nestrans | 2040

Regional Transport Strategy:

AT A GLANCE

- Vision
- Priorities
- Policies
- Actions

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.

During 2020 and 2021, we have faced and continue to 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 will likely have lasting impacts in the 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.

Prioritising Sustainable Transport

Walking and Wheeling

Cycling

Public Transport

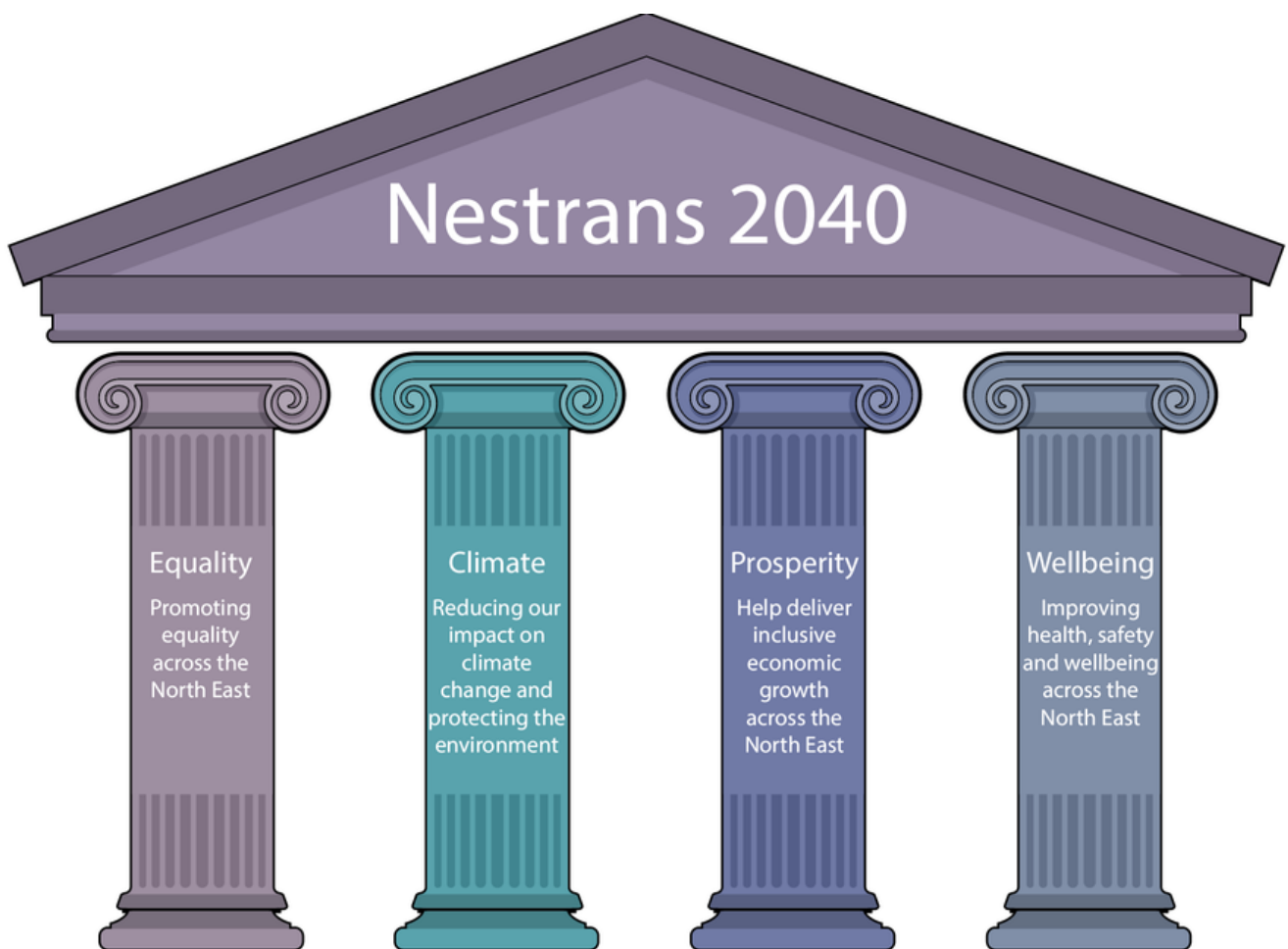**Taxis and Shared Transport**

Private Car

Our transport strategy must help us address the needs of our economy and society, 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 including physical and mental health, safety, accessibility and equality.

The development of the strategy has been guided by the National Transport Strategy, published in February 2020, which embeds and supports a Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and a Sustainable Investment Hierarchy in decision making. In line with this, the RTS promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people as well as making the best use of existing assets and capacity.

Our Vision:

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.

