ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:
Powering Tomorrow's World

To: Councillor Jenny Laing, <u>Chairperson</u>; Councillor Jim Gifford; <u>Vice Chairperson</u>; Councillors Marie Boulton and Douglas Lumsden; Councillors Peter Argyle and Gwyneth Petrie; Professor Stephen Logan, Mr Patrick Machray OBE and Sir Ian Wood.

<u>Aberdeen City Council Substitute Members</u>:- Councillors Gordon Graham, Alex Nicoll and Ian Yuill.

<u>Aberdeenshire Council Substitute Members</u>:- Councillors John Cox, Allison Evison and Ann Ross

<u>ONE Substitute Members</u>:- Jennifer Craw, Trevor Garlick and John Harper

Please note that a substitute member may only participate in the meeting when a substantive member is absent.

Town House,
ABERDEEN 14 August 2020

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE

The Members of the **ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Virtual - Remote Meeting on <u>FRIDAY, 21 AUGUST 2020 at 9.30 am</u>**.

FRASER BELL
CHIEF OFFICER - GOVERNANCE

In accordance with UK and Scottish Government guidance, meetings of this Committee will be held remotely as required. In these circumstances the meetings will be recorded and thereafter published on the Council's website at the following [link](#)

B U S I N E S S

1   <u>Determination of Urgent Business (If any)</u>

2   <u>Determination of Exempt Business (If any)</u>

3   <u>Declarations of Interest</u>

Members are Required to Intimate any Declarations of Interest in Respect of the Items on Today's Agenda.

4   <u>Minute of Previous Meeting of 24 July 2020</u> (Pages 3 - 6)

5   <u>Grant Offer Letter Reports (Appendices to Follow)</u> (Pages 7 - 10)

-    Appendix A Implementation Plan
-    Appendix B Benefits Plan
-    Appendix C Annual Forecast
-    Appendix D CRD Schedule 2

6   <u>Digital - Gap Analysis Progress Report</u> (Pages 11 - 14)

7   <u>Strategic Transport Appraisal Update</u> (Pages 15 - 34)

<u>EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS</u>

8   <u>Bio Hub - Verbal Update</u>

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Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Mark Masson, email mmasson@aberdeencity.gov.uk, or telephone 01224 522989

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:
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ABERDEEN, 24 July 2020. Minute of Meeting of the ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE. <u>Present</u>:- Councillor Jenny Laing, <u>Chairperson</u>;Councillor Jim Gifford, <u>Vice-Chairperson</u>; Councillors Marie Boulton, Douglas Lumsden, Peter Argyle and Gwyneth Petrie; Professor Stephen Logan, Sir Ian Wood and Jennifer Craw (as substitute for Mr Patrick Machray, OBE).

The agenda, reports and meeting recordings associated with this minute can be located here.

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

1. The Chairperson proposed that the Joint Committee consider item 8 (Aberdeen City Region Deal – COVID 19 Assessment – Exempt Appendix) with the press and public excluded.

<u>The Committee resolved:-</u>
in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude the press and public from the meeting at item 8, so as to avoid disclosure of information of the classes described in paragraph 6 of Schedule 7(A) to the Act.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. Members were requested to intimate any declarations of interest in respect of the items on today's agenda, thereafter the following were intimated:-
(1)   Councillor Lumsden declared an interest in item 7 (Aberdeen City Region Deal – COVID 19 Assessment) by virtue of him being a Council appointed Board Member of NHS Grampian. He considered that the nature of his interest did not require him to leave the meeting during the consideration of this item;
(2)   Jennifer Craw and Professor Stephen Logan declared an interest in item 7 (Aberdeen City Region Deal – COVID 19 Assessment) by virtue of them being Members of Bio-Aberdeen Board and Directors of Opportunity North East. They considered that the nature of their interest did not require them to leave the meeting during the consideration of this item; and
(3)   Sir Ian Wood declared an interest in item 7 (Aberdeen City Region Deal – COVID 19 Assessment) by virtue of him being a Director of Opportunity North East. He

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE
24 July 2020

considered that the nature of his interest did not require him to leave the meeting during the consideration of this item.

CHANGES TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

3. The Joint Committee had before them a notification of two changes to its membership as follows:-

Councillor Gwyneth Petrie to replace Councillor Richard Thomson as a substantive member.

Councillor Ann Ross to replace Councillor Colin Pike as a named substitute.

The Joint Committee resolved:-
(i)   to welcome Councillor Petrie to her first meeting; and
(ii)   to otherwise note the changes to the membership.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 5 JUNE 2020, FOR APPROVAL

4. The Joint Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 5 June 2020, for approval.

With reference to article 7 (Memorandum of Understanding – Housing), the Joint Committee were advised (1) that a meeting was scheduled with the Scottish Government in August and a report would be submitted to the Joint Committee thereafter; and (2) that both Council's Housing Leads had met recently to discuss the original Plan A and also a more substantive Plan B.

With reference to article 10 (Memorandum of Understanding – Transport), the Joint Committee were advised that Transport Scotland had provided an Options report, however officers were still awaiting costings, which would be provided to a future meeting of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee resolved:-
(i)   to note the updates provided; and
(ii)   to approve the minute as a correct record.

ACRD FUNDING UPDATE WITH UK AND SCOTTISH GOVERNMENTS

5. With reference to article 5 of the minute of the previous meeting of 5 June 2020, the Joint Committee had before it a report by the Programme Manager, which provided an update in relation to various communications with the UK and Scottish Government's regarding the Deal's funding, including:-

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE
24 July 2020

- Roll-over of funding risks and mitigation;
- Proposals on how financial governance can support cashflow;
- To submit an updated Profile of Spend (Appendix A);
- To submit opportunities to accelerate spend this financial year; and
- Verbal update for Deals to capitalise resource where possible Aberdeen City Region Deal.

The report recommended:-
that the Joint Committee –
(a)   agree the options 'Cashflow Options for all projects' outlined in Section 3.1.v of the report; and
(b)   agree with the proposed solution to Scottish Government, outlined in Section 3.2 of the report, 'Proposals for improved Financial Governance', of an annual payment of the sum set out in the Grant Letter at the start of each financial year.

