as a result of road transport, traffic flows, queuing and congestion. Increase area emissions of air pollutants in city/town centres for retail, business and leisure. Need to encourage more sustainable forms of transport and lower emission vehicles such as electric and hydrogen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RTS should promote and deliver sustainable travel such as walking and cycling. Also the RTS should promote lower emission vehicles, such as electric or hydrogen including for freight and public transport. Actions could include demand management such as low emission zones or workplace parking levy to encourage a behavioural change and modal shift. Reducing car dependence. These actions have already been highlighted as mitigation to poor air quality and have informed the RTS 2040.
Climatic Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change Greenhouse gas emissions – related to transport. Transport accounts for around 37% of total Scottish Emissions (Scottish Transport Statistics 2018) Responding to Scottish Government Climate Change Emergency Declaration and The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. The need to adapt to predicted climate change and its potential impacts (e.g. Extreme weather events and sea level rises). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RTS can support land use development plans which are well served by sustainable modes of transport. The RTS should consider the greenhouse gas emissions impact of transport and support the roll out of low emission vehicles that are electric, and hydrogen powered. The RTS should through its policies and projects promote a sustainable travel hierarchy to reduce the reliance on private cars and encourage a modal shift towards walking, cycling and public transport. The RTS can support wider digital strategies that will enable a reduction in the need to travel.
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water bodies in close proximity to main roads are at risk from pollution caused by impacts of contaminated surface water run -off from roads. The River Dee in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City is a Special Area of Conservation. Coastal erosion and coastal and river flooding is already an issue in some parts of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and some projects are already underway to manage the risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RTS should minimise water pollution and avoid impacts on the qualifying interests of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) that would lead to an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC. As well as other rivers that may be affected by potential development such as the river Ythan. The RTS will recognise protected areas throughout Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire (including but limited to SSSIs, SPA's and SACs). Consideration needs to be taken for areas that are at risk of Coastal Erosion and flooding. Particularly in regard to asset management of transport infrastructure.
Land and Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the Cairngorms National Park is located in Aberdeenshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the RTS should avoid soil contamination and minimise adverse impact on soil quality and coverage.

SEA Topic	Key Issues	Implications for Nestrans RTS 2040
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased development of land on the fringes of urban areas and in rural locations, resulting in soil sealing/loss. • Contaminated land and its impacts on land use and soil quality. • Loss of prime agricultural land through development. • Loss of land to permanent development. • Compaction/structural degradation and loss of soil biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS may require some landtake for some of its proposals. This may have an impact on prime agricultural land as well as loss of land, to permanent development. This should be considered when exploring options on locations of these potential sites. • The RTS should also consider enhancements to biodiversity when undertaking any new project or improvement works.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential disturbance to and loss of biodiversity from development and climate change. • Continuing need to protect internationally, nationally and locally designated sites such as conservation areas and nature reserves and enhance where possible. • Potential impacts on protected and non-protected species from development. • Potential reduced quality and loss of green space, green linkages, wildlife corridors to developments and infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should protect and enhance biodiversity through minimising the impact on protected and non-protected designations, species and habitats. • Access to greenspace is something that the RTS can influence through promoting active travel and core paths and new active travel infrastructure. • The RTS should maximise the delivery of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. For example, through asset management of infrastructure and easier access to greenspace all. • The RTS should also consider enhancement to biodiversity when undertaking any new project or improvement works.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to greenspace and active travel opportunities. • Opportunity for Core Path Plans throughout the area to link with new developments and assist in creating accessible communities. • Elevated levels of NO2 and PM10 have a negative impact on air quality and on human health, particularly among vulnerable groups. • Health inequalities due to low incomes and/or social deprivation. • Geographical issues such as rurality or noise due to location near a major road or port, harbour or airport. • Road Safety, fatalities and casualties as a result of collisions whilst travelling and using transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should take into account health of the population. This should include access to services such as health, work, education and leisure as well as open spaces. • The RTS has a key role to play in reducing social exclusion through improving accessibility. These issues have also been considered as part of the RTS 2040 Equality Impacts Assessment and its key pillars of equalities and health and wellbeing. • The RTS has a key role to play in improving health through the promotion of sustainable and active travel such as walking and cycling. • Air quality and improving air quality should be a large part of the RTS, to improve health. • The RTS has a role to play in improving safety, reducing collisions, casualties and improving security on the transport network. • The RTS has a role to play in reducing noise from transport which can be harmful to human health.
Population (including relevant socio-economic issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of place making, design quality including open green space. • Changing demographics – ageing population. • The population is increasing, and this trend is projected to continue. • The rural nature of many parts of Aberdeenshire where a large proportion of the population live make transport and access to and affordability of transport a key issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should take account the needs of all sectors of society. • The RTS should consider population demographics when looking at new infrastructure such as active travel routes and public transport provision. Access to services such as health, work, education and leisure is a key part of the RTS with particular challenges in more rural parts of the region. • Affordability of transport is a key issue for the RTS.

