nestrans

Mainstreaming the Equality Duty Report and Equalities Outcomes

March 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) covering the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council areas. The Partnership's principal statutory role and duty is to develop and oversee the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

The original Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy 2008 was developed in accordance with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and subordinate Regulations, including associated Regional Transport Strategy Guidance. The Strategy gained Ministerial approval in June 2008 and a Refresh was published in 2013.

Since then, a Regional Transport Strategy covering the period to 2040 has been developed and went through a process of stakeholder engagement in 2019 and 2020 and public consultation over the Summer of 2020. The Nestrans Board endorsed the new Regional Transport Strategy 2040 and it will be submitted to Scottish Government for Ministerial approval in spring 2021.

The RTS 2040 vision is:

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

1.1. In support of this vision, the strategy has been developed under four equal and overlapping pillars that align with and support the pillars of the National Transport Strategy which was published in February 2020.

Nestrans 2040

Equality
Promoting equality across the North East

Climate
Reducing our impact on climate change and protecting the environment

Prosperity
Help deliver inclusive economic growth across the North East

Wellbeing
Improving health, safety and wellbeing across the North East

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

1.2. Sitting within the framework of these pillars are six key priorities which set the tone and direction of the strategy overall. These have been developed to relate to each of the four pillars and to provide a clear statement of intent on what the strategy is aiming to achieve.

Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity

Zero fatalities on the road network

Reduced carbon emissions to support net-zero

RTS Key Priorities

Air quality that is cleaner than World Health Organisation standards for emissions from transport

Accessibility for all

A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split

RTPs are statutory Community Planning partners and the Partnership is a signatory to the Community Plans and Local Outcome Improvements Plans (LOIPs) covering its two constituent Council areas. Through its role in Community Planning, the Partnership seeks to support and contribute to the achievement of a range of wider equalities outcomes identified within LOIPs.

RTPs are also designated "Key Agencies" within the Development Planning process. Through its statutory role in contributing to and supporting Strategic and Local Development Plans, Nestrans seeks to ensure that strategic Land Use and Transportation policies are closely aligned, with a view to ensuring that all forms of land use and related development are served by a range of transport modes which are inclusive and provide accessible and sustainable travel choices for all sectors of the community.

Effective and accessible transport is the lifeblood of an inclusive and prosperous society. In developing and delivering its RTS, working with statutory and other key stakeholders, the

Partnership seeks to ensure that the connectivity and accessibility needs of all sectors of society and communities are recognised and addressed.

Relevant issues with particular relevance to the transport sector include:-.

- people with a disability or long-term illness are less likely to hold a full driving licence compared to people who report no disability/ long-term illness;
- adults from minority ethnic groups are markedly less likely to hold a driving licence than white ethnic groups;
- adults with a disability or long-term illness are more likely to use a local bus service than those with no disability or long-term illness;
- women make more use of local bus services than men;
- older people are more likely to use local bus services than other adults;
- women are less likely to cycle than men.

2. EQUALITIES DUTIES

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced guidance on how public authorities can meet the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Nestrans also took part in a virtual workshop with other RTP's and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in December 2020.

The Equality Act 2010 defines "general equality duties" which are as follows:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibitive conduct;
- Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristic and those who do not.

    The Act also sets out that:

- Meeting different needs includes (among other things) taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities;
- Fostering good relations means tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people of different groups; and
- Meeting the general equality duty may involve treating some people more favourably than others.

3. SPECIFIC DUTIES

The specific duties are the steps required to deliver the general duties as outlined above. The general actions required are;

- To publish a Mainstreaming Report and update this at least every two years and should include the following:
    - Show how equality becomes part of the structures, behaviours and culture of an authority;
    - Demonstrate how, in carrying out its functions, it is promoting equality;
    - Mainstreaming equality contributes to continuous improvement and better performance.

- To publish an Equality Outcomes Report and to update this every two years using involvement and evidence to:
    - Define a set of equality outcomes which it considers will enable the authority to better perform the general equity duty.

4. MEETING OUR DUTIES

4.1. Identifying the functions and policies relevant to equality

Nestrans is currently a Model 1 RTP having the statutory duty to develop a Regional Transport Strategy for its area. At present, although Nestrans has other powers, this remains its only duty under the 2005 Act and Nestrans has not moved towards seeking additional powers to allow it to move to a service delivery role. Consequently, Nestrans remains a very small organisation with a total of eight staff (March 2021), one role which is currently a vacancy.

The current establishment comprises:-

- Director
- Strategy Manager
- Transport Executive (Strategy & Delivery)
- Transport Executive (Programmes & Delivery)
- Transport Executive (Travel Planning & Delivery)
- Cycling Development Officer
- Office Manager
- Transport Officer (vacancy)

Nestrans is assisted in carrying out its functions by the provision of financial and human resources services by Aberdeenshire Council and Legal and IT services by Aberdeen City Council. These services were agreed by resolution of the Nestrans Board and in effect form service agreements with the two Councils concerned. Nestrans also receives Communications and Marketing support from Aberdeenshire Council and has a dedicated staff member (employed by Aberdeenshire Council but funded by Nestrans) 13 hours per week. Nestrans staff are not employed by any of these councils but are directly employed by Nestrans itself.

Since its formation in April 2006, Nestrans has very much concentrated on its primary duty to develop and implement a Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

At present, Nestrans is responsible for funding projects through its revenue and capital budgets which in 2020/21 totalled £4.015M. £2.989M Capital and £1.026M revenue. Consequently, while Nestrans is not a direct provider of transport services, it can influence that provision through grant assistance to local authorities and other public bodies, it can influence central government and other national transport providers through responses to consultations and pro-active lobbying and it can strongly influence transport policy and provision through the requirement for local transport and planning authorities to take cognisance of the Regional Transport Strategy when drawing up their own statutory documents.

Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

The RTS contains a range of objectives, policies and proposals that are designed to promote equality of access to transport for all sectors of the community from the disabled and the socially excluded, as a result of multiple social deprivation, to those who do not use public transport for fear of personal security. It also seeks to provide equality of opportunity to access transport no matter where someone lives.

As required by Scottish Government, our RTS was reviewed in 2019/20 to bring it in line with the current capabilities of Nestrans and better align it with the National Transport Strategy and other national, regional and local strategies and plans.

Many of the policies and actions contained within the RTS are concentrated on improving accessibility and in particular:
- Improving accessibility in rural areas
- Improving access to health and social care
- The affordability of transport
- Improving access to the transport network for all
- Planning and designing places for people

By addressing these issues in a non-discriminatory way, we will achieve equality of accessibility by all our residents and visitors.

The proposed RTS 2040 is available on our website www.nestrans.org.uk and the public consultation and supporting documents and assessments are available on www.nestrans2040.org.uk

Employment Duty

Advice on human resources issues is provided to Nestrans by Aberdeenshire Council who have developed their own comprehensive Equality Scheme. Therefore any advice supplied is compliant with our equalities requirements. Similarly, legal advice is provided by Aberdeen City Council.

As a result we have made significant progress on a number of fronts and have approved, published and applied policies and procedures on:-

Adoption Leave
Agency Workers and Consultants
Alcohol and Drug Misuse
Annual Leave and Public Holidays
Attendance Management
Anti-Bullying and Harassment Guidance
Career Breaks
Careers Information
Contract Information
Death in Service
Disability Leave Scheme
Disciplinary
Disclosure of Information
Domestic Abuse
Employee Review Schemes
Equality
Flexible Working
Gastrointestinal Infection Guidance
Grievance
Hospitality & Gifts
Industrial Action
Job Grading
Learning and Development
Leavers Process
Maternity Leave

Occupational Health
Overtime and Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)
Paternity Leave
Protection of Vulnerable Groups
Recruitment, Selection and Criminal Record Checks for Employment
Redeployment
Redundancy
Relocation and Resettlement
Retiral Award Scheme
Retirement
Salary Information
Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Registration
Secondment
Shared Parental Leave
Smoking Policy
Social Media
Special Leave
Stress and Mental Wellbeing
Structure Reviews
Trade Unions
Travel and Subsistence
TUPE
Volunteers
Work Performance and Ability
Working Time
Worksmart
Zero Tolerance

The above are all published on Aberdeenshire Council's Arcadia-Lite service at http://arcadialite.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/

In line with Aberdeenshire Council's HR policies, which are adopted by Nestrans, we are committed to adopting a fair and consistent approach in recruitment and selection procedures whilst ensuring the employment and retention of a high quality and motivated workforce.