Alan Wood, Aberdeenshire Council provided details of the key issues from the report and responded to a number of questions from members of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee resolved:-
(i)   to approve the recommendations; and
(ii)   that officers include details of the 'in-kind' direct support funding costs provided by both Council's in a future report to the Joint Committee.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL - COVID 19 ASSESSMENT

6.   With reference to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 5 June 2020, the Joint Committee had before it a report by the Programme Manager which provided details of the specific challenges, mitigations and additional support for each of the City Region Deal projects, including how each project could be progressed.

The report recommended:-
that the Joint Committee –
(a)   agree with the option in 3.4 of the report, that the Bio-Hub Board continue to seek additional funding from other sources and until such time, a Project Fund is made available in 2021/22 from the Aberdeen City Region Deal envelope and others funding. The partners agree that this should be treated as a temporary arrangement and there are risks and implications to projects should additional funds not be found; and
(b)   agree that as the long-term impact of COVID-19 remains unclear, projects should continue to plan, monitor, and report the impact on projects, especially in relation to procurement and construction plans and expected private sector and other funding within the Deal Budget Profile. This should be discussed at Annual Review with UK and Scottish Government's.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE
24 July 2020

The Joint Committee heard from the Programme Manager and discussed the report content in detail, noting the following:-

- that there had been significant increased construction costs pre-COVID which required to be monitored across all projects; and
- that representatives from Aberdeen Harbour Board were invited to attend a future meeting of the Joint Committee to provide an update on the current progress in relation to the construction of the new South Harbour.

The Joint Committee resolved:-
(i) to agree that they remain fully committed to the Aberdeen Bio-Hub project and all the projects in the Aberdeen City Region Deal;
(ii) to note that additional funding had been made available to similar projects in Scotland;
(iii) to defer the decision until Senior Officers of the City Region Deal had met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Scottish City Region & Growth Deal Delivery Board early August 2020 to discuss the recommended option above, and the risks and implications to UK and Scottish Government's projects should additional funds not be found;
(iv) to bring forward the 4th September Joint Committee meeting to 21st August 2020 at 9.30am to allow a decision to be made;
(v) to encourage Deal partners and stakeholders to continue to seek additional funding sources across all projects; and
(vi) to approve the recommendation at (b) above.

In accordance with the decision recorded under article 1 of this minute, the following item of business was considered in private with the press and public excluded.

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL - COVID 19 ASSESSMENT - EXEMPT APPENDIX

7. With reference to article 6 of this minute, the Joint Committee had before it an exempt report which provided details in relation to the BioHub located on Aberdeen's Foresterhill Health Campus.

Officers responded to a number of questions from members of the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee resolved:-
to note the details contained within the exempt appendix.
- **COUNCILLOR JENNY LAING, Chairperson.**

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Report Name	Grant Offer Letter Reports
Lead Officer	Richard Sweetnam
Report Author	Julie Richards-Wood, CRD Programme Manager ACC
Date of Meeting	21st August 2020
Governance	City Region Deal Joint Committee

1:	Purpose of the Report

The conditions set out in the Grant Offer Letter for 2020/21 totalling £51,320,000, require the annual return of the attached appendices.

Appendix A: Annually in Q1 an updated Implementation Plan.
Appendix B: Annually in Q2 an updated Benefits Realisation Plan
Appendix C: Bi-annually Q2 and Q4 a Financial Forecast Table for the remainder of the Programme.

To provide JC with an update on Benefits Realisation as requested at July's Joint Committee.

2:	Recommendations for Action

   i.   Review and approve the Implementation Plan
  ii.   Review and approve the Benefits Realisation Plan
 iii.   Review and approve the Financial Forecast Table

3:	Summary of Key Information

3.1 The conditions set out in the Grant Offer Letter for 2020/21 totalling £51,320,000, require the annual return of the attached documents addressing the criteria noted below. These documents along with the Annual Performance Report (Annual Report) will inform the Annual conversation between the UK/SG and Deal Partners scheduled September 2020.

3.1.i. Appendix A **Annually in Q1 an updated Implementation Plan.**
This includes the targeted milestones/activities and output for individual Projects for the coming year and the work plan for the Programme Board including for Programme governance e.g. dates for reporting, etc.

3:	Summary of Key Information

3.1.ii Appendix B   **Annually in Q2 an updated Benefits Realisation Plan**
This details the realisation of Benefits across the Programme and as the projects develop bring focus and alignment to wider regional cohesion and economic development benefits achieved by utilising partner resources.

3.1.iii Appendix C   **Bi-annually Q2 and Q4 a Financial Forecast Table for the remainder of the Programme.**
This includes the spending profile for the overall Programme and by individual Project and the annual forecasted expenditure/spending profile over the forthcoming Financial Years.
It will inform financial planning across the deal landscape, identifying how any slippage / acceleration is intended to be managed across the Programme.

3.1.iv Each project lead provides monthly financial update (Appendix D, for information) submitted to UK/SG and reports quarterly through a Progress Status Report (PSR) on Milestones, Benefits and Financial Profile. This is summarised in a Programme Dashboard and Financial Report presented to Programme Board, Joint Committee and SG/UK the following month.

3.2 **Benefits Realisation Working Group** The Benefits Realisation Working Group is responsible for supporting all projects in fully maximising the Benefits arising from the Aberdeen City Region Deal Investment as well as making recommendations and assurance to Aberdeen City Region Deal Programme Board. Although meetings have been impacted by COVID19 and staffing changes there is still a commitment for representatives from Scottish Enterprise and Aberdeen University to support this work. Further workshops are planned with the Scottish Government, to share examples of best practice and guidance that has been developed with Fraser

3.2 **Measuring GVA** OGTC have developed a project specific model that can provide GVA. Using this model employment impacts and tax take estimates can be developed. This model relies on assumption-based input data of the potential value generated from OGTC's innovations reaching the market resulting from either:
- A change in volume contribution (mboe) = production increase
- Assumed annual savings to industry in terms of cost reduction.

