



## **Response to the National Planning Framework 4 – Call for Ideas**

### **Introduction**

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the next National Planning Framework (NPF4) and would be happy to engage further on any aspects of our submission which the Scottish Government would like to explore.

Nestrans is currently preparing a Regional Transport Strategy for the next twenty years, Nestrans 2040, and it is timely to be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the Call for Ideas with an indication of interventions which are likely to be contained within the RTS. Through the Aberdeen City Region Deal, a Strategic Transport Appraisal has been undertaken and the RTS builds on the developing scenarios and options from that appraisal.

Nestrans works closely with constituent local authorities and Transport Scotland and the interventions which are being considered have been developed in conjunction with these bodies and through a consultation process consistent with STAG. Measures will be further developed through more detailed STAG appraisals and considered through the development of Local Development Plans (LDP), Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Local Transport Strategies (LTS) and Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport projects Review (STPR2) as well as the process of work on the NPF4.

Nestrans acknowledges the Scottish Government's commitment of achieving Net Zero carbon by 2045, and this submission should make a significant contribution to that ambition as well as our own.

Name of proposed national development	<b>North East Scotland Strategic Transport Network enhancements. Improved International, national and intra-regional connections.</b>
Brief description of proposed national development	<p>Transformational change in strategic transport connections within the north east and connecting the region to the Central Belt, rest of the UK and Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved rail links Aberdeen to Central Belt</li> <li>• Regional commuter rail services (Montrose - Aberdeen – Inverurie, with additional local stations)</li> <li>• Improved surface access connectivity to Aberdeen International Airport via public transport</li> <li>• Aberdeen Rapid Transit (Craibstone via Airport and TECA to Portlethen via Aberdeen City Centre, Bridge of Don to Kingswells/Westhill via Aberdeen City Centre, Orbital route connecting Bridge of Don to Aberdeen South Harbour, all with complementary infrastructure and priorities)</li> <li>• Improved connections to strategic port developments at Peterhead and Fraserburgh</li> <li>• A new strategic Park &amp; Ride site at Portlethen</li> <li>• Sea freight and ferry connections to Orkney and Shetland.</li> </ul>
Location of proposed national development (information in a GIS format is welcome if available)	Widespread across the region.
What part or parts of the development requires planning permission or other consent?	<p>Inter City Rail - A development within one or more of the Classes of Development described is designated a national development.</p> <p>Aberdeen Rapid Transit - depending on the scale of physical transformation required, planning permission and compulsory purchase may be required. This will become more apparent as the detail of projects advance.</p> <p>New rail stations may also require planning permission and/ or compulsory purchase.</p> <p>Other transport infrastructure developments would typically be promoted through specific trunk road or side road orders.</p>

When would the development be complete or operational?	2026-2040
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<p>Is the development already formally recognised – for example identified in a development plan, has planning permission, in receipt of funding etc.</p>	<p>Rail - Improved rail links Aberdeen to Central Belt recognised in NPF3 (pg76), funded through the City Region Deal additional funding package and currently being developed by a Project Group consisting Transport Scotland, Nestrans, Network Rail and others.</p> <p>The classes of development support the development of an enhanced Inter City rail network within Scotland, which must be widened out to benefit all of Scotland. Additional capacity on the existing rail network should demonstrate serving cities north of the Central Belt and commitment is required to electrification and/or hydrogen trains to deliver the decarbonisation of the railways.</p> <p>Regional Transport Strategy All elements. Ensuring effective connections to north coast ports (Peterhead and Fraserburgh) has been recognised due to importance and value of seafood and energy transition.</p> <p>Rail connections and Park &amp; Ride site at Portlethen originally identified in STPR and confirmed through Aberdeen City Region Deal;</p> <p>Aberdeen Rapid Transit, connectivity to airport identified in Strategic Transport Appraisal and key elements of Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy 2040.</p> <p>North East Freight Action Plan.</p>
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Contribution of proposed national development to the national development criteria (maximum 500 words)

Increasing the use of public transport through improved inter city rail links to and from Aberdeen to Inverness, the central belt, rest of the UK and Europe, and investing in Aberdeen Crossrail will release wider capacity on Scotland's rail network, will ensure a reduction in emissions from private and road freight vehicles, will enhance commuter services and connections into intercity communities in the corridor, and coupled with progressive decarbonising of transport networks will contribute to meet Scotland's net zero target. Faster and better rail links will improve connectivity and reduce perceptions of remoteness, provide an alternative to car and air travel, which will encourage mode shift, have environmental benefits, and enhance the productivity of business travel, which is beneficial to inclusive growth. Aberdeen Crossrail (Montrose-Aberdeen-Inverurie

local service) may be suitable for a zero-carbon hydrogen trains pilot, helping the Scottish Government's aim of decarbonising the railways and contributing to the climate change criterion.

Lower emission rates and reduced reliance on private car ownership and road freight travel will help to enhance poor air quality, therefore ensuing better health and wellbeing for people. Rapid rail movements support inclusive growth by reducing journey times.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit will offer transformational change to the region's public transport, encourage modal shift, reduce carbon emissions and other pollutants and utilise road space more effectively. Bus services provide the most effective and efficient form of motorised road transport and are essential in providing socially-necessary transport for people without access to a car, which is over a third of households in some parts of the north east. A tram-like scheme with complementary priority infrastructure and a pedestrian/cycling/bus only centre will be a central tenet in rejuvenating Aberdeen City Centre, through supporting living in the city centre, improving air quality and ensuring public access to the facilities on offer in North East's regional centre. Better access to rapid transit will address social exclusion issues and ensure better accessibility to priority areas, such as health services. Rapid Transport will support people, sustainability and quality of life contributing to modal shift and improving place.

The harbours in the north east have a long history of supporting the economic viability of the area, and have continued to have a vital role as freight and ferry hubs linking to the islands and international locations. Support for coastal and promoting passenger and freight movement by short sea shipping routes will again support people and inclusive growth by ensuring quality of life and enabling more equal access to services and facilities. Increased short sea shipping routes will reduce road freight and may help to meet the net zero emissions target.

The north east ports (Peterhead and Fraserburgh) make a significant contribution to the national economy via the value of seafood landed and processed, the contribution of the deep water berthing for the sub-sea industry, and the wider renewables and decommissioning work ongoing. Reliable connections are essential for their continued success, and targeted investment on the A90(N) would be part of ensuring maximised contribution to the national economy, and inclusive growth agenda.