Our strategy identifies four equal and overlapping pillars that align with and support the pillars of the National Transport Strategy, by relating them to local priorities:

Nestrans 2040

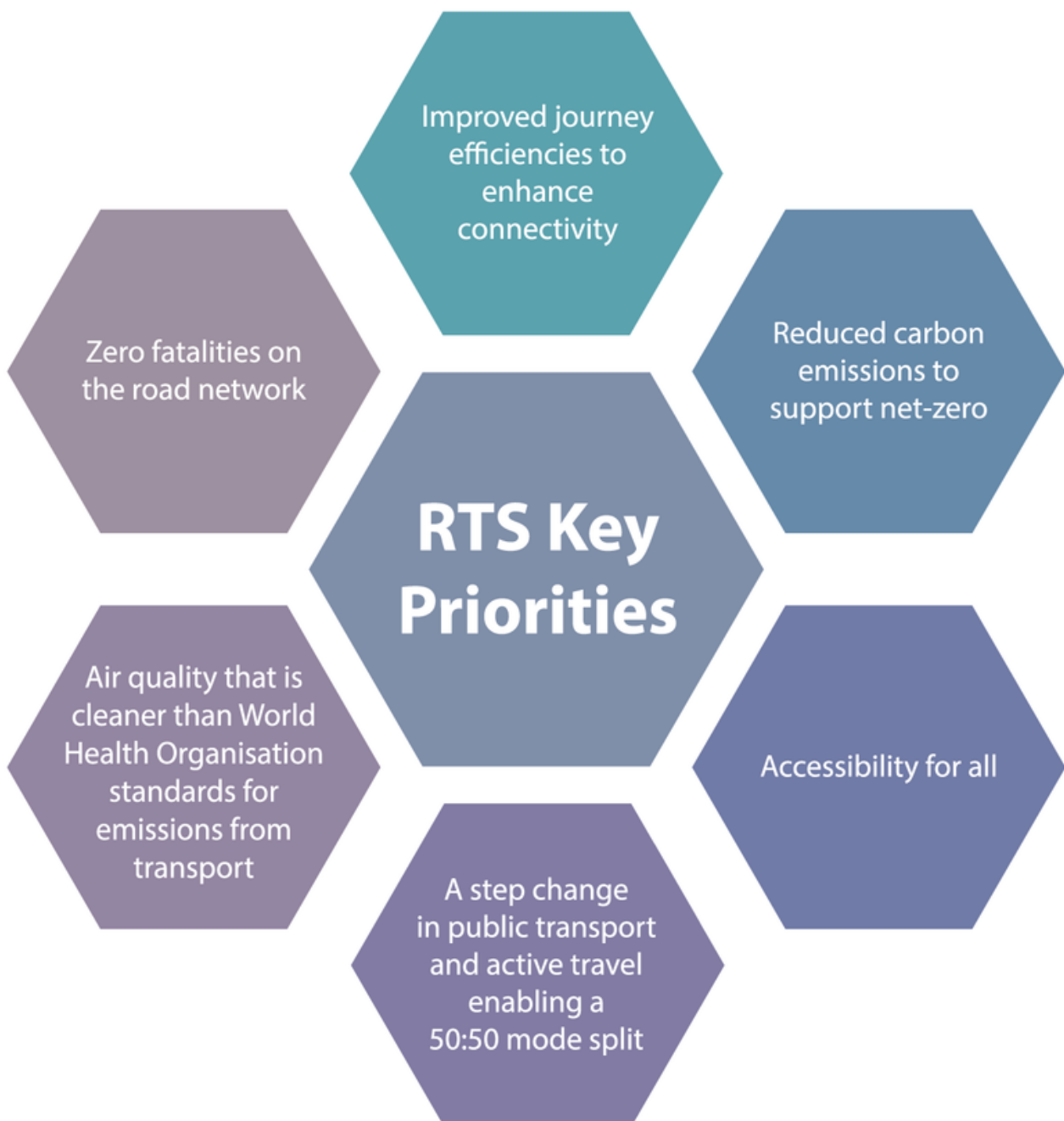| Equality	Climate	Prosperity	Wellbeing
Promoting equality across the North East	Reducing our impact on climate change and protecting the environment	Help deliver inclusive economic growth across the North East	Improving health, safety and wellbeing across the North East

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.

Our Priorities

To achieve our vision, the strategy sets six key priorities and seeks to achieve these 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 to deliver.

Key to the successful delivery of the strategy is the combination of shared transport, active travel and behaviour change improvements supported by measures to manage the demand for car travel. 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.

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

Key policies and actions

The following section provides a high-level summary of the key policies and actions contained within the strategy and which are set out in full in the underlined main strategy document.