SEA Topic	Key Issues	Implications for Nestrans RTS 2040
Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability of historic and cultural heritage assets to insensitive developments, climate change and land management. • Loss of heritage resources of regional and national significance. • Sustainable access (Transport and travel) to historic and cultural heritage locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should encourage sustainable travel to key historic and cultural heritage assets. • The RTS should also consider historic and cultural assets when determining locations of any new routes or infrastructure and seek to minimise any impact. • The RTS should consider sustainable tourism and protect and enhance the landscape around these assets.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merging of communities through urban expansion/ribbon development. • Loss of diversity in the landscape and its character. • Capacity of landscapes and Special Landscape Areas to absorb development and change. • Impact of undeveloped, remote and wild countryside and coasts. • Erosion of rural character through suburbanisation and the intrusion of noise and light pollution. • Potential removal or introduction of new visual elements into the landscape e.g. new strategic route, active travel or other transport infrastructure. • Access to areas of value for their landscape quality for leisure purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should take landscape setting into consideration when identifying the requirements for changes to the transport network. • The RTS should seek to minimise the impact of the transport network on areas designated for landscape or townscape protection. • The RTS should seek to improve accessibility across the region for those who do not have access to a car. • The RTS should seek to enhance and protect the landscape character when considering any transport infrastructure or development.
Material Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield sites vacant within the region. • Continuing demand for mineral extraction. • Capacity and use of existing road and rail infrastructure. • Protect and enhance airport and harbours/ports in the region. • Pressure on water infrastructure to cope with new development. • Protect, adapt and enhance existing road, bridge and rail infrastructure from effects of Climate Change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTS should promote and support development of new active travel routes and any new developments, in locations that minimise environmental impact. • Existing infrastructure should be part of an asset management plan and climate change adaption plans. New infrastructure should be built with consideration of the changing climate and extreme weather. • The RTS should be aware of any additional maintenance requirements created by its actions. • Surface access to ports, harbours and airport should be considered and influenced by the RTS.

4.2 Many of the transport and environmental problems emerging from the analysis of baseline data and the Aberdeen City Region STA process are already being addressed through local transport strategies and other plans, including the Strategic Development Plan and local development plans.

4.3 Taking account of the environmental information above, as well as the content of the Draft RTS, Table 4.2 below outlines the expected evolution of the baseline environmental position in the absence of the implementation of the RTS. This information is provided to fulfil reporting requirements set out in the 2005 Act and the environmental topic headings refer to matters specified within Schedule 3 of the 2005 Act.

Table 4.2– Baseline Environmental Issues and Associated Implications for Draft RTS