In accordance with Aberdeenshire Council's equality policy, the procedures for recruitment promote equal access to jobs, good personnel practice and compliance with employment legislation. All candidates will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities regardless of gender, race, age, status, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs. Nestrans is committed to ensuring that all employees involved in the recruitment and selection process are properly trained in order that the objectives of this policy are met.

Nestrans staff work flexibly, using flexi time to manage their work life balance and all can work remotely. Three out of the seven staff work part time.

The building that we currently use for our offices is rented from Aberdeen City Council. The building has level access and wide doors and there is also one car parking space at the rear of the building adjacent to the level access. Accessible toilets for people with disabilities are available on the same level as the office and a hearing loop is installed within the office.

During 2020/21, the Nestrans office has been closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and all staff have worked from home, only attending the office occasionally to check mail, collect items required to do their work and process invoices. This has led to Nestrans staff working more flexibly than before and adapting their working practices to allow for remote working. All staff

have a laptop and mobile telephone and have been primarily using MS Teams to communicate and work.

This change in working practices to remote and more flexible working is likely to continue for the foreseeable future until Covid-19 restrictions ease. It is likely, as remote and flexible working is now more of the culture, that staff will spend less time in the office in future and travel less as many meetings can now be attended virtually.

4.2. Assessing and consulting on the impact of our policies

Assessment

As part of the development of the new RTS 2040, several assessments were carried out in parallel. These included an Equality Impact Assessment, Health Inequalities Impact Assessment, Fairer Scotland Duty and Strategic Environmental Assessment. These are available on our website https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RTS-Equalities-Assessments.pdf

Consultation

A comprehensive consultation was carried out as part of the development of the RTS 2040 and a consultation website and virtual exhibition was published during Summer 2020 and is available here www.nestrans2040.org.uk. A **North East Transport Consultative Forum (NETCF)** was established in 2003 and consists of over 100 stakeholders with an interest in transport issues in the north east. The Forum was originally established to ensure a balance of economic, social and environmental interests and this has been maintained to ensure that sustainability principles are at the heart of policy development. The members therefore include community representatives, economic and environmental groups as well as transport operators and non-governmental bodies. Organisations include those representing minority groups and disability groups, thus ensuring inclusion in policymaking and that equality issues are given a high profile. Membership of the Forum includes representatives from:

Health	Safety	Mobility	Business and Commerce	Employment
Cycling	Emergency Services	Disability (including Sensory Impairment)	Bus	National Park
Walking	Economic Dev.	Environment	Rail	Freight
Tourism	Road	Leisure	Education	Taxis
Young People	Air	Retail	Elderly	Harbours and Shipping

The Group Leaders or Transport Spokespersons from each of the political parties on the two Councils are also included on the invitation list to Forum meetings and NETCF circulations. Officials from Transport Scotland receive circulations and minutes and attend the Forum when appropriate. Minutes from the NETCF meetings are available on our website Documents – North East Transport Consultative Forum | NESTRANS

During the development of the RTS 2040, a virtual workshop of the Forum was also held to discuss and obtain feedback on the draft strategy.

The Forum continues to meet when appropriate to:

- Inform people of what Nestrans is doing and what are our future plans;
- Allow for discussion and involvement in decision making on relevant issues;

- Allow issues of concern to be raised; and
- Use as a basis of developing initiatives.

It is not intended that the forum be a vehicle just to tell people what we are doing but to provide an opportunity at which a wide range of issues can be discussed and developed, so that members feel engaged and involved.

Members of organisations representing groups of people with disabilities are included on NETCF (as detailed above) and have been actively involved in all aspects of bringing forward the strategy. In particular, the local Disability Advisory Groups are both represented on the Forum, as are the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland. We have also had meetings with local youth groups and with older people through Grampian Regional Equality Council.

In this way, equalities issues have been mainstreamed throughout the development of the strategy, rather than being a specific analysis of the final package against a list of criteria. In addition to this, however, as part of the Transport and Health Action Plan developed as a sub-strategy to the RTS, a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment on the Strategy has been undertaken in conjunction with NHS Grampian and the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnerships and other partners. This assessment included detailed consideration of the impacts of the strategy on key groups.

Monitoring policies for any adverse impact on equalities

Built into the RTS is a monitoring plan associated with specific targets. A monitoring report is reported to our Board on an annual basis and these are available on our website at Monitoring and Modelling | NESTRANS. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, a series of ten travel surveys were also undertaken. These are also available on this webpage.

A number of the monitoring measures relate to accessibility and integration which in terms of equality are important issues.

4.3. Employment Duty

As an organisation employing eight staff, the Partnership is not required to report on Gender Pay Gap Information.

As noted above, the Partnership adopts the employment and related monitoring processes of Aberdeenshire Council, which are continually reviewed to ensure equality issues are fully recognised and embedded within employment reporting.

We carry out monitoring of candidates as part of our recruitment process and have provided a web-based application documentation that will allow applications electronically and allow large print access.

The gender and ethnicity composition of the Partnership's employees as of March 2021 is as follows:

	2016		2021	
Ethnicity	Male	Female	Male	Female
White	2	6	3	4
Mixed or Multiple				
Asian				

African				
Caribbean or Black				
Other				

Guidance issued in March 2015 under the Scottish Government's Equality Evidence Toolkit for Public Authorities indicates that reporting combinations of other protected characteristics for small employee numbers risks identifying individuals, which should be avoided.

Board Diversity

Nestrans is committed to making progress on improving the diversity of our Board to encourage new and innovative thinking and maximise use of talent, leading to better decision making and governance.

As at March 2021, the Board is made up of eight Councillor members of which four are nominated by Aberdeen City Council and four are nominated by Aberdeenshire Council. Nestrans has no control over these nominations. In addition, there are a further four non-councillor Board members, appointed directly by Nestrans.

As at March 2021, the current gender balance of the Board is six males and two females for Councillor members and three males and one female for non-Councillor members.

Nestrans will seek to encourage diversity amongst its non-councillor board members in terms of the interests and groups represented on the Board. Nestrans will also seek to improve the current gender balance of its non-councillor board members in line with the principles of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018.

As the remaining eight Board members are appointed by the two Councils, it is only the recruitment of non-councillor Board members that Nestrans has control over. The above commitments will be added to the scope of the appointments committee for future non-councillor board appointments in order to ensure an inclusive application process.

In addition to the above, Nestrans will request that the Councils consider the principles of the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 when making Councillor appointments to the Nestrans Board. This should also fit in with the need to consider the political balance of the Board and appropriate representation from the relevant Council committees.

Publish the results of assessments, consultation and monitoring

Both the Mainstreaming Report and Outcomes Report will be reported to the Nestrans Board for approval before being published on the Nestrans website www.nestrans.org.uk.

An update will also be provided within the Nestrans annual report which is published on our website and identifies HR policies. It includes a specific section on equalities reporting progress.

Ensuring employees are aware of their duty to promote equality

All Nestrans policies relating to employment and the strategy are available on our web page. They are also subject to reports to the Board which again are available on our website. Any

amendments made to employee policies are circulated to ensure staff awareness of any changes.

The accompanying Equality Outcomes Report includes a specific action which is designed to ensure that all employees of the Partnership are aware of and take appropriate actions to address, implement and monitor the Partnership's duties in relation to equalities.

<u>Nestrans Equalities Outcomes 2021</u>

To ensure that equality issues are fully addressed, this outcome report sets out the range of equalities issues facing Nestrans and its operations, the outcomes that we have set and the actions to be taken to meet these outcomes.

The Nestrans Equalities Outcomes were first published at the end of 2014 and again in 2017.

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership (RTP) covering the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council areas. The Partnership's principal statutory role and duty is to develop and oversee the delivery of the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS).

