

nestrans | 2040

REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
FOR THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND

Draft for Consultation

August 2020



Nestrans is the Regional Transport Partnership for the north east of Scotland with a statutory duty to produce and deliver a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

This RTS is a long-term strategy for the areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, which sets the vision and direction for transport in the region for the next 20 years. In 2020, we face unprecedented challenges on a global, national, and local basis. The far-reaching impact of Covid-19 has created considerable uncertainties about the future, demanding short-term changes to how our society works, which may impact on longer-term. Tackling the global climate crisis means we must ensure that we are taking immediate steps to reduce the impact of our choices on the planet. The Oil & Gas downturn has affected our local economy and transport demands. Our transport strategy must help us address the needs of our economy, by placing increasing emphasis on an Energy Transition to low carbon and sustainable energy, reducing our net carbon emissions to zero; it must prioritise actions that enable short-term and longer-term economic re-building and growth and demands for better connectivity. At the same time, we must also address pressing environmental concerns and wider health and social issues.

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Our Vision:

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

A progressive transport strategy for the north east

Nestrans' first strategy, produced in 2008, was ambitious and aspirational. It contained a package of over a billion pounds' worth of new infrastructure and at the time, many thought that achieving it was unlikely.

Yet over the last 12 years, we have experienced one of the most dynamic and productive periods of investment in connectivity. Significant and transformational projects such as:

- **AWPR and Balmedie-Tipperty dualling;**
- **New Park & Ride Sites;**
- **Transformations to our airport terminal and runway;**
- **A new crossing of the River Don and road upgrades in Dyce;**
- **Investments in railway infrastructure, plus new and refurbished trains and carriages;**
- **A new harbour under construction at Bay of Nigg;**
- **Investments in walking and cycling infrastructure; and**
- **Upgrade on the A96 at Inveramsay Bridge.**

These projects have embraced connectivity by all modes of transport and give us an opportunity for profound change to the way we travel. It is essential to the success and return on these investments that we 'lock in the benefits' to ensure traffic growth does not undermine the progress that we have made.

To achieve this, our focus will be on implementing schemes and measures which will support behaviour change. This will allow us to make best use of the infrastructure we have in place and put a greater emphasis on issues such as climate change, equality, health and technology, whilst enhancing our economic competitiveness through improved connectivity.

New technology will also play a key role in our future to 2040. It can support work to place the north east as a leader of new fuel technologies and investigate changes to how we access and pay for travel and indeed whether we need to travel. This strategy will support the Regional Economic Strategy, with its focus on Energy Transition to accelerate the delivery of net zero carbon solutions, and the local authorities' commitment to net zero carbon emissions.

This pace of change presents a challenge for a strategy which will look to 2040 and the long-term yet remain flexible enough to react to trends and changes as they occur.



A sound, shared vision and direction

The success of any strategy requires a collaborative approach, and, in that regard, our region has always been ahead of the curve. Nestrans was formed in the spirit of collaboration and so too has been the development of this strategy.

As fundamental as it has been to the creation of this strategy, partnership working will play an even more important role in its fulfilment. The success of the strategy's schemes and measures depend on one another. This will need implementation and input from a range of partners in a clear and co-ordinated way.

The strategy has had input from:

- MPs, MSPs and Councillors**
- Local and regional authorities**
- Business organisations**
- Transport operators and providers**
- Active travel organisations**
- Accessibility groups**
- Health and emergency services**
- Local business community**
- Community Councils**
- General public**



Structured Interviews



Facilitated Stakeholder Workshops



Online Surveys

Ambitious, achievable and evidence based

The success of the previous strategy came from having sound business cases which created a balanced package of measures. Our plans for 2040 follow the same theme of being **realistic yet ambitious**.