SEA Regulation Topic(s)	Possible Changes without the Emerging Regional Transport Strategy
Air Quality	<p>Without the strategy, air quality may continue to be higher than WHO safe levels of emissions from transport.</p> <p>Other Policies, Plans and Strategies (PPS) will affect air quality issues. Particularly the local transport strategies.</p>
Climatic Factors	<p>Currently, transport accounts for 37% of total Scottish emissions. The largest contributor to transport emissions is the road sector, accounting for 68% of total transport emissions. Without intervention such as actions implemented through the new RTS, traffic levels may grow and will result in increased levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Without a strong policy framework at a regional level implementation of cross border projects or implementing low emission vehicles or other new technologies may not happen.</p> <p>Actions and interventions will continue to be taken forward through local transport strategies, however a strategic approach to travel behaviour change has proven successful, particularly as many people in Aberdeenshire travel to Aberdeen City and vice versa. Other PPS will also affect climatic factors, particularly in terms of the distribution and type of development across the Nestrans area.</p> <p>Without the Draft RTS and other complementary strategies, this would likely continue. Current programmes and investment would be ongoing through the Local Transport Strategies for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. However, there would be a significantly reduced level of co-ordination between the two areas and cross border work and an unnecessary duplication of work which would undermine their effectiveness.</p>
Water	<p>Adverse effects in water quality from existing road network would remain the same. Actions and interventions will continue to be taken forward by the local authorities through their Local Transport Strategies and Transport Scotland for trunk roads. Impacts of specific interventions would be fully assessed at the project level.</p>
Land and Soil	<p>Impacts of specific interventions would be fully assessed at the project level.</p>
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	<p>Traffic levels may grow and without significant uptake on low emission vehicles this will result in increased greenhouse gas emissions and congestion which can result in poorer air quality. This can impact biodiversity, flora and fauna through increased disturbance, noise and emissions, particularly in area that do not currently suffer from high levels of traffic.</p> <p>Measures would continue to be implemented through the local transport strategies, however a regional approach to the impacts and potential solutions would not be achieved. Impacts of specific interventions would continue to be fully assessed at the project level.</p>
Health	<p>Actions and interventions would continue to be taken forward through local transport strategies, however without a regional approach to area such as access to healthcare across the region, implementation would be less joined up and significant changes to provision would be likely to be more difficult.</p>
Population (including relevant socio-economic issues)	<p>Continuing increases in population without investment in transport infrastructure, across all modes will affect the economy of the region as well as quality of life of the population.</p>
Cultural Heritage	<p>Traffic growth would likely continue which may result in a negative impact. Particularly as other PPS are promoting Tourism in the area, strongly as part of the ways to improve and diversify the economy.</p>

SEA Regulation Topic(s)	Possible Changes without the Emerging Regional Transport Strategy
	Actions and interventions will continue to be taken forward by the local authorities through their Local Transport Strategies. Impacts of specific interventions would be fully assessed at the project level.
Landscape	Impacts of specific interventions would continue to be fully assessed at the project level, however there would not be a strategic overview of the cumulative impact. Measures would continue to be implemented through the local transport strategies, however a regional approach to the impacts and potential solutions would not be achieved.
Material Assets	Maintenance of the transport network falls under the responsibility of the local road authorities and is dealt with through local transport strategies. Having a Regional Transport Strategy allows a strategic approach to asset management, climate change adaptation and good networks with the other infrastructure owners such as the Rail network, harbours and ports and the airport.

4.4 In summary, without this plan, it is envisaged that current programmes and investment would be ongoing through the Local Transport Strategies for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, however there would be a significantly reduced level of co-ordination between the two areas and cross border work. There would also be a lot of duplication of work, without a Regional Transport Strategy. For example, Nestrans works with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Public Transport Operators, Freight operators and other key stakeholders at a Regional level and feeds back into the local level, to stop duplication of meetings and work for both the local authorities and the key stakeholders.

5. What are the Likely Environmental Effects of the Draft RTS?

5.1 The preferred strategy package set out within the Draft RTS to implement the above strategic framework is structured around 18 thematic policy chapters. Each of these headings concludes with a suite of specific actions, comprising both general commitments and individual projects, each of which have been subject to SEA as detailed in Appendix 4 of the Environmental Report. A summary of the SEA findings in respect of the proposed RTS Actions is provided below.