Further work has started to collect actual input data– around cost reduction and volume contribution. Similar models for the Deal and other CRD projects will be developed as they come on-line and with input from the UK and Scottish Government.

3.3. **Inclusive Economic Growth including Equalities and Inequalities** In order to capture a shared vision on inclusive growth, the Scottish Government proposes that the following outcomes framework – the 5 Ps – can be used to frame discussions on inclusive growth. The five themes proposed are: Productivity, Population, Participation, People and Place. This is currently being developed in relation to the priorities of the region and the links with the existing Deal projects.

The Fairer Scotland Duty (2018) places a legal responsibility on public bodies in Scotland to actively consider ('pay due regard' to) how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. Training is currently being pursued for the ACRD Joint Committee Members and Programme Board on this.

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3:	Summary of Key Information

The completion of an EHRIA is a statutory requirement and a refreshed City Region Deal EHRIA was approved by Joint Committee in April 2019 demonstrating thorough consideration of socio-economic disadvantage and narrating mitigation measures that can potentially be applied.

3.4 **Impact of COVID19** The implications of Covid-19 coupled with the impact of oil price fluctuations on Aberdeen's economy are yet to be fully comprehended. Aberdeen is facing an even more significant economic shock than previous downturns, and it is anticipated that the economic consequences on businesses, individuals, young people, and the most vulnerable groups in the city will be considerable. Many of the Benefits outlined at Business Case will not be fully realised for five or ten years and these may need to be adjusted to reflect the impact of COVID19 once the scale of the impact is known. The Deal will focus on how through Procurement and Community Benefits we can maximise opportunities.

3.5 **Procurement and Community Benefits**

By adopting a shared approach to positive procurement, and including community benefit clauses within all contracts, City Region Deal partners can set specific requirements for contractors to deliver on, maximising the impact of benefits generated from investments.

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have a shared Community Benefits and Sustainable Procurement policy which can be used as a basis to develop a shared approach, however City Region Deal partners that are non-statutory bodies will have more freedom in the content of community benefit clauses. Support has been provided to City Region Deal Project Leads to support positive procurement and a workshop was delivered outlining support in preparing Community Benefits. Bio Hub and Digital both have community benefits within their projects.

3.6 **Partnership and Community Planning** Benefits continue to be aligned to the Regional Community Planning Partnership and will be mapped against outcomes within the Council's Local Outcome Improvement Plans. This is required to support projects in adhering to The National Standards for Community Engagement, reflecting the main elements of good community engagement - Inclusion, Support, Planning, Working Together, Methods, Communication and Impact where appropriate. Community Engagement shapes the Strategic Transport Appraisals and Aberdeen South Harbour Projects and is reflective in all projects by cross-sector Boards and working groups.

3.7 **Communications** Working together with the UK/Scottish Government the ACRD Communications Working Group will continue to look for opportunities to promote the realisation of benefits, which includes video content, social media and an online presence through the Aberdeen City Region Deal Website and across partner website platforms to promote the work that is happening in the region. Case Studies of Benefits can be viewed in the Aberdeen City Region Deal Annual Reports at www.abzdeal.com

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4:	Finance and Risk

Appendix C: If funding is not spent as profiled there is a risk that it won't be rolled over to the year of choice. The cashflow of funding to projects would need to be sourced and managed by the Deal.

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ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:
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Report Name	Digital – Gap Analysis Progress Report
Lead Officer	Belinda Miller
Report Author	Wendy Robertson
Date of Committee	21st August 2020
Governance	City Region Deal Joint Committee

1:	Purpose of the Report

i.   To update Committee on the progress to date of the digital infrastructure Gap Analysis for the region.

2:	Recommendations for Action

i.   To note the progress update and request the Outline Business Case be brought to November's Joint Committee.

3:	Summary of Key Information

i.   Progress to Date

A gap analysis of all Digital infrastructure within the City and Aberdeenshire has been completed and presented to the Digital Working Group and the Programme Board by Cube Ultra and FarrPoint (contracted to undertake the Gap Analysis work). It contains;

- a detailed mapping (by service) of current and planned telecommunications infrastructure in the region
- review of public sector infrastructure and requirements
- implications for future Aberdeen City Region Deal programmes to address gaps in the market and the implications for funding a procurement approach.

It is expected that proposals, subject to Business Case will utilise the remainder of the Digital funds for the benefit of the economy and the region.

3:	Summary of Key Information

ii.   Key Findings

Across Scotland the availability of superfast broadband services (>30Mbps) is now 94% of all premises. Aberdeen City is aligned to the national average but there remain considerable gaps in Aberdeenshire where over 22k premises are still unable to receive superfast services.

If we look at higher speed full fibre services which are key to maintain business competitiveness Aberdeen City is rapidly becoming one of the best-connected Cities in the UK due to the City Fibre/Vodafone investment. However only 3% of Aberdeenshire premises can access such services.

iii.   Implications for City Deal

A draft outline business case will be completed to address this GAP in coverage along with a number of options for intervention. Note they are **not** mutually exclusive, more than one option could be undertaken.

Option 1: GAP funding of rural broadband services: The provision of subsidies to telecommunications operators (including possibly the winner of R100) to connect rural premises that would otherwise be uneconomic for the operators to connect.

Option 2: Utilisation of Vouchers: The region could encourage local residents to apply for UK and Scottish Govt voucher schemes. There is also scope for a local voucher scheme to top up national schemes if required.

Option 3: Financial Measures: Introducing financial measures such as loans to rural operators to drive inward investment into the rural areas. Loans would be repayable at market rates over an agreed period. This removes barriers to new or smaller operators that may not have access to capital. This option has been used in other rural areas, where the appetite of private sector financiers to invest is lower.

Option 4: Awareness and Stimulation - Local authority staff could provide hands on assistance to communities to apply for vouchers and other schemes. There is also scope for the Local Authority to pool or aggregate demand in an area. Finally, local authority staff could lobby industry to make them aware of opportunities in the area and possibly use the region to test new services (eg 5G)
.