Summary of Evidence
As part of preparing the Equalities outcomes, Nestrans referred to the Fairer Scotland Duty, Health Inequalities Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment that were carried out in 2019 and 2020 as part of the information gathering and consultation process to develop the Regional Transport Strategy 2040. Nestrans also conducted a number of consultation activities in developing the RTS 2040. This has included speaking to various stakeholders and groups and proactively attending events and meetings to talk about and receive feedback on our draft plans. There has also been a workshop with the North East Scotland Transport Consultative Forum and a website www.nestrans2040.org.uk was developed to allow people to read and comment on discussion papers. www.nestrans2040.org.uk gives a good overview of the consultation work that has been done.
Nestrans also monitors many aspects of travel and transport as part of its annual monitoring report. This report is published on the Nestrans website www.nestrans.org.uk. As part of this annual monitoring report, there are several items monitored in the report that are very relevant to the Equalities Outcomes. The targets relate to the original RTS and will be updated to reflect the new RTS 2040. The numbering relates to the Indicators in the full Monitoring Report.
These are highlighted in the following graphs and commentary.

2. Key issues and opportunities for the north east

Issues

2.1. The significant amount of background work that has informed the development of this strategy has highlighted the following key issues and opportunities for transport in the north east.

2.2. ***A growing and ageing population*** - Between 2001 and 2018, the population of Aberdeen City increased by 7% (from 211,910 to 227,560), while Aberdeenshire grew by more than double this figure at 15% (226,940 to 261,470). This resulted in an 11% increase across

the region, which is greater than that of the Scottish national profile at 7% over the same period. Population projections indicate that between 2016 and 2041 the population of Aberdeen City will increase by a further 6% and Aberdeenshire by 13%[1]. This compares to a Scottish average of 5%. Whilst a growth in population in the region can be viewed as a positive, in common with national trends it is expected that the number of people of pensionable age and over will grow by 14% in Aberdeen City and 29% in Aberdeenshire[2]. This will present a significant challenge for the region in terms of health and social care requirements and it is vital that we contribute to people being able to remain in good health and socially active for longer.

2.3. The impact that *climate change* will likely have on our region by 2040 will bring rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns and an increase in extreme weather events. We are already seeing some of these impacts today with the last decade being the warmest since records began. Rainfall has been increasing in Scotland over the last thirty years, with more heavy downpours. The global climate is changing and this is expected to accelerate in the coming decades. For transport infrastructure it is anticipated that this will lead to structures and assets being exposed to higher temperatures, flooding, coastal erosion and subsidence as well as potentially increasingly being exposed to high winds and storms. Greater consideration will need to be given going forward to construction methods, materials used and location of development in the context of climate change.

2.4. *Car availability and usage* – car mode share for travel to work in the region is particularly high. At 58% pre-covid, Aberdeen City has significantly higher car mode share on travel to work journeys than Edinburgh (39%), Glasgow (45%) and Dundee (53%). At 81% Aberdeenshire car mode share for travel to work is higher than in Aberdeen. The Scottish national average is 63%. The number of households with access to two or more cars is also high, particularly in Aberdeenshire (38%)[3].

2.5. *Travel distances* – the region has a large geographic area and hence longer than average travel distances – almost half of Aberdeenshire residents travel further than 10km to work. This is an increasing trend - since 2011, total vehicle kilometres travelled annually in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire has increased by 3% and 8% respectively, compared to 5% nationally. 2020 will see these figures significantly reduced with the longer term trends post-covid still to emerge.

2.6. *Socio-economic inequalities* – there are communities across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire which experience high levels of deprivation, often linked to poor levels of connectivity and a lack of access to opportunities including education, employment and leisure.

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[1] Source: National Records of Scotland, Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2016 based)

[2] Source: National Records of Scotland, Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2016 based)

[3] Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, Scottish Household Survey, 2018

2.7. The ***mode share*** of travel to work by different modes across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire has remained relatively static with the majority of travel to work journeys undertaken by car drivers and public transport use remaining relatively low. This is very much influenced by the combination of where people choose to live, the locations of their workplaces and the difficulty of providing a viable and attractive public transport network to meet these complex journey needs. For those journeys that could be undertaken by public transport, a perceived lack of attractive and efficient public transport alternatives, the ready availability of free or cheap parking at destinations and the limited coherent and segregated active travel network all make it challenging to change travel behaviours.

2.8. Limited ***data on travel patterns*** across the north east and the census data quickly going out of date, means that it is difficult to get an accurate picture of how people are travelling across the north east for everyday journeys beyond simply travel to work and education. The changes to travel due to restrictions that have occurred during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic have also changed travel patterns and it is not clear how these may patterns may alter once restrictions ease.

2.9. ***Perceptions of public transport*** are often poor with it seen as an unattractive option due to long and unreliable journey times compared to the car and lack of quality interchanges. Confidence in the reliability of bus services and the disproportionate impact on buses when there is any form of network disruption is off-putting for many potential bus users. Mode share for travel to work by bus in Aberdeen in 2019 was lower than other cities in Scotland at 7% compared to Glasgow 17%, Edinburgh 28% and Dundee at 14% [5]. The Covid-19 pandemic and the advice not to use public transport unless the journey was essential may also have acerbated this perception.

2.10. The ***rural nature of much of the region*** makes it particularly challenging to serve by public transport and car travel will remain a requirement for many.

2.11. ***Challenges for the bus industry*** which include congestion, declining patronage and rising costs make it difficult for bus operators to provide attractive and reliable services. Reducing budgets available for local authorities to support services combine to result in a vicious circle of declining level of service and rising fares making services less attractive. The significant short and long-term challenges presented by Covid-19, which will make it increasingly challenging to attract passengers back to using the bus, will only add to the uncertainty and challenges for the industry as a whole going forward and potentially result in increasing levels of inequality.

[5] Source: Travel to work and other purposes, Scottish Government Statistics, www.statistics.gov.scot

2.12. The ***relative remoteness of the city region*** to key markets in the central belt and further afield make efficient and effective connections for businesses vital.

2.13. The ***cumulative impact of development*** - continuing demands for growth and economic development require further investment in the transport networks which sometimes cannot be justified in advance of development and may often be contrary to attempts to influence mode choice. The cumulative impact of a large number of developments across a wider area can create the requirements for infrastructure improvements physically remote from that development but linked by a common transport corridor. Some infrastructure improvements can be funded through the planning system and developer contributions however there are significant challenges in delivering improvements that are required due to the cumulative impact of a number of developments over time.

2.14. ***Digital connectivity*** is a particular problem for large areas across Aberdeenshire. Although there has been significant and ongoing investment in improving digital connectivity across the region in recent years there are still areas where poor connectivity makes remote and flexible working much more challenging.

Opportunities

2.15. ***Revolution in Rail improvements*** – investment in dualling the railway line between Aberdeen and Inverurie, and signalling improvements south of Aberdeen, have facilitated the opportunity to separate local rail services from InterCity services. New and refurbished rolling stock have enabled a step change in local rail services, with a dedicated local service calling at all stations between Inverurie, Aberdeen and Montrose and separate services providing an express service between Aberdeen and major markets.

2.16. The completion of the ***Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route***, funded by Transport Scotland and the local authorities, has enabled traffic to distribute around the city and avoid passing through it. This provides the opportunity to reassess the roads hierarchy within the city, lock in the benefits by ensuring public transport, walking and cycling facilities are prioritised and bring forward City Centre Master Plan schemes.

2.17. The ***high quality of life*** within the region is evident in the low levels of deprivation. The number of locations within the 20% most deprived in Scotland (SIMD, 2020) for Aberdeen City are 29 and Aberdeenshire 9. This compares to the City of Edinburgh at 71, Glasgow City - 339, and Dundee City - 70. However, in rural areas deprivation can be experienced on a household by household basis, rather than on an area

by area basis and is therefore less easily tracked and can be hidden.

2.18. **Tourism** numbers for the region have grown year on year and the region is one of the most visited in the UK. Aberdeen is ranked 7th of all places in the UK as a location to have a weekend break (Laterooms 2017). The region boasts Europe's largest whisky trail, over 300 castles / country houses and historic ruins, 55 golf courses, a National Park, five snow sports centres, Royal Deeside and over 165 miles of coastline containing some of the best locations for dolphin watching. Recent investment in The Events Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Aberdeen Art Gallery and new hotels, along with international standard events including Nuart and the Tour of Britain cycling event, provide the region with a secure footing for tourism being a major industry over the next two decades.