Table 5.1 – Summary of SEA Findings for the Draft RTS

	Policy/action Headings	SEA assessment overview
AT	Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment	This will help to improve the health (both physical and mental) of the population by both increasing levels of physical activity and by improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles than if they were travelling by less sustainable means. There will be environmental impacts associated with any areas of construction which will need to be assessed in more detail at the project stage and used to inform the design of any schemes taken forward.
RL	Developing the rail network	Developing the rail network can encourage more people to move from travelling by car to public transport. Whilst rail still produces greenhouse gas emissions and it is still diesel trains used in the North East, this RTS and SEA will encourage and support more people travelling by train and encourage the decarbonisation of the railways, including looking at alternative fuels such as hydrogen trains. The Draft RTS is proposing looking at potential new railway stations along the current railway line to maximise current infrastructure assets and encourage a modal shift to rail. There will be environmental impacts associated with any areas of construction which will need to be assessed in more detail at the project stage and used to inform the design of any schemes taken forward.
RT	Aberdeen Rapid Transit	Aberdeen Rapid Transit would be a new form of public transport in the city along key strategic corridors. This could be significant in terms of encouraging a modal shift from cars to more sustainable forms of transport and aims to significantly improve the public transport offering in the region, by having a high quality, low emission, fast, reliable and frequent public transport routes. The exact route and locations of this ART are still to be identified and any locations would be subject to

	Policy/action Headings	SEA assessment overview
		the appropriate STAG and/or EIA assessments before any decisions would be made. There will be environmental impacts associated with any areas of construction which will need to be assessed in more detail at the project stage and used to inform the design of any schemes taken forward.
BS	Improving the region's bus network	As many parts of the region are rural and not everyone has access to a private car, public transport and in particular bus for those who don't live near a railway station is a vital form of transport to allow people to access work, education, leisure, health and social care. Working with bus operators will be vital to ensure that these lifeline services can continue and decarbonisation of buses is supported during the lifetime of this strategy.
PR	Maximising the benefits of park and ride	Park and Ride is an important element of the Draft RTS due to the rural nature of many parts of the region. The park and ride sites will allow for multi-modal journeys such as driving part of the way and then continuing the rest of the journey by car share, public transport or active travel. This will help to reduce emissions and improve air quality, if less cars are travelling into our towns and city centre. One new park and ride site is proposed to the south of Aberdeen, as well as expansion of the network of mini-interchange hubs across Aberdeenshire. The location of any of these sites has not been confirmed and any locations would be subject to the appropriate STAG and/or EIA assessment before any decisions would be made. There will be environmental impacts associated with any areas of construction which will need to be assessed in more detail at the project stage and used to inform the design of any schemes taken forward.
MD	Managing demand	Managing demand will be considered as part of the Draft RTS to help to improve air quality in Air Quality Management Areas and in areas where the number of vehicles and/or queuing and congestion is detrimental; to road safety, encouraging public transport, active travel, reducing emissions, improving air quality and placemaking.
RE	Reducing emissions from transport	This is a key element of the Draft RTS. This will be done through actions aimed at reducing the need to travel, through digital technology, encouraging a modal shift away from cars to more sustainable forms of transport and promoting and encouraging the use of low emission vehicles such as electric and hydrogen.
BC	Encouraging behaviour change	In order to implement the Draft RTS, encouraging behaviour change and a cultural shift will be required. This section of the strategy focuses on softer measures (such as information, promotion and marketing) to support the physical measures, such as managing demand and infrastructure improvements. So other more sustainable forms of transport can be easier and safer to use and promoting the benefits of reducing the need to travel, public transport and active travel and lower emissions vehicles to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and improve public health.
RD	Maintaining and improving the region's road network	Having good asset management is important to continue the transport links that already exist to allow people to access services such as work, education, health and social care and leisure. Some improvements to the road network are proposed, many of which are to improve safety and in some areas, to improve operational efficiency. There will be environmental impacts associated with any areas of construction which will need to be assessed in more detail at the project stage and used to inform the design of any schemes taken forward. Such assessment will also need to consider potential impacts of increased traffic where capacity is enhanced.
FR	Facilitating the movement of freight	The movement of freight is important to ensure a supply of goods to and from the area. Good access to ports, harbours and the airport is essential for the economic success of the region. The Draft RTS will encourage freight operators to move to lower emission vehicles where possible and will support the development of rail freight where appropriate.
AS	External air and sea connections	Air and sea connections can be lifeline services to the people who live in the Northern Isles and use these to access the mainland via Aberdeen. These are also important to the economy of the region and to tourism. The Draft RTS will encourage sustainable surface access plans to the ports, harbours and airport. The Draft RTS will also encourage alternative low emission fuels and promote new technologies for air and sea connections where appropriate over the lifetime of the strategy. It also aims to see connections to key UK and international hubs maintained for the economic prosperity of the region.
RS	Road safety and casualty reduction	Reducing collisions and casualties, particularly amongst vulnerable road users, will greatly improve health and wellbeing and encourage more people to shift modes from cars to active travel.