However before determining the appropriate option or blend of these options there are two *external critical issues that need to be resolved to ensure that Aberdeen City Deal interventions do not replicate proposed commercial investment of the programmes of the Scottish Government.*

- Openreach investment plans in Aberdeenshire: in July BT Openreach announced FTTP build in seven Aberdeenshire locations; Banff, Cowie, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Peterhead and Stonehaven. It is expected this deployment will take place during the period up to 2024. At the time of writing it remains unpublished how many premises are included and the impact on the planned R100 deployment and City

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3:	Summary of Key Information

        Deal interventions.

- R100: Contracts were awarded for the procurement for the R100 programme in the South and Central Lots in late 2019. However, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire reside with the North Lot where the procurement has been subject to challenge. This remains unresolved with a court hearing planned for September 2020

    iv.   **Next Steps**

An OBC will be drafted in late August.

However, both points should be addressed in September, therefore the scoring of the options for the OBC need to be revisited after those dates.

Revised OBC – completed September

OBC – to Joint Committee in November

Full Business Case – To Joint Committee in February

4:	Finance and Risk

i.   There is £7.4m funds remaining for the Digital Programme. It is expected that these funds will be fully utilised for the benefit of the economy and the region subject to Business Case.

ii.   The funds are made up of £5m MoU funding and £2.4m from the two Council's contribution towards the Digital theme of the City Region Deal

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ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:
Powering Tomorrow's World

Report Name	Strategic Transport Appraisal Update
Lead Officer	Pau Finch
Report Author	Paul Finch, Strategy Manager, Nestrans / CRD Transport Lead
Date of Report	21 August 2020
Governance	City Region Deal Joint Committee

1:	Purpose of the Report

This report updates the Joint Committee on the progression of the Strategic Transport Appraisal, focussing on the consultation currently being undertaken on the Regional Transport Strategy and priority transport interventions.

2:	Recommendations for Action

The report is brought before the Joint Committee for their awareness.
Responses to the consultation exercise are invited from the City Region Deal partners.

3:	Summary of Key Information

Background
The Strategic Transport Appraisal element of the City Region Deal is defined as follows:

In order to realise the full potential of the area a transport appraisal (supported by UK Government and Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and local partners) will take a 20 year strategic view of the transport implications of the investment unlocked by this Deal across all modes including road and rail. This work will commence in 2016 and will be based on Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance. The appraisal will recognise the priorities of local, regional and national transport plans and programmes as well as the existing work outlined above.

The scope of work will include addressing issues at key gateways into Aberdeen; enabling safe, reliable and attractive connections (road and public transport) along key strategic corridors which promote economic growth; tying together transport infrastructure and development planning/management, on a city/region basis; and facilitating the City Centre Masterplan.

The various different stages of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance have been worked through, culminating in a draft Preliminary Options Appraisal report being finalised in June this year. The outcomes of this work have, in turn, influenced the content of the revised draft Regional Transport Strategy, published by Nestrans. It is highlighted that the scope of the Regional Transport Strategy is broader than the scope of the work on the Strategic Transport Appraisal.

3:	Summary of Key Information

The RTS and work on the Strategic Transport Appraisal are now open for consultation, with a closing date of Friday 16 October. Consultation materials, can be accessed from www.nestrans2040.org. A Strategic Environment Appraisal, and Equalities Assessment are also available for comment. It is planned to hold a series of on-line briefing events to present the work, and facilitate questions and answers on the work during the consultation period.

The outcomes of the STA work identified 29 interventions for continued development, and considered whether they should be progressed by local authorities; as part of Nestrans' RTS; with support from CRD; or recommended for promotion by Transport Scotland and their Strategic Transport Projects Review. The following interventions were identified as suitable for further progression with support from CRD funding.

1. Active Travel linking to, and within, the City Centre
2. New Railway Stations on existing Lines
3. Strategic Public Transport Corridor Schemes linked with Park and Ride Sites.
4. Trunk Road improvement – Ellon to Toll of Birness, and thereafter to Peterhead/Fraserburgh
5. Local Road improvements on A92 corridor– Wellington Road, links to Aberdeen South Harbour
6. Westhill Corridor – early consideration of connectivity and development pressures
7. Improvement of Inter-City Rail connections, to Central Belt and Inverness, including rail freight opportunities

The summary of the Strategic Transport Appraisal work is provided as an appendix to this report. The full work is available at http://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Aberdeen-City-Region-Deal-Strategic-Transport-Appraisal-Draft-Preliminary-Options-Appraisal-Report-Final.pdf

The next steps will be to consider the outcomes of the consultation on the RTS and STA work, prior to finalisation of the work later in 2020. A revised outline business case will then be brought back to the committee mapping out the development work planned for the next five years of the deal. This will continue alongside ongoing discussions with key stakeholders, including Transport Scotland, and public transport operators.
It is highlighted that national work on the second Strategic Transport Projects Review is currently paused whilst the focus is placed on developing their Transport Transition plans.

4:	Finance and Risk

The Strategic Transport Appraisal is associated with £7m funding, with £5m from Scottish Government and UK Government, and £1m each from the two local authorities. Just over £2m has been invested in the work to date, which has also included the ongoing development of strategic transport model, ASAM.

The funding associated with the STA is linked to option appraisal and development, but not implementation. There is a risk that despite positive business cases being developed, that funding for scheme implementation will not necessarily be available. There is a risk that national priorities for investment will not align with regional priorities.