2.19. **Aberdeen South Harbour** – development of the new harbour at Bay of Nigg on the south side of Aberdeen will provide a wide range of new and expanded opportunities for maritime developments. Cruise liners will fit with the tourism potential and industries such as decommissioning and Energy Transition to low carbon and sustainable energy will be able to focus on the new facilities.

Current Monitoring

Rail:
There are currently nine railway stations in the north east. This increased from seven with the opening of Laurencekirk station in May 2009 and the opening of a new station at Kintore in October 2020.
Indicator 1 provides an estimate of the population within walking distance (1.6 kilometres) of a railway station and within 5 kilometres. With developments focussed on having good accessibility and opening of additional stations, it is the intention that these proportions will increase over time.

Indicator 1: Number of rail stations in the North East and population with access to a station			
	Number of stations	**Population within 1.6km of a station** (and proportion of total North East population)	**Population within 5km of a station** (and proportion of total North East population)
2001 baseline	7	81,550 (19%)	230,986 (53%)
2012	8	95,259 (20%)	254,431 (53%)
2017	8	108,222 (23%)	246,183 (52%)
2019	8	109,679 (22%)	247,745 (51%)
2020	8*	108,740 (22.2%)	246,222 (50.3%)

Target 1a: *To open a new railway station in the north east every three years, to a total of 12 by 2021.*

Target 1b: *To increase the proportion of the north east population with access to a station to at least 25% within 1.6 km and at least 60% within 5 km by 2021.*

Source: Strategic Development Planning Authority Main Issues Report Monitoring Statement (2011), Councils' Small Area Population Statistics (2019).

*As Kintore station only opened in October 2020 it is not included in the above table.

As the above shows, almost half of the population in the North East of Scotland do not live within 5km of a railway station so this reducing their ability to access the railway network.

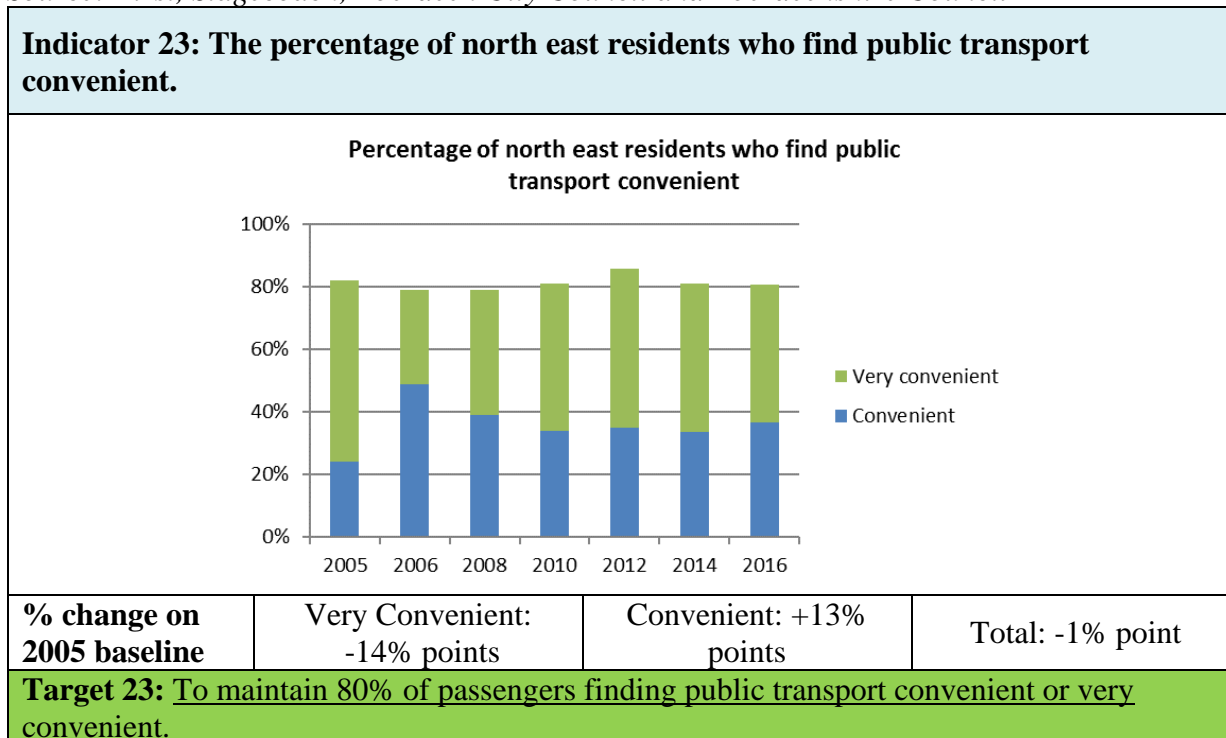Due to this the access to bus is important for public transport in the North East of Scotland.

Bus Usage

Nestrans continues to work with the two major bus operators and two local authorities as part of a voluntary quality partnership agreement. Due to a change in the way the figures are recorded through the quality partnership, in order to avoid double counting, it is not possible to directly compare bus patronage figures for years prior to 2015/16. There has however been a reduction in paying passengers between 2015/16 and 2017/18.

The Local Authority and Bus Operators Forum relaunched the Voluntary Quality Partnership in August 2018, forming the Bus Alliance. A baseline document, the State of the Network report was published in 2019, with a five-year action plan published in spring 2020. Actions primarily aim to reverse the trend of declining patronage, although may require some re-evaluation depending on the impacts realised following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Indicator 22: The number of people using buses in the north east.			
	Paying customers	Concessions	Total
2015/16	19.4 million	10.4 million	29.9 million
2016/17	18.1 million	10.5 million	28.6 million
2017/18	16.3 million	10.2 million	26.5 million
% change since 2015/16	-15.9%	-2.4%	-11.2%
Target 22: To increase the number of bus passenger journeys by 2021.			

Source: First, Stagecoach, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council

Indicator 23: The percentage of north east residents who find public transport convenient.

% change on 2005 baseline	Very Convenient: -14% points	Convenient: +13% points	Total: -1% point
Target 23: To maintain 80% of passengers finding public transport convenient or very convenient.			

Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, Scottish Household Survey

Reliability and punctuality of buses

Both First and Stagecoach publish data relating to reliability and punctuality. The table below shows that although reliability (i.e. the number of services operated) remains high for both operators, punctuality (i.e. those running on time) is currently below the target of 95% of buses departing on time set by the Traffic Commissioner[4].

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[4] On time is defined by the Traffic Commissioner as being within the window of tolerance of 1 minute early to 5 minutes late.

| Indicator 25: Reliability and Punctuality				
	Reliability (% of miles operated)		Punctuality (% buses starting their route on time)	
	First	Stagecoach	First	Stagecoach
2010	99.5%	99.9%	86%	89%
2016	99.8%	99.7%	95%	84%
2017	97.3%[5]	99.3%	94%	86%
Target 25a: *To secure 99% reliability of bus services run in the north east through to 2021.*				
Target 25b: *To secure 95% punctuality (no more than one minute early or five minutes late) for bus services within the north east through to 2021.*				

Looking at the table above, it should be noted that the technical figures provided by the operators and the perception of passengers are not always in sync. The table below shows that passenger satisfaction rates the punctuality and waiting time of buses as lower than the standards being recorded by the operator. This could be due to reductions in frequency leading to longer waiting times at the bus stop or expectations greater than the Commissioner's standard. However, it should be noted that indicator 25 will require updating before a full comparison between the technical figures and satisfaction figures can be compared to assess whether there is a correlation in recent years.

Cost of bus services

As a key determinant of mode choice, this report monitors the respective prices of City Centre parking and of average daily bus fares. Indicator 26 shows that whilst daily bus fares have become more competitive since 2012, car parking charges have remained relatively static. Although the relative cost of bus:parking reduced between 2007 and 2015, this has since stalled. Car parking prices were increased in 2020 to £2.40 for a two-hour stay in the main city centre car parks. It should be noted that a cheaper bus fare for First Bus is available if purchased through the m-ticket app. However, this does not reduce the overall ratio between bus fares and car parking.