The strategy has a solid evidence base in the form of a Strategic Transport Appraisal which has been funded by the City Region Deal. Following the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), this appraisal work has involved many rounds of consultation. The process started by identifying problems and opportunities and considered a long-list of potential interventions, directly addressing these. It also identified a preferred package of schemes and measures, the key elements of which form this strategy.

We have also provided the opportunity for comment on a range of discussion papers on relevant topics. This has helped to inform the development of the strategy.

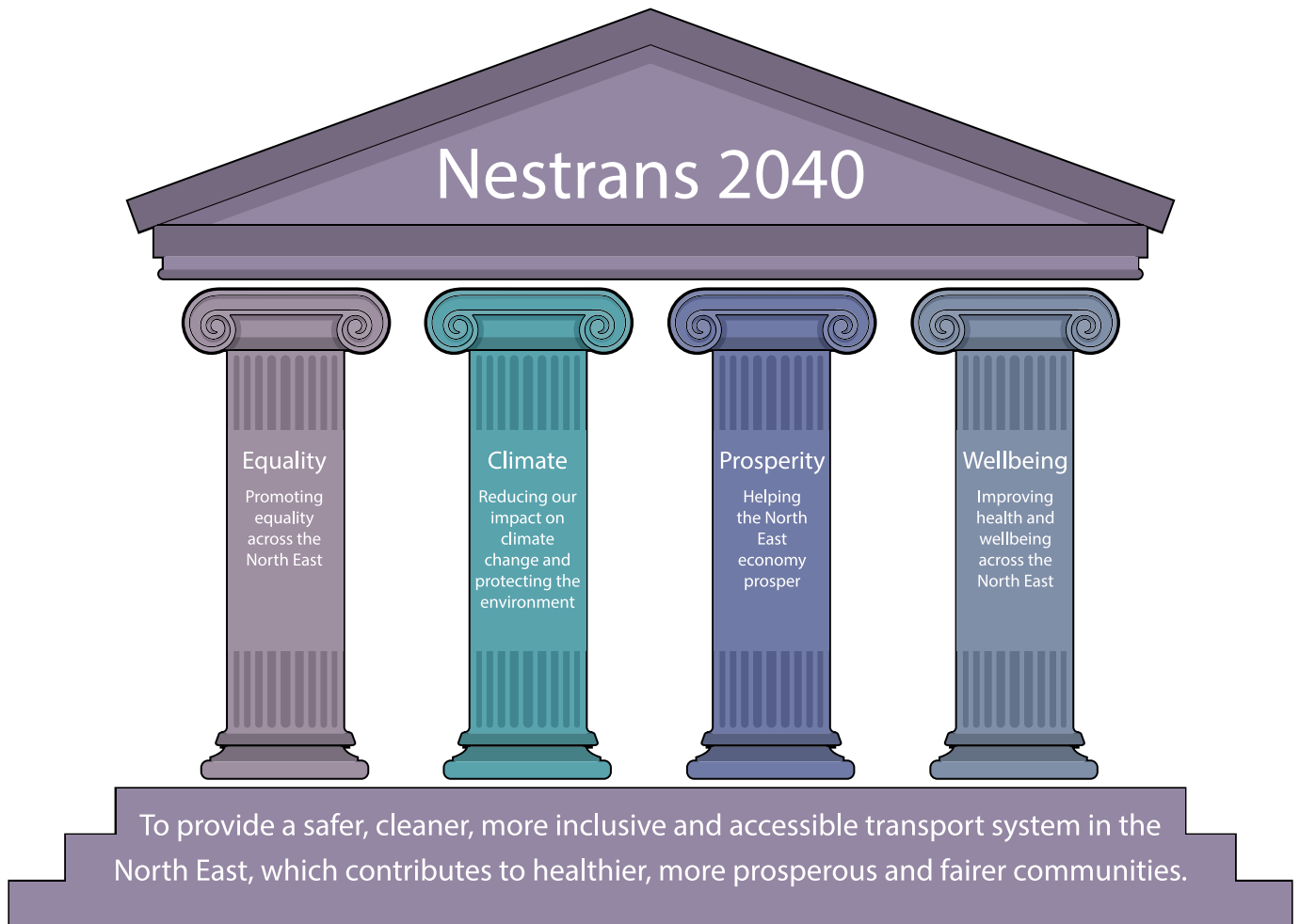
Grand wish lists often feature in strategies in misguided attempts to seem ambitious and inspired. Yet schemes that we know are undeliverable and unaffordable will not be able to achieve our region's objectives, no matter how popular or 'nice to have'.