	Policy/action Headings	SEA assessment overview
RU	Improving accessibility in rural areas	Given the geography of the region, the issue of rural connectivity is vital to ensuring appropriate equity of access to education, employment, public services, health care, shopping and recreational facilities. This is a key element that has come out of our initial consultations and improvements in this area will bring wide societal benefits.
HE	Improving access to health	Improving access to health is a key part of the Draft RTS and builds on the work of the current RTS and the health and transport action plan. This access may be around transport to health care facilities or improving access to health via digital or virtual appointments.
AF	The affordability of transport	Affordability of transport and in particular affordability of public transport is important to allow people to access work, education, healthcare and leisure and is a key element that has come out of initial consultations.
AA	Improving access to the transport network for all	This is another key element that has come out of our initial consultations and has been key to the thinking around developing the Draft RTS. Access to the transport network across all modes, will help to improve access to work, education, healthcare and leisure.
PP	Planning and designing places for people	This is a key element to encourage more active travel, reduce emissions, make it easier for people to access work, education, health and leisure locally across the region and create places that are attractive and pleasant places for people to live, work and visit.
NT	Future impact of new technologies	Much of the impact of new technologies is unknown and many new technologies may be developed across the lifetime of this Draft RTS. A particular area of opportunity is around the development and take up of alternative fuels technology and connected and autonomous vehicle technology. These new technologies will be supported where they can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, improve safety and improve access to travel and transport generally across the region.

5.2 Overall, the likely significant environmental impacts identified through the SEA process are summarised below:

- **Positive impacts:** The Draft RTS includes a large number of actions and measures to increase the proportion of trips undertaken by sustainable modes (reducing the need to travel, bus, rail, walking and cycling), particularly in areas currently affected by congestion and poor air quality. Actions included in this Draft RTS include investigating the potential for Aberdeen Rapid Transit, potential further railway stations, bus and rail improvements, enhanced measures to increase the number of trips by active travel such as walking and cycling bike, encouraging the uptake of alternative fuels and support for demand management measures to lock in the benefits of other schemes. Collectively these actions will help to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. Climate Change is one of the four pillars of the Draft RTS and reducing greenhouse gas emission underpins the development of the Draft RTS and its priorities and actions. More active travel will also likely to improve the populations health and wellbeing, as well as improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Unknown impacts:** As many of the proposed measures in the Draft RTS are outline at this stage, and specific details such as routings or locations are unspecified, there are unknown physical impacts from some proposed schemes, particularly those which will result in new or extended infrastructure. This includes strategic road improvements to mitigate the cumulative impact of development. All these areas will have to be fully considered in line with the principles of STAG (which includes appraisal of environmental impacts) in order to identify a preferred option before they can be taken forward.
- **Negative impacts:** Negative impacts could arise from new road, rail, active travel, Aberdeen Rapid Transit and park and ride infrastructure which may involve land take. These impacts may arise from crossings such as bridges over water or routes through sensitive sites; special consideration will be required and additional environmental assessments carried out in these areas on a case by case basis. Negative impacts may also arise from air travel and maritime travel such as freight and passenger ferries. However, it is important to note that none of the RTS actions have been assessed as themselves likely to have significant adverse effects on the environment. Furthermore,

potential negative project-level impacts need to be balanced against predicted benefits from implementing the projects and implementing the Draft RTS as a whole, which has been developed to improve road safety, reduce congestion, improve air quality, improve health and wellbeing, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable modes of travel. Additionally, RTS Actions involving proposals for road/rail improvements have been balanced with proposals to lock in the benefits of road safety, reducing congestion for public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