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[5] This may be in part due to drivers strike in early 2018.

Indicator 26: To monitor the price of car parking in Aberdeen City Centre relative to bus fares, by comparing a ratio of 2hrs off-street parking in a Council multi-storey car park: cost of peak daily ticket on city buses.


Cost of parking vs average bus fare (Aberdeen City)
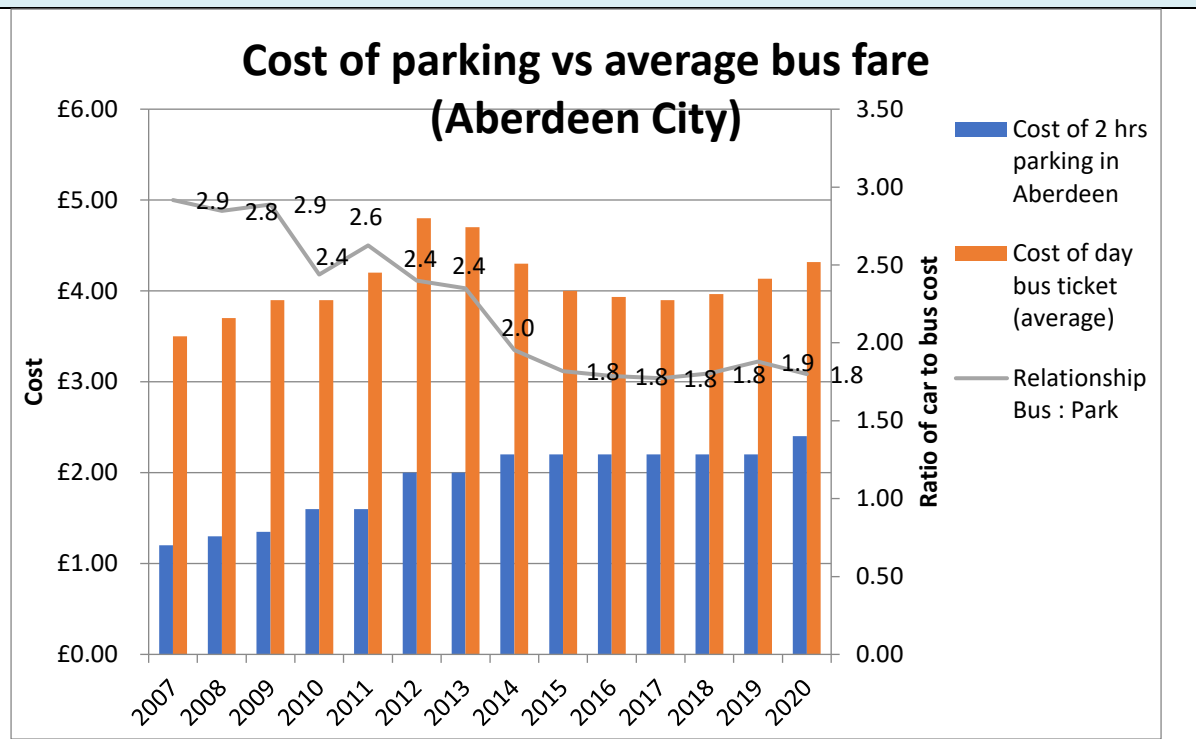
% change in cost on 2007 base	Cost of 2 hrs parking: +100%	Cost of bus day ticket: +23%

Target 26: *To reduce the differential between the cost of parking and bus travel to a factor of no more than 1.5 by 2021.*

Source: Aberdeen City Council, Stagecoach, First Aberdeen & Grasshopper

Monthly bus season tickets are also compared to Scotland's other main cities. Whilst Aberdeen remains amongst the most expensive for a monthly ticket, the gap between the cities has narrowed with the Aberdeen ticket reducing in real terms. As of 2020, with all cities now offering direct debit, online and/or m-ticket options, the graph below now represents the cheapest ticket offering for each area. Taking this into account, Aberdeen is cheaper than Glasgow and is similar to Edinburgh for ticket price.

Indicator 27: To compare cost of monthly (or four weekly) bus ticket in Aberdeen with other Scottish cities.

Cost of a monthly (or 4 weekly) bus ticket

Legend:
- First in Aberdeen
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Glasgow
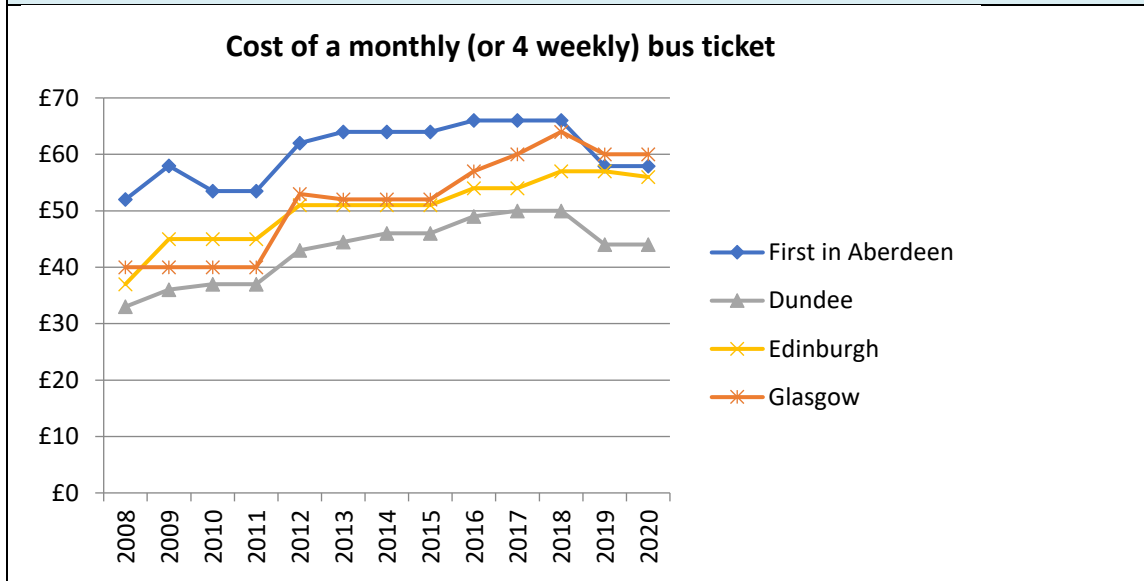
| % change on 2008 baseline	Aberdeen (First): +11%	Dundee: +33%	Edinburgh: +51%	Glasgow: +50%

Source: First Aberdeen, Stagecoach, Travel Dundee, Lothian Buses and First Glasgow

Reliability and cost of bus transport are key part to having a Transport system that is fair and accessible for all. As the above data shows, there is still a way to go in regard to affordability of bus transport compared to other modes. This new RTS 2040 aims to try and reduce this.
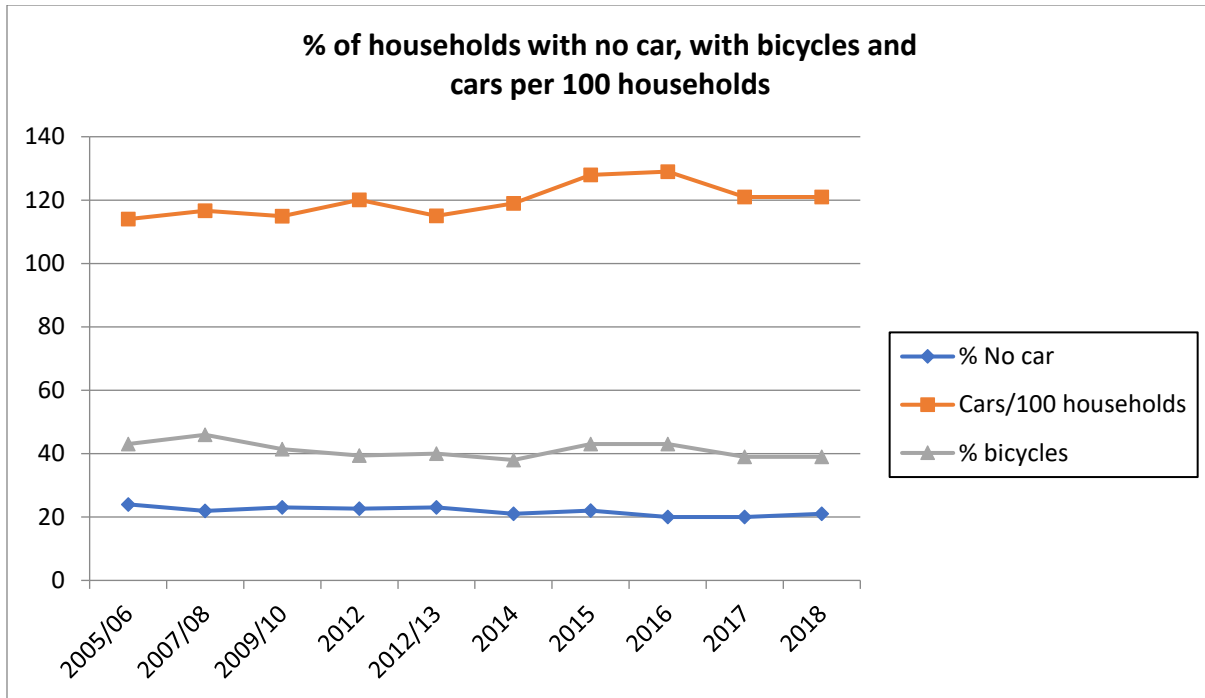
Car Ownership