Increasing active travel for health and the environment (AT)

Increasing the number of people walking, cycling, and wheeling:

- Implementing safe and segregated active travel connections and enhancing the network of continuous links;
- Through speed reduction measures and traffic management, ensuring that towns and cities are suitable and attractive for walking and cycling; and
- Improving access to cycling through hire schemes, education, and training, to enable all who wish to travel actively the means to do so.

Developing the rail network (RL)

Focussing on achieving reduced and more reliable journey times by rail, increased capacity, and an enhanced local rail network:

- Investment in improving the quality of InterCity services, ensuring reliability, adequate capacity and improved on-board facilities, as well as reducing end-to-end journey times between key centres;
- Ensuring a frequent and reliable Cross-Aberdeen local rail service and better integration of local services with InterCity services;
- Delivery of new stations to improve connectivity to the rail network, full access for all and improved access to stations by non-car modes; and
- Providing opportunities for growth in rail freight.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART)

A public transport option that provides a step change in mass transit provision in the north east, supporting a successful city region and offering journey times that are competitive to the car.

- Investigate the feasibility of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) as a high quality, high-capacity public transport solution with prioritised routeing connecting Craibstone/ Airport / TECA to the south via the city centre and Westhill / Kingswells to Bridge of Don via the city centre.

Improving the region's bus network (BUS)

Focussing on improving the quality, speed, and reliability of bus journeys across the north east to increase the number of people using the bus and improving accessibility across the region:

- A commitment to continue as a key partner of the North East Bus Alliance and ensure a strong partnership continues for the benefit of the north east;
- Continue to deliver, monitor, and review the actions contained within the Bus Action Plan;
- Develop Bus Service Improvement Partnership agreement(s) for improvement of bus infrastructure and services; and
- Seek external funding for enhanced capital and revenue funding to benefit bus passengers.

Maximising the benefits of Park & Ride (P&R)

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. Park & Ride forms an essential part of the solution to reduce traffic in the city centre, improve local air quality and reduce carbon emissions:

- Deliver a high-quality Park & Ride facility to the south of Aberdeen along with supporting bus priority and service enhancements supported by Bus Service Improvement Partnership agreement(s); and
- Expansion of the network of mini-interchange hubs to improve accessibility in rural areas including sites in Banchory, Crathes and Oldmeldrum.

Managing demand (MD)

Identifying a need to manage the demand for car travel, contributing to the Scottish Government commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030. 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 licencing or other charging options.

Reducing emissions from transport (RE)

Introducing measures to reduce carbon and other harmful emissions from transport for the benefit of the global climate and the health and well-being of the local population and environment. This needs to be achieved through a combined approach of an overall reduction in car kilometres; an increased mode share for public transport, active travel, and shared transport; and decarbonisation of the transport fleet:

- 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;
- Substantial mode shift, supported by actions contained across the wider strategy including mass transit and demand management measures;
- Supporting a city centre Low Emission Zone with the primary focus to reduce levels of vehicle emissions that are harmful to human health; and
- Expansion of the network of electric vehicle charging and hydrogen re-fuelling facilities and work to decarbonise the transport fleet.

Encouraging behaviour change (BC)

Encouraging a change in behaviour through education and encouragement towards reducing the need to travel and a switch to more sustainable forms of travel:

- Work with local partners through the Getabout partnership and national organisations to ensure an efficient and effective promotion with consistent messaging;
- Support the development and implementation of travel planning initiatives and other tools to increase awareness and improve information and integration between services; and
- Investigate opportunities for Mobility as a Service (MaaS) measures.

Maintaining & improving the region's transport network (MI)

Maintaining and improving the region's transport network by focusing on existing assets. We will also identify where targeted improvements can help to achieve the strategy's objectives. This includes:

- Safety and reliability enhancements on the A944, A947, A93, A92 and A98;
- Working with Transport Scotland to upgrade the A90 north of Aberdeen, including dualling between Ellon and Toll of Birness, junction upgrades, including roundabouts at Toll of Birness and Cortes as well as safety and reliability enhancements to Peterhead and Fraserburgh;
- 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 and grade separation of junctions.

Facilitating the movement of freight (FR)

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:

- Continued development of freight routes, facilities, and provision of freight information to support logistic companies in making efficient and effective decisions;
- Provide opportunities to enable a mode shift to sea or rail and support development of connections from Craiginches Rail Freight Terminal to Aberdeen South Harbour; and
- Promote opportunities to reduce emissions from freight transport, supporting the uptake of cargo bikes and alternatively fuelled vehicles.