Our ambition comes from knowing that Nestrans2040 presents a clear and collaborative package of schemes that can and will successfully address identified problems and issues, is ambitious yet deliverable and has every chance of achieving positive business cases and therefore attract the funding to enable delivery.



Our vision

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

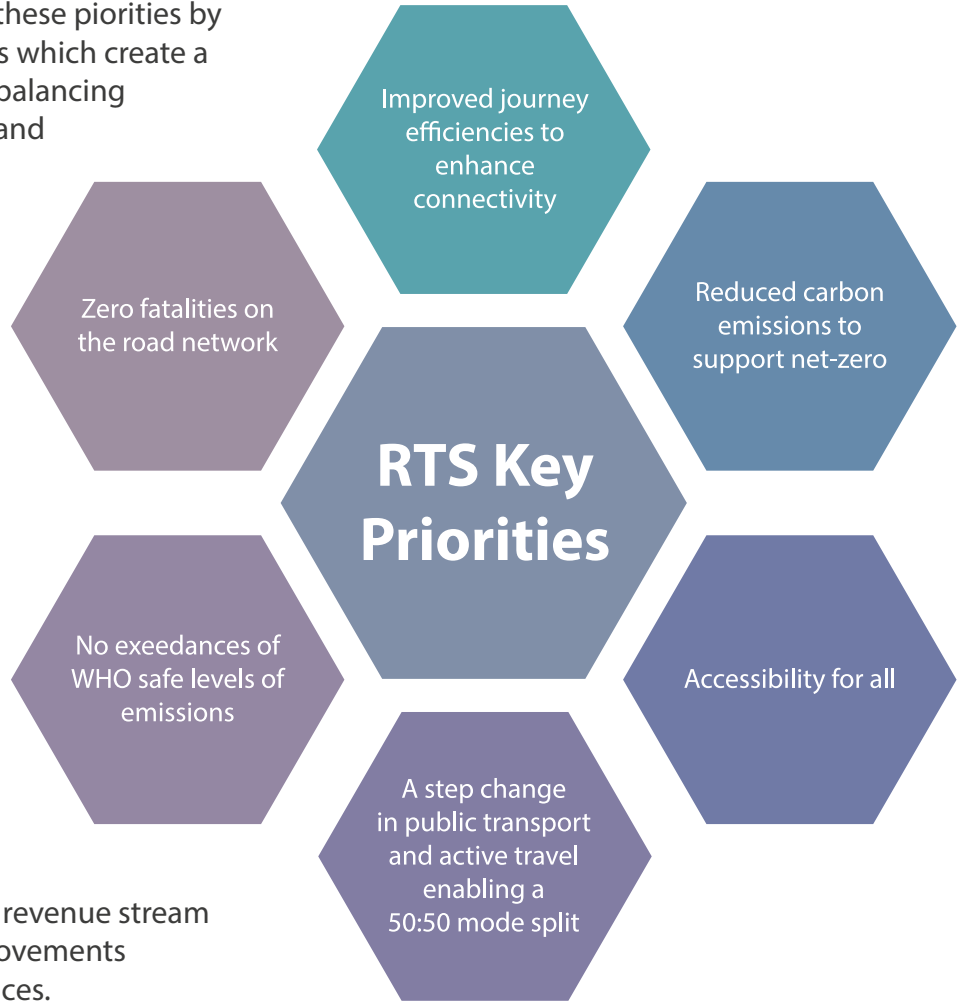


Our Priorities

To achieve our vision, the Nestrans Board has identified six key priorities:

This strategy seeks to achieve these priorities by identifying policies and actions which create a consistent and clear package, balancing the economic, environmental and social needs of the region. It also identifies actions which will require us to work in partnership with local authorities, Transport Scotland, operators, communities, third sector organisations and the private sector in order to deliver.