2

Aberdeen City Region Deal – Strategic Transport Appraisal

Draft Preliminary Options Appraisal Executive Summary

On behalf of Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Aberdeen City Regional Deal – Strategic Transport Appraisal

Project Ref: 47533

Report Title: Preliminary Options Appraisal – Executive Summary

Date: 15th June 2020

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Emily Seaman	Associate Transport Planners	ES / SR	04/02/2020
Reviewed by:	Scott Leitham	Director, Transport Planning	SL	04/02/2020
Approved by:	Scott Leitham	Director, Transport Planning	SL	04/02/2020
For and on behalf of Stantec				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
1	17/01/2020	First Draft	ES	SL	SL
2	04/02/2020	Second Draft	ES	SL	SL
3	17/04/2020	Third Draft	ES	SL	SL
4	22/05/2020	Fourth Draft	ES	SL	SL
5	29/05/2020	Fifth Draft	ES	SL	SL
6	15/06/2020	Sixth Draft	ES	SL	SL

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (CRD STA) was initiated as a means to collate and rationalise the current and future problems and opportunities within the transport system, and to act as the mechanism to facilitate the delivery of transport projects to support the Regional Economic Strategy (RES).

The '*Aberdeen CRD STA, Initial appraisal: Case for Change*' study was completed in 2018, and this report identified a range of problems and opportunities across the region, developed seven key themes, and subsequently defined six Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs). Option generation and sifting exercises were undertaken in 2018/19 and this process identified a list of 42 options recommended for further development and consideration. The *Initial appraisal: Case for Change* stage of the study, and the option generation and sifting outcomes and 42 option recommendations, were approved by Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans and the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Board committees in Summer 2018 and Summer 2019 respectively.

At the national level, the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) and the ongoing second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) are establishing the overarching strategic objectives for Scotland's transport system and the associated transport investment programme.

This report sets out the appraisal and outcomes of the '*Aberdeen CRD STA Preliminary Options Appraisal*' stage of the study, commencing from the 42 shortlisted options and Transport Planning Objectives developed during the earlier study stages. These options have been developed, refined and appraised here, and recommendations on appropriate pathways for their further development and delivery have been derived where appropriate.

Outcomes Summary

Recent policy developments have had significant implications for transport, particularly with respect to decarbonisation. There is ever greater urgency in the need to focus on 'greener' transport, moving away from fossil fuel based transport towards electric and alternative fuelled vehicles, increasing use of public and active travel modes, and reducing the need to travel.

Given this context, the appraisal of the options here has led to the development of five option categories, prioritising and supporting the implementation of more sustainable transport while ensuring the promotion and development of Aberdeen city centre as the key regional centre for commerce, leisure and tourism. These five categories broadly comprise: **city connectivity** – ensuring sustainable connectivity to / from, and within the regional centre; **rural connectivity** – providing sustainable and proportionate travel choices across the region's more rural hinterland; **strategic connectivity** – linking the region effectively to the rest of Scotland and internationally; **safety** – moving towards a zero fatalities target; and **demand management** measures – to manage resources effectively and encourage the use of sustainable modes.

Within these five categories, each option has been defined as either **'core'** (large scale options designed to instigate substantive change), or '**supporting**' (smaller supporting options, less likely to bring about substantive change in their own right, but nevertheless important in supporting the core measures and overall objectives).

The emerging overall package to be taken forward from this study can be seen as a **transport package to begin transitioning the north east to a post-carbon, more prosperous, safer, and more equitable future.**

1

Preliminary Options Appraisal

Setting the Scene

The options developed and appraised as part of this study build on a range of policies & strategies, and plans & projects which are already on-going or currently in development. Since the *Initial appraisal: Case for Change* stage of this study was completed, a number of important national, regional and local strategies and plans have been published, or reached important milestones in their development, providing a revised context in which the transport options for this study sit. Furthermore, new transport projects are now being developed and implemented.

The City Region Deal made a commitment to scope out the transport requirements to support the area for the next 20 years. Since the City Region Deal was signed in November 2016, the Scottish Government has amended the emerging Climate Change Bill with what are now the most stringent legislative targets anywhere in the world, aimed at ending Scotland's contribution to climate change within a generation.

The option appraisal recognises the new National Transport Strategy (NTS2) with its focus on reducing inequalities and taking climate action, and is consistent with the emerging Regional Transport Strategy (RTS2040) which is setting out the vision and direction for transport provision in the north east for the next 20 years. This appraisal also recognises the recent publication of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (2018), and both the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Proposed Local Development Plans which went to the respective councils for consideration in March 2020, with all acknowledging the declared climate emergency.

The options developed for this study seek to work within this evolving policy context, championing regional and local strategies and in particular supporting the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan. The options are also being underpinned by the recently developed Roads Hierarchy Principles and Aberdeenshire Council's *Town Centres First Approach*. Importantly, the options developed and appraised as part of this study should be seen as building on the foundations laid by the ongoing, committed and pipeline schemes, studies and projects including the range of improvements to the active travel, rail, bus and road networks.

Revisiting the TPOs

Given the evolution of the policy landscape since the original study TPOs were developed and to provide consistency of approach, the TPOs were refined and aligned with the six RTS2040 priorities and their associated objectives.

Option Development and Appraisal

The **42** options from the *Initial appraisal: Case for Change* stage of the study were **further developed** to allow for more meaningful appraisal at this stage. This included: (i) consideration of how policy landscape changes since the options were developed may impact on the options; (ii) a review of the rationale for the options; (iii) consideration of the geographical context and scalability of the options; and (iv) consideration of the role of the local authorities / Nestrans in delivering the options. As part of this process, strategic 'corridors' were also developed to provide ongoing geographical context, particularly where interventions are primarily capital investment.

An **option rationalisation** process was undertaken which included: (i) reviewing, repackaging and re-categorising options; (ii) identifying options for which a narrative was required rather than a full appraisal; and (iii) identifying those options no longer considered appropriate for appraisal as part of this study, but which may be considered in other workstreams with either a national or more local focus. This rationalisation process resulted in a total of **29** options.

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The appraisal of each of these 29 options has been undertaken through:

- the development of logic mapping for each option which set out: (i) the underlying problems the option is seeking to address; (ii) the transport and wider societal impacts of implementing the option; (iii) which of the TPOs the option is supporting and, (iv) interdependencies with other options; and

- the development of a proportionate 'appraisal table', qualitatively appraising the option against the TPOs and key STAG criteria, drawing on existing studies, benchmarking exercises, case studies of similar schemes, and professional knowledge.