With over 239,000 cars, the north east has more cars and vans than households, yet 21% of households do not have access to a vehicle.

There were 94,400 cars registered in Aberdeen and 144,900 registered in Aberdeenshire at end December 2018 (Source: Scottish Transport Statistics). Over the entire North East, this represents a total increase of 15% on 2005.

Number of cars licensed in the North East
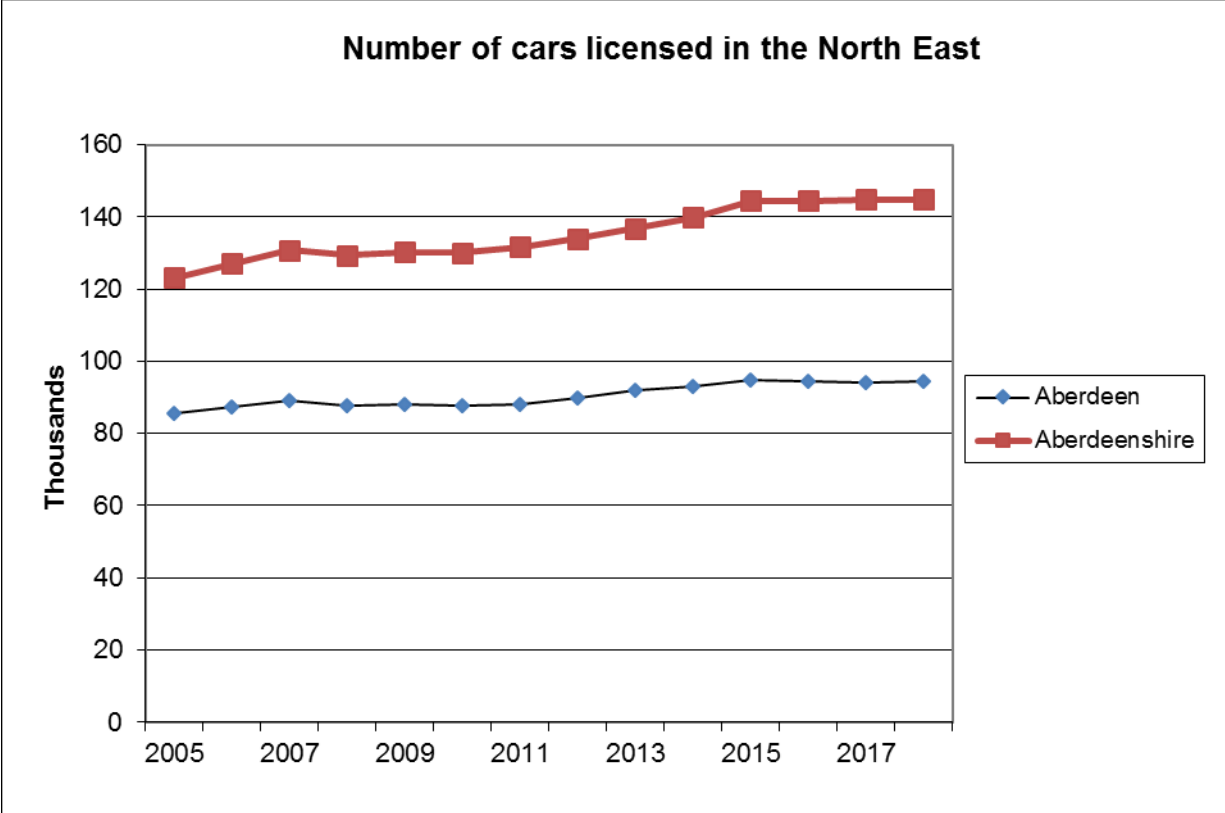
Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, 2019

Car ownership is high in the north east, with around 80% of households having access to a car. Aberdeenshire has the joint second highest rate of car ownership in Scotland, with 86% of households having access to at least one vehicle. Car ownership in Aberdeen City has increased from 65% of households in 2005/06 to around 70% in 2018, although has reduced from 73% in 2017. Despite this, some 30% of households in the City and 13% of households in Aberdeenshire do not have access to a car or van. Over the last 5 years, the proportion of households without access to a car in Aberdeen City has remained relatively static at around 27-32%. (Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018).

% of households with no car, with bicycles and cars per 100 households

Legend:
- % No car
- Cars/100 households
- % bicycles

Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018

Indicator 32: The proportion of households in the north east without access to a car or van.

|	Aberdeen	Aberdeenshire	North East
2005/06	34%	14%	24%
2012	29%	17%	23%
2014	27%	15%	21%
2015	30%	13%	22%
2016	32%	9%	20%
2017	27%	13%	20%
2018	30%	13%	21%

Source: Transport and Travel in Scotland, 2018

Access to a car or van or a bicycle is lower in areas of multiple deprivation and homes with lower incomes. This new RTS 2040 aims to try and ensure that access to a bicycle is easier to allow for more active travel and having access to a car, whether via a car club or car sharing, where public transport isn't available or inaccessible is improved.

Drivers with a Disability

There were 16,072 Blue Badge holders in the north east at the end of March 2019. This represents 5% of cars registered in the region. After a number of years of increases in the number of Blue Badge holders across the north east, there have been reductions in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire since 2011 – a 34% reduction in six years.

Indicator 33: The number of blue badge holders (and proportion relative to cars registered) in the north east.

	Aberdeen		Aberdeenshire		North East	
	Blue badges	% of all cars	Blue badges	% of all cars	Blue badges	% of all cars
March 2006	8,645	10%	10,024	8%	18,669	9%
March 2011	8,044	8%	16,288	12%	24,332	11%
March 2016	6,643	6%	10,210	5%	16,853	6%
March 2017	6.908	6%	9,838	5%	16,746	6%
March 2018	6,863	6%	9,604	5%	16,467	6%
March 2019	6,820	6%	9,252	5%	16,072	5%
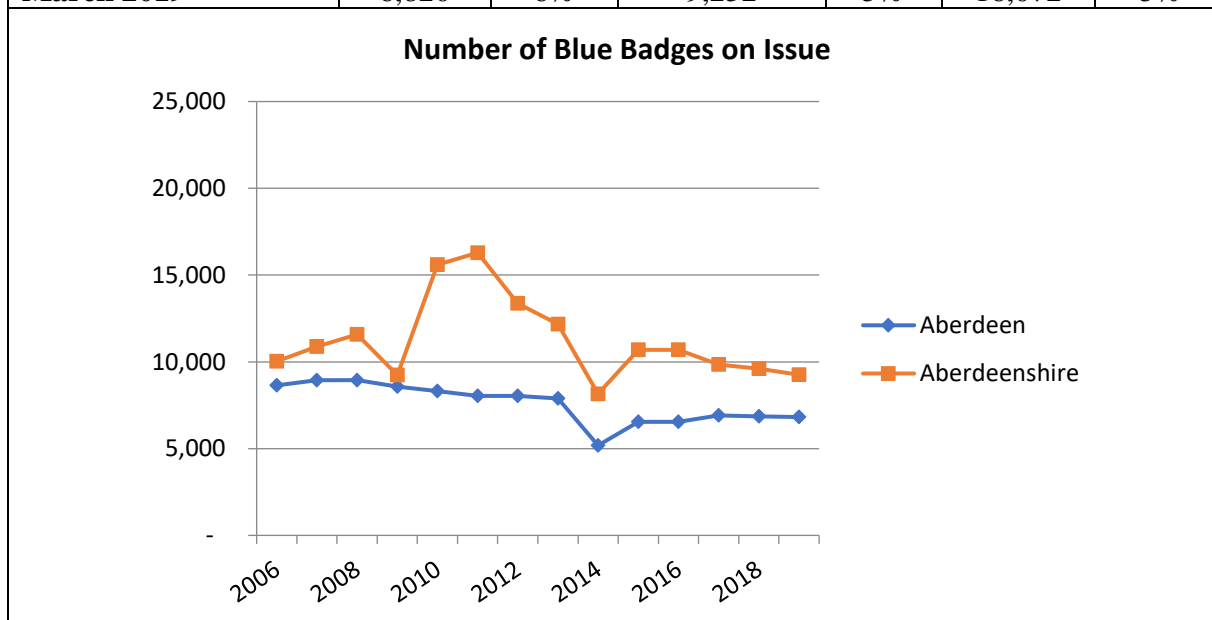
Source: Scottish Transport Statistics, 2019

