



**Community
Transport
Association**

**Response to
Consultation on
NESTRANS
Draft Regional Transport Strategy**

4 February 2007

The Community Transport Association

The CTA is a rapidly growing national charity giving voice and providing leadership, learning and enterprise support to member organisations, which are delivering innovative transport solutions to achieve social change. CTA UK promotes excellence through providing training, publications, advice and information on voluntary, accessible and community transport.

Voluntary and community transport exists to meet the travel and social needs of people to whom these would otherwise be denied, providing accessible and affordable transport to achieve social inclusion.

The CTA is the representative body for third sector passenger transport operators in the UK. CTA Member organisations are involved in the provision of transport, especially accessible services.

The CTA is part-funded by the Department for Transport, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland).

CTA's Response to Consultation

The CTA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the NESTRANS draft Regional Transport Strategy. Our responses to the questions asked in the consultation are shown on the following pages.

Contact Details

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Consultation Question 1

Have we tackled the right issues? What do you think are the most important challenges?

Yes. We feel that the draft strategy identifies the most important issues and is in accordance with what the Scottish Executive has stipulated as the three key strands in a strategy – measures which will promote economic growth, reduction in carbon emissions and social inclusion. The 12 issues identified in the strategy cover all three areas. All are equally important challenges. Transport is an important stimulant towards economic growth but not at the expense of the environment. Equally important is a transport system for all, which includes services for people who are marginalised for whatever reason. Demand responsive transport, including community transport, has an important role to play in this regard and we are pleased that this is recognised.

Consultation Question 2

Have we got the right balance of objectives? Are some objectives more important than others?

Yes, the strategy has the right balance of objectives. As in 1 above, no objective is less or more important than any other. Amongst the bullet points listed with respect to accessibility and social inclusion we would suggest including:

- **To encourage provision of demand responsive and flexibly routed services**

Reference is made in some areas to “public transport” which in its widest sense is fine. However, some would interpret this as “public sector” transport which is narrower. Therefore, we would suggest that “passenger transport” may be a better term.

Consultation Question 3

Do you agree with our proposed measures and projects? Are there any additional measures/projects that should be included?

Yes. Whilst we are very supportive of Sub Strategy 3 on the strategic policy framework which refers to support for Demand Responsive Transport services and Community Transport services, we would have liked to see some reference to practical measures in this regard in the main headings in Sub Strategy 2 – the internal connections strategy. Such measures and projects could be highlighted in an additional section NC8: Non- conventional transport.

Consultation Question 4

Which measures/projects do you consider to be the most important priorities for implementation?

All are equally important. Our caveat is that measures which support accessibility and social inclusion should have no less a priority than measures which support economic growth and/or reduce negative impacts on the environment. A basic principle in delivering NESTRANS' strategy should be that it aims to provide transport for all, including those who need services in addition to mainstream provision. If a fair balance between economic, environmental and social inclusion imperatives is not achieved then the strategy will not be successful.

Consultation Question 5

Do you have any other comments or suggested changes to our draft strategy?

Generally, we feel that this is a good strategy covering most of the transport issues which people in the NESTRANS area might have.

We would like to see measures included which encourage transport operators to introduce more accessible vehicles. Access to healthcare is a growing problem across Scotland, not just in the NESTRANS area, yet there is only one brief mention of this in the Summary. Community Transport is regarded as able to solve the problem of non-emergency health transport but, despite a willingness to get involved, initiatives are coming unstuck due to inadequate funding and the eligibility criteria imposed by public authorities. CTA believes that NESTRANS has an important role to play in resolving this growing problem

We welcome the strategy's commitment to demand responsive and community transport services. The CTA would be very happy to assist NESTRANS with the development of their strategy in this area, given that we have specialist knowledge and understand how the voluntary sector works.

Within the CT network many operators are moving towards a social enterprise model of service delivery and CTA would suggest that NESTRANS could help groups who wish to develop as social enterprises. Again CTA, would be happy to assist NESTRANS in its thinking and planning on this matter.