Key to the successful delivery of the strategy is the combination of shared transport, active travel and behaviour change improvements supported by fiscal and revenue raising measures. This balance of measures will reduce traffic, creating healthier and more pleasant places, and provide a revenue stream through which to deliver improvements to sustainable modes and choices.



Key policies and actions

Active travel for health and the environment

Increasing the number of people walking and cycling. This will include investment in safe and attractive walking and cycling facilities in our towns and cities, and on links between them. This will enhance the network of continuous links and include safe and segregated active travel connections.



Mass transit solutions to deliver mode shift

- **Further developing the rail network.**
This will include improved journey times to key destinations (building on existing commitments to reduce journey times to the Central Belt) and considering opportunities to provide more local stations;
- **Investigation into the feasibility and proposals for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network.**
Providing a step change improvement to public transport provision in the region through development of a high-quality, high capacity public transport solution with dedicated rights of way that deliver fast and reliable journey times;
- **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 & Ride to provide a region-wide public transport option.**
Supported by proposals for Aberdeen Rapid Transit. This will enable transfer to rapid transit, bus or rail services even for those who may need a car for part of their journey.

Demand Management

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

- **Car parking controls; and**
- **Understanding the potential benefits and impacts of introducing workplace parking levies or other charging options.**

Air Quality and Carbon Reduction

Introducing measures to reduce harmful emissions from transport. On a local basis this would look at pollutants affecting air quality and the opportunities to develop new fuel technologies, contributing to our ambitions to transition to low carbon and sustainable energy. On a wider basis it would look at measures to reduce transport's share of greenhouse gases which impact on a global scale and affect the wider climate with a view to moving towards net zero.

Behaviour Change

Encouraging a change in behaviour through education and encouragement towards more sustainable forms of travel. We will work with 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 assets. We will also identify where targeted improvements can help to achieve the strategy's objectives.

This includes:

- **Safety enhancements;**
- **Removing pinch points;**
- **Ensuring the long-term viability and resilience of existing structures, such as bridges on the region's principal road network; and**
- **Prioritising identified concerns on the road network, including beyond our boundaries such as improvements to the A90 between Aberdeen and Perth to connect into the national motorway network.**

Freight

Supporting the efficient movement of freight, by working with the Freight Forum to facilitate a channel for discussion and communication. This will ensure 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. This will ensure we optimise links to and from the north east. It will recognise the importance of efficient surface access to the ports and airport by a range of travel options, including new, innovative or mass transit options where appropriate.

Road Safety

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



Transport Accessibility

Seeking to enable equity of access to education, employment, health and other key services for everyone across the region, including those living outwith the city and towns.

Improving access to health and social care by working with partners including NHS Grampian, local authorities and Health & Social Care Partnerships. This will be through the ongoing work of the North East Health & Transport Action Plan.

Addressing issues around the affordability of transport ensuring that:

- **Transport poverty is minimised as far as is possible; and**
- **Priority groups have access to reasonably priced travel options.**

Improving access to the transport network for all, ensuring that:

- **People are not disadvantaged due to mobility issues or difficulties in using or accessing transport; and**
- **We help to minimise geographic disadvantages.**

Planning and designing places for people

Providing a framework for local authorities and land use development plans for the design and planning of communities. This will encourage the creation of communities as places for people, with motorised vehicles considered as one part of a wider plan, in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy.