Indicator 34: The proportion of taxis which are capable of carrying wheelchairs

Number of wheelchair accessible taxis and % of all taxis
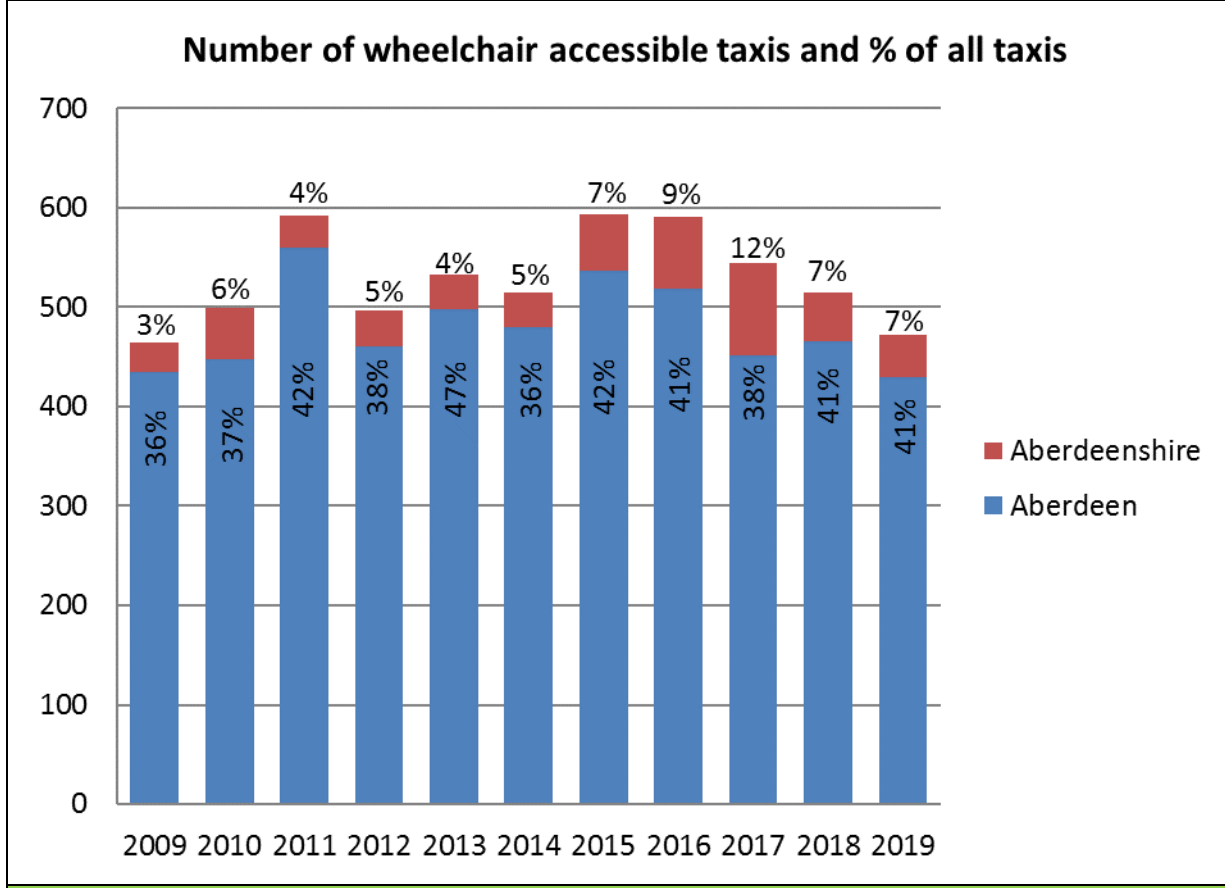
Target 34: To increase the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis across the north east from 39% in 2009 to at least 50% by 2021

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2019

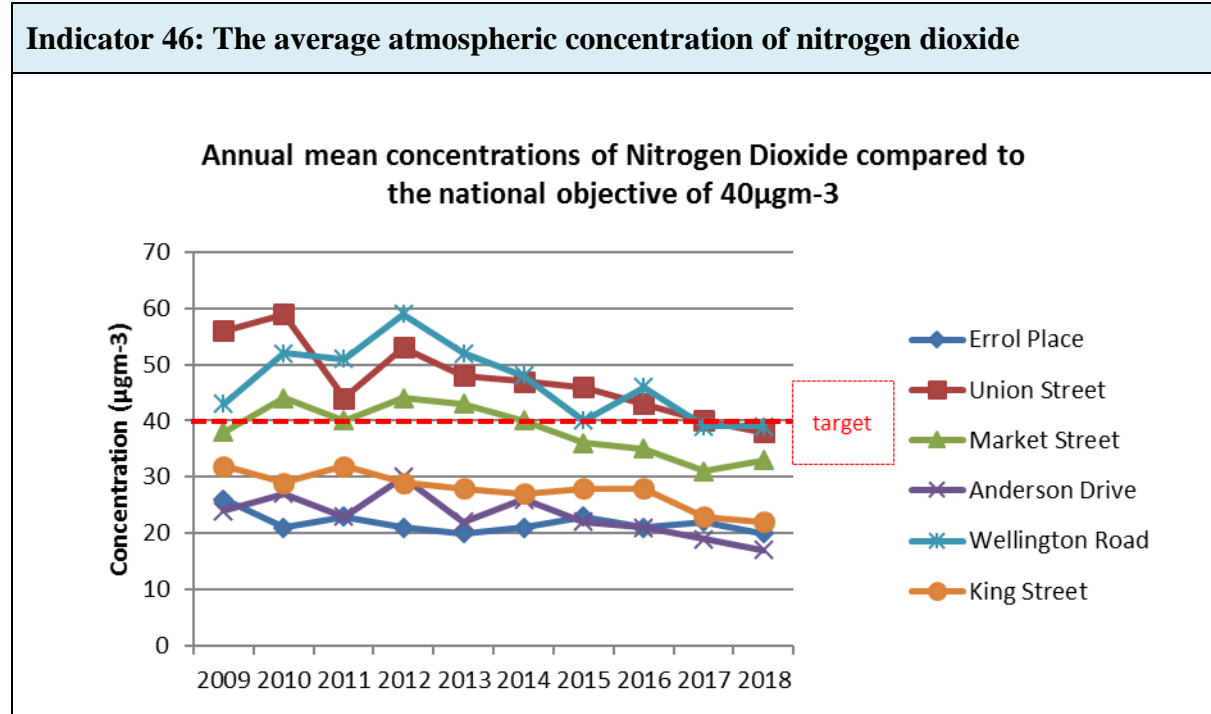|	2009		2015		2019			
	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible	Taxis & Private Hire	Wheel chair Accessible	% change no. of taxis 2009-2019	% change accessible 2009-2019
Aberdeen	1,198	435	1,288	537	1,055	430	-12%	-1%
Aberdeenshire	834	29	807	56	622	42	-25%	45%
Total NE	2,032	464	2,095	593	1,677	472	-17%	2%

In 2012, Aberdeen City Council announced a cap in the number of taxi licences and committed to a 100% wheelchair accessible fleet. The original deadline to achieve this was by 2017. Following a consultation in 2018, the deadline has been extended, although Aberdeen City Council remain committed to a fully wheelchair accessible fleet by 2023.
Air Quality

Air Quality can have a big impact on public health and air quality is affected by transport emissions. Three Air Quality Management Areas have been identified in Aberdeen: the

City Centre; Anderson Drive; and Wellington Road. These areas have been identified for projected exceedances in permitted levels of both Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) and Particulates (PM10) and the City Council has produced a plan of action for reducing emissions to within European-defined maximum levels in these areas.