Additional data analysis and information gathering has been undertaken to provide more detailed and up-to-date information to: (i) facilitate the appraisal; (ii) understand where investment (across the various modes) should potentially be prioritised considering the geographical context, the location of key services, employment and population; and (iii) provide greater evidence to support the identification of the problems, and hence the appropriateness of an option.

The appraisal has highlighted that the transition of the vehicle fleet to electric vehicles in the coming years represents a substantive re-shaping of personal transport. Although they operate with zero tail pipe emissions, these vehicles are still carbon and resource intensive over their life cycle, and they still require road space. Cheaper running costs in the short term at least, and being marketed as a 'green' solution, could encourage people to continue to travel by private car as they currently do, or indeed increase their trip making by car. This is a particular risk given the current COVID-19 situation. Therefore, there is a balance to be struck between policies & measures which embrace and facilitate the move to electric vehicles on one hand, policies & measures which encourage people to use active travel and public transport and a requirement to ensure demand for private vehicles (fuelled by whatever means) is managed, particularly in the largest urban areas.

Option Appraisal Outcomes

It is clear from the appraisal undertaken here that many of the options considered have merit in being taken forward for further detailed appraisal, as they make some contribution towards the TPOs. To provide a structured framework for delivery, the options have been categorised and broadly prioritised based on the appraisal outcomes. The five option categories, together with the key elements which should be taken forward for further development, appraisal and business case work are shown below.

As noted above, the options developed and appraised should be seen as building on the foundations laid by the ongoing, committed and pipeline transport schemes, studies and projects including the range of improvements to the active travel, rail, bus and road networks. The appraisal work is based on the assumption that those schemes which are currently associated with an established high degree of commitment and other preparatory work will be implemented, and are thus not included in the tables below. This includes: Kintore Railway Station; A96 Dualling; A96/A92 Haudagain roundabout improvements; A90/A937 Laurencekirk Junction improvement; External Links to Aberdeen South Harbour; Berryden Corridor Improvements and the South College Street improvements.

Category 1: City Connectivity

To support the climate change agenda and deliver on the aims and aspirations of the City Centre Masterplan and Roads Hierarchy principles, it is clear that a step-change in public transport and active travel provision and use is needed. This category broadly focusses on connections to / from and within Aberdeen as the regional centre. This requires an improved sustainable travel network to enable efficient access including:

City Connectivity Measures
Mass transit provision, such as Bus Rapid Transit, on high demand corridors, anchored with a ring of Park & Ride sites
Bus priority improvements on other corridors

Bus 'feeder' services from more rural areas to link to the mass transit system
Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIP) to ensure service levels and vehicle quality
Improvements to ticketing
High quality and safe active travel in key corridors linking to the city
Development of Montrose to Inverurie as a high-volume commuter rail corridor with new stations

Implementation of the above would build on the foundations set out in the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Strategic Development Plan and emerging City and Shire Local Development Plans.

Category 2: Demand Management

As shown through the appraisal, many of the options seek to encourage behavioural change, whilst fewer options seek to actively dissuade people from travelling as they currently do. However, as established in the appraisal tables, in order to complement Category 1 options, there are options whose implementation would help achieve the step-change towards more sustainable travel that is required. These demand management measures can help create the shift to greener travel modes required, and in so doing also tackle the issues of city centre air quality, congestion and safety. Such demand management measure include:

Demand Management Measures
Low Emission Zone
Road-space reallocation in favour of public transport and active travel
Workplace parking charges
Increased on-street and off-street parking charges / extension of the current 'controlled' parking area.

Whilst these demand management (Category 2) options would support the success of the city connectivity (Category 1) options, Category 1 options must be provided in parallel with Category 2 options to enable efficient movement of people and goods, and thus support the continued prosperity of the region . The categories are therefore inextricably linked.

Category 3: Rural Connectivity

Given the geography of the region, the issue of rural connectivity is vital in addressing inequalities and providing sustainable options in terms of access to employment, education, public services, healthcare and recreational facilities.

This category includes measures aimed at establishing a 'connectivity benchmark' based on settlement type (established through the Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification) for both those without access to a car, and those who would prefer not to use a car. Such a package requires a consistent 'rural connectivity audit' to establish appropriate connectivity across all of the region's settlements, and this would benefit from being undertaken as a joint exercise with key partners such as NHS Grampian, higher education establishments and other community planning partners.

Building on the Aberdeenshire Town Centres First Framework, the audit would recognise the role that many of Aberdeenshire towns play in providing key service centres for their rural hinterlands. Establishing a settlement 'connectivity benchmark' is about ensuring connections between smaller towns and villages as well connecting with Aberdeen. Such an audit would also include understanding the role that improved digital connectivity could play in incentivising and enabling those resident in the region's rural areas to reduce their need to travel by ensuring working from home can be done flexibly, effectively and efficiently.

The emerging category options will then include:

Rural Connectivity Measures
A step change in rural public transport connectivity
Provision of 'mini' interchange hubs
More formalised and consistent demand responsive services open to, and promoted to all; alongside consideration of other innovative interventions such Mobility As A Service (MAAS) pilots
Active travel improvements focussed around community accessibility to town centres and local services
Developing and implementing a Rural Digital Working Strategy for the region

Category 4: Safety

The safety of the transport system is key and is reflected in all national, regional and local plans & strategies. The RTS 2040 aims for zero fatalities on the road network. As such, this safety category comprises measures proven to reducing accident rates and includes:

Safety Measures
Community safety through the consideration of 20mph zones, school zones and other traffic calming measures
On-going safety, management and improvement measures on the key road routes in the region

These measures are set against a changing technological backdrop. This is particularly pertinent with respect to connected and autonomous vehicles which have the potential to substantially de-risk the movement of goods and people by road with respect to driver and passenger safety.

Category 5: Strategic Connectivity

Supporting and strengthening the region's connectivity, strategically within the region, and to the rest of Scotland, the UK and overseas is vitally important in ensuring the efficient movement of people and goods to support the region's economy. It is recognised that the ongoing development of the strategic rail, road, air and ferry sectors falls under the remit of national transport bodies and the Scottish Government. However, this study fully acknowledges the important role that Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans play in influencing and lobbying, as well as partnering with national organisations, in order to ensure the continued and enhanced transport connectivity of the region.