5.3 The Draft RTS is a high-level strategy document and most individual actions (e.g. schemes, initiatives or projects) will have to undergo further development and appraisal work before they can be implemented. In particular, RTS Actions involving infrastructure works will require to be subject to consenting processes and environmental assessments as appropriate in order to identify and address (i.e. through siting, design and mitigation) any likely significant adverse effects. In some cases this is likely to include carrying out a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with relevant regulations. Infrastructure proposals will also need to take account of and make provision for pedestrians and cyclists as an integral part of the design process. Whilst primary mitigation will be avoidance where possible, further mitigation measures have also been developed through this SEA process.

6 How can these Environmental Effects be Effectively Managed, Mitigated or Enhanced?

6.1 To address potential issues and uncertainties identified through the SEA of individual Draft RTS components, and more broadly to the ability of the Draft RTS to address identified key environmental issues, the recommendations summarised in Table 6.1 below should be addressed either within the Final RTS and/or through subsequent RTS delivery as appropriate. This would help to further demonstrate how the SEA has informed and positively influenced the development of the RTS.

Table 6.1 – Recommended Mitigation of Environmental Effects

RTS Component	Mitigation Mechanism	Recommended Mitigation
Key Priorities	Final RTS	Consider inclusion of reference to protecting and enhancing physical environmental quality within relevant Key Priority (e.g. KP5).
RL1	Final RTS	Consider inclusion of commitment to improving (rail) network resilience.
RL2	RTS Delivery	Consider opportunities to link rail station improvements with surrounding active travel networks.
BS1 – BS6	Final RTS	Consider including a stronger commitment to the increased deployment of low emission buses, including hydrogen powered vehicles, within these actions.
PR6	RTS Delivery	Consider opportunities to link improvements to Park & Ride facilities with surrounding active travel networks.
AT7	RTS Delivery	Consider opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements into proposals for new / upgraded active travel routes through adopting a green infrastructure approach.
RD1 – RD11	RTS Delivery	Focus road actions on improvements which directly contribute to one or more of the RTS Key Priorities whilst avoiding tensions or adverse effects on others. Through careful routing and siting, direct adverse effects on sensitive receptors identified within the detailed assessment provided in Appendix 4 of the Environmental Report should be avoided wherever possible. Indirect effects should also be minimised through careful siting, design and delivery.
FR4	RTS Delivery	Prioritise modal shift (road to rail) when designing and delivering access improvements to Aberdeen South Harbour. This includes the need to future-proof improvements to account for potential future changes in freight transport.
RU1 – RU7	RTS Delivery	Consider options to mitigate environmental effects (e.g. carbon emissions) from proposals involving increased road transport to enhance accessibility in rural areas.

RTS Component	Mitigation Mechanism	Recommended Mitigation
NT2 – NT4	RTS Delivery	Consider targeting transport innovation projects within and around AQMAs.
RL1 – 2, RT1 – 5, BS1, BS2, BS4, PR1 – 6, AT1 – 3, AT5, MD2, MD4, RE3 – 6, RE9, RD1 – 11, FR3, FR4, AS6, AS7, RS4 – 6, RU3, RU7, AA1, AA5, PP3 – 4	RTS Delivery	<p>All proposed actions involving land, water and/or infrastructure works have the potential to generate a wide range of direct and indirect effects on natural and built environments. To ensure the avoidance of likely significant adverse effects (e.g. harm to sensitive receptors and designated sites) and to maximise environmental benefits from the RTS, all such proposals need to be carefully sited, designed, constructed and operated in accordance with statutory requirements, policy requirements and best practice.</p> <p>Any further studies (e.g. STAG work) or individual consenting applications (e.g. planning permission) needed to implement specific actions included within the RTS will need to be supported by relevant technical assessments, which should present a robust assessment of all likely significant social, environmental and economic impacts of implementing the action (e.g. siting and design of infrastructure works). This includes a need to undertake Equalities and/or Health impact assessments for some actions with likely impacts on particular communities or demographic groups, as well as specific environmental technical assessments. In doing so, all relevant technical assessments should define any specific mitigation measures (e.g. design changes, pollution control measures, temporary diversions, etc) which need to be incorporated into the construction or operational phases of the action to ensure the avoidance of likely significant adverse effects.</p> <p>To assist with securing the undertaking of relevant technical assessments, the full ER includes a detailed assessment (Appendix 4) and environmental constraint mapping (Appendix 5) and identifies specific likely environmental impacts from each component of Draft RTS and resultantly considers potential technical assessment requirements. This is a key output from the SEA which must be taken account of when implementing the Final RTS.</p>