External Air and Sea Connections (AS)

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 and recognises 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:

- Work to maintain and enhance air connectivity to international hub airports and support calls to level the playing field in terms of the current Highlands and Islands exemption for Air Passenger Duty (and its planned replacement, Air Departure Tax).
- Support the continued investment in our ports and harbours, including Aberdeen South Harbour and proposals for Free / Green Ports and the proposed Energy Transition Zone; and
- Work with partners to reduce carbon emissions and promote improved access and sustainable modes for travel to the airport and ferry terminal.
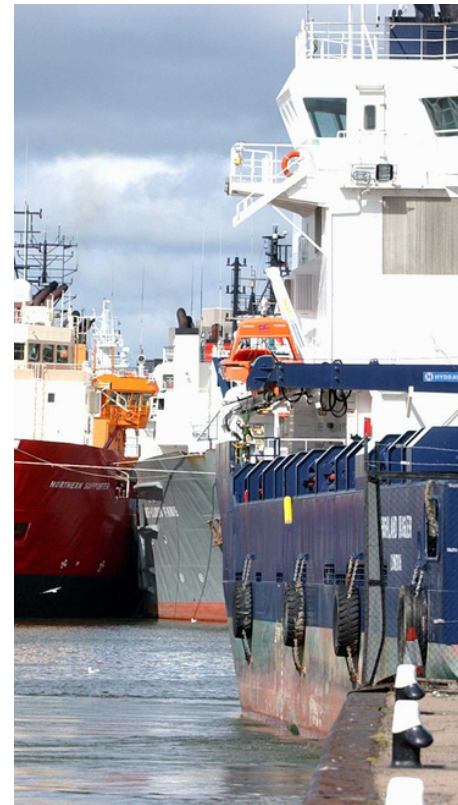
Road Safety and Casualty Reduction (RS)

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:

- Identification of routes or locations where speed restrictions, traffic calming measures, safe crossings or segregated provision of cycling and walking facilities could contribute to fewer collisions and improved perceptions of safety; and
- Engagement with the public and other partners to raise awareness, educate and promote messages of road safety.

Improving accessibility in rural areas (RU)

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.

- Explore opportunities for enhanced Demand Responsive Transport provision across rural areas and the trial of new models of rural transport provision; and
- Expand the network of mini-interchange hubs connecting local bus, Demand Responsive Transport, community transport, cycling and walking and support active travel improvements focussed on community accessibility.

Improving access to health (HE)

Improving access to health and social care by working with partners including NHS Grampian, local authorities, and Health & Social Care Partnerships:

- Further development and delivery of the North East Health & Transport Action Plan;
- Raise the profile of access to health issues to enable a more consistent approach and greater financial support; and
- Support mental and physical health through connections to green networks and open spaces as part of a high quality and safe active travel network.

The affordability of transport (AF)

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:

- Working with transport operators to expand the availability of fares capping technology and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) measures to ensure the best value fare is available for all journeys;
- Work with partners to promote concessionary fares schemes and lobby to address anomalies in fares structures that create inequalities; and
- Work to enhance local public transport services and active travel networks, focussing on connecting communities and removing some of the barriers to accessing transport faced by those on lower incomes.

Improving access to the transport network for all (AA)

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:

- A programme of access for all improvements at all key public transport interchange points and within urban and town centres including all rail and bus stations and interchange points such as Aberdeen city centre, town centre interchanges and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary;
- Work to provide more disability relevant transport information and explore technological solutions to enhance provision and accessibility of information; and
- Continued support for the Thistle Assistance Card.

Planning and designing places for people (PP)

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:

- Provide support and input to the development planning process in line with the priorities of this strategy;
- Produce a regional travel planning strategy; and
- Support placemaking principles creating environments for people which are not dominated by cars, helping to communicate the vision and overarching ambition for the places of the north east.

Future impact of New Technologies (NT)

Recognising the importance of digital technologies in achieving many of the outcomes of this strategy, we support the measures being taken forward to improve digital connectivity across the region. We need a framework which can be flexible in responding to new challenges and enable us to take advantage of new technologies as they emerge:

- Seek opportunities to use improved digital connectivity and the data sensor network to optimise the management of the transport network and improve the operation and passenger experience for those using public and sustainable transport; and
- Support and facilitate the introduction of new and emerging technologies such as connected and autonomous vehicles and continue to be at the forefront of hydrogen technologies.

Delivering the Strategy

The success of any strategy requires a collaborative approach and, 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 will depend on one another, and delivery will need implementation and input from a range of partners in a clear and co-ordinated way.

This strategy will guide our future delivery plans and three-year budgeting process and we will use regular monitoring and evaluation to continually shape and inform these processes to ensure we are able to respond to future changes and uncertainties. We will continue efforts to maximise the amount of external funding we can bring in to the region to deliver our priorities and complement the funding available locally. The RTS is a long-term strategy and, despite the short to medium term uncertainties currently being experienced, the 6 key priorities of the strategy must remain the focus.

The full version of the Regional Transport Strategy and supporting documents can be viewed online at: www.nestrans.org.uk/our-strategy

To request a printed copy of any of the documents, please contact: Nestransinfo@nestrans.org.uk

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