Strategic Connectivity Measures
Improved strategic rail connectivity to the Central Belt and Inverness
Improved trunk road reliability (reflected through the road safety, management and improvement interventions noted in Category 4)
Improved access to the region's ports (reflected through both the road safety, management and improvement interventions noted in Category 4 and other on-going schemes such as the on-going *External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour* study)

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Preliminary Options Appraisal
Aberdeen City Region Deal – Strategic Transport Appraisal

Stantec

Option Delivery Pathway and Prioritisation

The 29 individual options appraised have been assigned to one of the categories listed above, with the exception of Option 25 and Option 26.

All options have been defined as either:

- **Core:** Large scale options required to instigate substantive change; or
- **Supporting:** Smaller supporting options, less likely to bring about substantive change in their own right, but nevertheless important in supporting the core measures and overall objectives.

The table below lists the 29 options with their assigned category and whether they are considered as 'Core' or 'Supporting'. The table also notes the most appropriate delivery 'pathways' in each case, together with the **proposed key next steps** for taking the option forward.

These options are presented broadly in line with Transport Scotland's sustainable transport hierarchy.

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Option Categorisation and Type (Fully appraised options)

Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
1	Upgrade existing active travel routes	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓		STAG-based feasibility and engineering work to consider the implementation of continuous, segregated active travel corridors into the city centre to inform subsequent Business Cases / funding applications. Local authorities to take the lead and continue to progress ongoing active travel focussed corridor studies.
2	Increase provision and quality of active travel routes across the region	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			
3	Implement regional cycle hire scheme	3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Pending development of an Aberdeen City bike hire scheme (which complements the City Connectivity Package), Nestrans to undertake further investigation into the costs and benefits of smaller scale cycle hire schemes in town centres or other suitable locations across the region.
4	Softer Measures to encourage active travel	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Local authorities and Nestrans, through the 'Getabout' partnership and brand, to increase current 'softer measures' initiatives to encourage and enable greater active travel use, .
5	Improve bus services and network	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			Nestrans led study to investigate how the new powers embodied in Transport Act could be used to provide a catalyst to generating a step change in bus provision and operations across the region. This would be informed by a region-wide bus network review including a 'rural connectivity audit' – considering current provision versus rural community needs.
6	Demand responsive services	3: Rural Connectivity	Core	✓	✓			
7	New railway stations on existing lines	1: City Connectivity	Core		✓	✓	✓	Nestrans to undertake an Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between Aberdeen and Dyce, (drawing on the work of the Aberdeen North-West Station Review). Outline Business Case to confirm preferred option for the station sites between

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Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
								Aberdeen and Laurencekirk, taking forward the recommendations from the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Corridor Study. This would support the development a strong 'commuter line' between Montrose, Aberdeen, Dyce and Inverurie.
8	New railway lines and associated stations	-	-	-	-	-	-	It is unlikely that railway line re-openings can be justified under existing Treasury criteria and transport appraisal criteria in the medium-term but alignments should be protected in case there are substantial changes in appraisal guidance in the future. This option is therefore considered a long-term prospect and no next steps are defined at this stage.
9	Strategic Public Transport Corridor Scheme(s)	1: City Connectivity	Core		✓	✓	✓	Nestrans (CRD funded) to undertake a STAG-based study of Bus Rapid Transit and other mass transit options to serve strategic locations and corridors across the Aberdeen travel to work area. This would in turn provide the Strategic Case for the subsequent Business Case.
10	Park & Ride Facilities	1: City Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	Park & Ride sites and smaller mini interchange hubs to be further considered within the framework of corridor studies and rural accessibility analysis.
11	Improved Transport Hub	1: City Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans to support the work of Aberdeen City Council in the implementation of the City Centre Masterplan including investigating the potential for improved accessibility between the rail / bus station and the harbour.
12	Improved integrated ticketing (linked to option 5)	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Working in partnership with the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, Nestrans to investigate the types of improved and smart integrated ticketing schemes that could be implemented region-wide, and coordinate with national schemes.
13	Improved marketing / information about public transport services	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Building on current marketing of information in relation to public transport provision, investigate types of additional information provision that would have the greatest positive impact. To be progressed in partnership with bus and rail bodies including the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and ScotRail as well as the regional Getabout partnership.

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Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
14	Access for all across all public transport (including taxi) modes	1: City Connectivity 3: Rural Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans, partnership with the Councils, to undertake audit of existing mobility issues across all public transport modes and core urban realm across the region, to establish the specific problems and issues. To be progressed in partnership with bus and rail bodies including the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance and ScotRail, as well as the regional Getabout partnership.
15	A90(N) / A952: Ellon to Peterhead / Fraserburgh	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Core	✓	✓	✓	✓	As a Trunk Road, the principal mechanism for delivery of future investment will be via STPR, with due regard to NTS2 investment hierarchy. Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans to continue to develop evidence to augment existing business case and appraisal work, and support interface with development management processes. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to north of Aberdeen (noting the on-going planning for the A96 dualling). Nestrans in partnership with local authorities to examine the most appropriate schemes which would provide improved access to the region's ports at Fraserburgh and Peterhead.
16	A90(S): Aberdeen to Perth	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Core	✓	✓		✓	As a Trunk Road, the principal mechanism for delivery of future investment will be via STPR, with due regard to NTS2 investment hierarchy. Nestrans and Tactran have a joint interest in securing improvements to the safety, consistency and performance of this strategic route. Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt. Continue with work to develop a suitable scheme to provide improved connectivity to the new Aberdeen South Harbour at the Bay of Nigg, and associated improvements on A956 Wellington Road corridor.
17	A92: Blackdog to Stonehaven (inc. new River Dee bridge)	4: Safety 5: Strategic Connectivity	Supporting	✓	✓	✓		As a local road, local authorities to continue to manage the performance of the route and associated principal radials in line with investment hierarchy. Specific requirement to consider the function of the route in line with revised Roads Hierarchy, City Centre Masterplan,