Monitoring stations are in place at six locations and provide data on the current situation as well as annual average concentrations of pollutants. Indicator 46 shows that, as of 2018, all monitoring sites are within the annual mean objective, with Union Street dropping below the target of 40µgm-3 for the first time. Market Street was the only site to see a small increase in NO_2 levels.

Indicator 46: The average atmospheric concentration of nitrogen dioxide

Annual mean concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide compared to the national objective of 40µgm-3
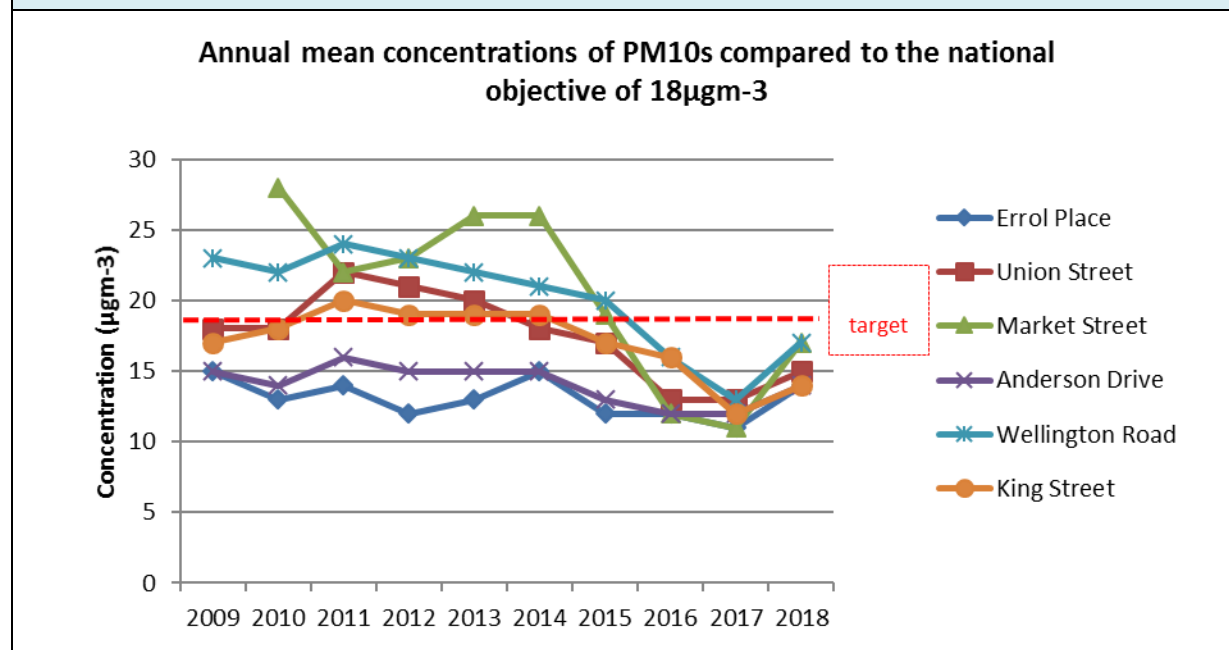
Target 46: To reduce the levels of identified pollutants and meet national and European legislation on pollutants (enabling the removal of AQMA status at all sites in the north east - in Aberdeen City Centre, Wellington Road and Anderson Drive)

Source: www.scottishairquality.co.uk and Aberdeen City Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Progress Report

Between 2017 and 2018, the annual mean objective for particulates increased across the board, but all sites remain within target and all are reduced on Baseline.

Indicator 47: The average atmospheric concentration of particulates (PM10s)

Annual mean concentrations of PM10s compared to the national objective of 18µgm-3

Target 47: To reduce the levels of identified pollutants and meet national and European legislation on pollutants (across the three AQMAs in Aberdeen).

Source: www.scottishairquality.co.uk and Aberdeen City Council 2019 Air Quality Annual Progress Report

Equality Outcome 1:
Inequality: We currently have gaps in evidence for all protected characteristics, but particularly, we have gaps in our evidence for, Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers), religion and beliefs, gender reassignment and sexual orientation. There is some evidence at a national level that these groups do face inequality when accessing or using transport, but we do not have sufficient data at a regional level.
Equality Outcome: *Evidence to provide a better understanding of how all people and their protected characteristics in the North East of Scotland travel, and any inequalities they may face whilst travelling or trying to access transport.*
General Equality Duty: Will help gather information and data to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all in the planning and delivery of transport services.
Link to Strategic Priority: RTS strategic priority – Accessibility for all.
Outputs: Carry out a comprehensive travel and transport survey in the North East of Scotland which will include targeted evidence collection around people with protected characteristics. This will enable the identification of any issues. We will then identify changes required, the support and resources required to affect these changes, and the support necessary for these to be understood, agreed and implemented.
Activities: Core activities will include: engagement with stakeholder groups, organisations and third sector organisations; data collection and analysis; meetings with transport providers and consultation about changes. We will ensure that the needs of those with protected

characteristics are identified and any potential resources or changes required are understood and agreed.

Measuring Progress: Once a baseline study has been carried out, we will undertake annual monitoring to see if progress is happening.

Equality Outcome 2

- **Inequality:** Many people can experience difficulties accessing the transport network because of safety, cost, availability, accessibility, connectivity, information available and assistance of staff.
- **Equality Outcome: Everyone can** *access transport safely with an integrated service that provides accessible information, appropriate assistance and support from transport staff.*
- **General equality duty:** Will help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all in the planning and delivery of transport services.
- **Link to strategic priority:** RTS strategic priority – Accessibility for all.
- **Outputs:** The barriers facing everyone, and their needs are identified. The changes, support and resources required are understood and agreed. Delivery of a programme of travel improvements and passenger assistance.
- **Activities**: Engagement with stakeholder groups, organisations and third sector orgs. Meetings with transport providers. Consultation about changes. Programme of support and improvements agreed. Test and pilot new and modified service methods, technology, vehicles, and practices.
- **Measuring progress:** Develop a monitoring report as part of RTS delivery plan and monitoring for the for evaluating impact and measuring progress. Collect and analyse data to evaluate impact and measure progress.

Reducing inequalities is at the heart of the RTS 2040. Overall, Nestrans feel that the RTS 2040 provides a positive framework to reduce inequalities and improve equality. Nestrans is aware that access to transport and affordability of transport are key issues that impact on people's lives and that those with lower incomes are affected by these issues more than those with higher incomes. The new Regional Transport Strategy 2040 continues the work that Nestrans has been doing to reduce these inequalities and puts the policies and priorities in place to reduce these further. This includes working in partnership with others including the Bus Alliance, Getabout Partnership, the Health and Transport Action Plan, working together through Community Planning Partnerships, and continuing to work with Transport Scotland, public transport operators, local authorities, other Regional Transport Partnerships and the third sector.

Next steps

Continue to work with Grampian Regional Equalities Council, our partners on the Health and Transport Action Plan, all relevant stakeholder groups and Getabout to promote sustainable transport messages and provide a signposting for grants and services that may be available to help people with access needs and requiring advice on travel and transport.

Continue to consult widely across the whole of the North East of Scotland, including as many groups and communities of interest as possible and update and mitigate the current inequalities in transport and travel where possible by implementing the RTS.