7. What Monitoring is Proposed?

- 7.1 Monitoring of RTS implementation and of associated likely environmental effects (as identified through this SEA) will be undertaken and published on an annual basis through the Nestrans RTS Annual Monitoring Report. Monitoring mechanisms in respect of likely environmental effects will be detailed in due course within the Nestrans 2040 RTS SEA Post Adoption Statement.
- 7.2 The Nestrans RTS Annual Monitoring Report will be presented to the Nestrans Board and published on the Nestrans website: www.nestrans.org.uk. Implementation of both the RTS as a whole and of individual actions will take account of any observed changes to environmental baseline conditions together with any future changes to relevant Plans, Policies and Strategies.

8 What are the Reasonable Alternatives to the Draft Strategy?

- 8.1 The 2005 Act requires the likely significant effects of implementing both a PPS as prepared (i.e. the Draft RTS) and reasonable alternatives to be examined, as well as the rationale for identifying reasonable alternatives to be described. The 2005 Act further states that to be considered as reasonable alternatives, options (e.g. alternative policy criteria or site allocations) must relate to the plan or programmes' objectives and geographical scope. Reasonable alternatives must therefore be:
- Realistic, in that they are plausible alternatives which could be implemented and are consistent with relevant national and other policy frameworks;
 - Related to the objectives of the PPS under consideration; and,
 - Within the geographical scope of the PPS (i.e. applicable to the Nestrans area).
- 8.2 The Draft RTS has been developed through an iterative and collaborative process undertaken in tandem with the Aberdeen City Region Deal STA. This multi-stage options development and refinement process led to:
- The development of a holistic vision and six Key Priorities to underpin the Draft RTS, approved by the Nestrans Board in 2019. As high level objectives, it is not possible to identify any reasonable alternative priorities without changing the fundamental basis of the emerging RTS, which would not appropriately respond to identified key transport and environmental problems; and
 - The identification of a long list of options, all of which have been refined, sifted and included as a package of actions within the Draft RTS. Importantly, as all feasible and relevant options identified through the Aberdeen City Region Deal STA Part 1 Appraisal have been included (i.e. no options were discounted outright), these have all been subject to SEA as detailed in this ER. As detailed in Appendix 3 of the full ER, this approach was validated through further work undertaken by Nestrans officers to consider whether the inclusion of only some of the identified options to focus the RTS in a particular direction could still effectively deliver all six RTS Key Priorities. The work evidenced the need to include all identified options within the Draft RTS and thus confirmed that proceeding with only a limited number of the options would not itself represent a reasonable alternative. There are therefore now no other reasonable alternative options which also need to be considered in this SEA, including potentially progressing only some of the STA options.

9 Next Steps

- 9.1 The ER and this Non-Technical Summary NTS are being issued for consultation alongside the Draft RTS and Strategic Transport Appraisal. All four documents will be consulted on in Summer/Autumn 2020 for a period of 10 weeks. Details of how to participate in the consultation have been provided on the Nestrans consultation website (www.nestrans2040.org.uk) and published in a local newspaper prior to the consultation period commencing.

10 How will Responses be Considered?

- 10.1 All comments received in response to this ER and the Draft RTS will be reviewed by Nestrans officers in Autumn/Winter 2020, so that any required revisions can be made before the finalised RTS is presented to the Nestrans Board for approval. The identified SEA further mitigation and enhancement recommendations identified will also be considered at this point.
- 10.2 Once finalised and approved by Scottish Ministers, a SEA post adoption statement will be prepared and published on the Nestrans website alongside the adopted RTS in accordance with statutory requirements.