New Technologies

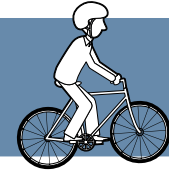
Providing a framework which can be flexible in responding to new challenges. We will also take advantage of the future impact of new technologies as they emerge.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport

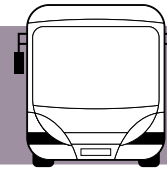
Walking and Wheeling



Cycling



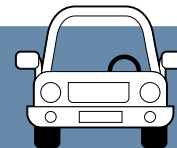
Public Transport



Taxis and Shared Transport



Private Car





Schemes and Measures

1.	City Centre Re-imagining:
i)	Supporting a city centre Low Emission Zone with the primary focus to reduce levels of vehicle emissions that are harmful to human health;
ii)	Strengthening of Aberdeen’s City Centre Car Parking Strategy, incorporating charging, enforcement and extending controls, to ensure it delivers on demand management policies and supports sustainable travel choices;
iii)	Investigation of revenue-raising options through managing the demand for car travel, including Workplace Parking Levy or other charging options;
iv)	Development of proposals for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit scheme, initially on four key corridors, linking to Aberdeen Airport and Park & Ride sites; and
v)	Implementing City Centre Masterplan and Roads Hierarchy proposals to dissuade through traffic from city routes, substantially reduce traffic in the city centre and deliver an effective network of pedestrian, cycle, bus, and rapid transit proposals.

2.	Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment:
i)	Implementing safe and segregated active travel connections which enable walking and cycling to be the norm for short journeys;
ii)	Through speed reduction measures and traffic management, ensure that towns and cities are suitable and attractive for walking and cycling;
iii)	Provide access to cycling, including hire schemes, education and training, to enable all who wish to travel actively the means to do so; and
iv)	Travel planning support for individuals and employers.

3.	Alternative Energy Region:
i)	Positioning North East Scotland at the forefront of alternative energy technology developments;
ii)	Enabling the region to be an exemplar for hydrogen transport;
iii)	Facilitating a move to electric vehicle technologies and leading the move from petrol/diesel to zero-emission transport; and
iv)	Embracing emerging transport technologies, such as connected and autonomous vehicles.
4.	Enhancing connectivity through fit-for-purpose road links:
i)	Supporting Transport Scotland’s proposals to dual the A96 Aberdeen-Inverness;
ii)	Campaigning for enhancements to the A90 Aberdeen-Perth, including a by-pass around Dundee and grade-separation of junctions;
iii)	Working with Transport Scotland to upgrade the A90 north of Aberdeen, including dualling between Ellon and the Toll of Birness, junction upgrades including roundabouts at Toll of Birness and Cortes as well as safety and reliability enhancements to Peterhead and Fraserburgh; and
iv)	Safety and reliability improvements on A944, A947, A93, A92 and A98.
5.	Addressing the challenges of rurality:
i)	Ensuring digital opportunities are maximised to reduce the dependence on travel to access services and jobs; and
ii)	Seeking to enable equity of access to education, employment, health and other key services across the region.
6.	Cross-Rail and InterCity Rail enhancements:
i)	Reduced journey times, improved reliability and service enhancements on InterCity rail routes;
ii)	Ensuring a frequent and reliable Cross-Aberdeen local rail service;
iii)	Delivery of new stations where appropriate to improve connectivity to the rail network; and
iv)	Providing opportunities for growth in railfreight.

Join us in sharing your thoughts

The Nestrans 2040 Regional Transport Strategy has been developed in partnership for the region and its people. It is important that individuals and organisations respond and input as part of this continuing consultation. We hope that this document has given you a brief insight into the Strategy. We would encourage you to take the opportunity to view the full strategy document online. We present the document in a number of chapters to articulate how it has been developed.

It also explains what we would hope to achieve in partnership with others and for that reason we would welcome your comments and thoughts.

View the full strategy document, find out more and contribute online at www.nestrans2040.org.uk.