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Op.	Description	Category	Type	Recommended Delivery Pathway				Potential Next Steps
				LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	
								associated interventions on A956 Wellington Road/Link to Aberdeen South Harbour, and the performance/function of specific junctions.
								Nestrans to examine the most appropriate schemes to ensure connectivity to the Central Belt and north of Aberdeen (noting the on-going planning for the A96 dualling).
18	A947: Aberdeen to Banff	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, local authorities to undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes in line with investment hierarchy. Includes ongoing development of the A947 Route Action Plan and Dyce area interventions into timed and costed Delivery Plans and including options for an improved link between the A947 and A96 (dependent upon final agreed alignment for A96 dualling).
19	A98: Aberdeenshire / Moray boundary to Fraserburgh	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, Aberdeenshire Council to continue to manage the performance of the route in line with investment hierarchy. Includes options for Banff Bridge.
20	A944 / B9119: Aberdeen west to Aberdeenshire boundary with Moray	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓	✓		As a local road, local authorities to undertake further work and risk analysis to examine the most appropriate schemes on this route in line with investment hierarchy. Early consideration required of multi-modal connectivity and route performance, as well as wider development pressures, between Aberdeen and the Westhill area.
21	A93: Aberdeen to Braemar to Aberdeenshire boundary with Perthshire	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			As a local road, local authorities to continue to manage the performance of the route in line with investment hierarchy.
22	Long Term Asset Management strategy	4: Safety	Supporting	✓	✓			Local Authorities to revisit the existing asset management and mitigation plans for both councils to consider whether the plans fully consider the management and maintenance of the road network and structures in light of the changing climate and financial pressures.

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Op.	Description	Category	Type	LTS / LA	RTS2040	CRD	STPR / TS	Potential Next Steps
				Recommended Delivery Pathway				
23	Community road safety measures	4: Safety	Core	✓	✓			Local authorities to further investigate the potential to introduce 20mph zones in all urban environments building on experience from elsewhere.
24	Low Emission Zones / Zero Emission Zones (inc. consideration of freight restrictions)	2: Demand Management	Core	✓	✓		✓	Local authorities and Nestrans, in partnership with Transport Scotland, to continue work developing the potential Aberdeen city centre LEZ and consider the case for other potential schemes.
25	Electric Vehicle and Hydrogen vehicle charging and refuelling strategy and implementation	-	Supporting	✓	✓			Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to work with Nestrans to extend the network of publicly available charging points.
26	Improved network monitoring and data use	-	Supporting	✓	✓			Local authorities to continue to develop and explore emerging technology options for traffic monitoring and management, and how these could be applied within the region.
27	Congestion Zone charging	2: Demand Management	Supporting	✓	✓			Nestrans to progress a regional Demand Management Study in partnership with both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to appraise the options in more detail. The scope of this study would include: the potential to raise parking charges and / or extend the current 'controlled' parking areas; introduce a workplace parking levy; and / or a congestion charging zone through the development of a viable Business Case exploring potential alternative charging models.
28	Parking Demand Management	2: Demand Management	Core	✓	✓			
29	Improve Inter-City Rail Connections	5: Strategic Connectivity	Core		✓	✓	✓	Nestrans to continue to work with the Transport Scotland and Network Rail to implement plans to improve the rail network connecting Aberdeen to both the Central Belt and Inverness, including consideration of rail freight opportunities.

In addition to the options noted in the above tables, it is important to note the following options (for which a narrative was developed rather than a full appraisal) were also considered in this study, and are recommended for inclusion in the RTS2040:

- **Improved Access to Healthcare**: where Nestrans will continue to work with NHS Grampian to implement the Health and Transport Action Plan, integrated throughout relevant workstreams;

- **Revised Approach to Development Control**: where Nestrans has the potential to influence policy through national policy work;

- **Maintain and expand air routes**: where Nestrans will continue to work with regional parties in a lobbying role;

- **Maintain and enhance maritime routes**: where Nestrans will continue to work with regional parties in a lobbying role;

- **Digital connections**: where Nestrans will support work through the City Region Deal and economic development partners;

- **Freight Hubs and facilities**: whilst likely to be commercially driven, Nestrans will need to maintain a close monitoring role in liaison with the North East Freight Forum and planning partners and other relevant stakeholders (such as the ports and harbours); and

- **Infrastructure measures to support the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan**: where Nestrans will continue to consider and input into individual elements as they are worked up in detail.

Future Scenarios

The options were broadly developed and considered under a background 'business as usual' scenario. However, there are a number of issues which have the potential to materially re-shape how people use the transport network in the coming decades, and therefore how relevant some of the measures being considered here may be in the future. These issues can be thought of under three main themes:

- Decarbonisation;
- Technology; and
- Societal change.

Whilst there is a varying degree of uncertainty with respect to much of this, the potential implications should be considered in order to manage the risk of, for example, making investments now that are subsequently overtaken by events, leading to potential redundancy. Looking further ahead to the next steps listed above, any project appraisal will require a 60-year benefits stream to be calculated. Some of the issues discussed here, particularly full vehicle automation, are not likely to become a factor in the short or medium term, e.g. to 2040, but certainly would become a factor if looking to, for example, 2080. A broad commentary around these issues is presented in the report.

A further current consideration is the potential for medium-term, structural impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to materially alter societal behaviour with respect to work and travel. In March 2020, the UK went into 'lock-down' due to the global pandemic. The aftermath of the pandemic has the potential to impact on the way we work, live and travel. Given the national need for working from home, employers and employees have had to adapt accordingly, implementing working strategies and technological solutions to enable this. The outcome may be a new working reality where staff choose to work more often from home, and some of the desired behavioural change outlined in the NTS2 and regional & local strategies may be achieved sooner than anticipated. There are also significant short to medium term restrictions on public transport capacities due to the requirements of social distancing. This evolving working and travel environment may have implications for schemes at the planning stages, as these may need to be revisited to explore whether they are still appropriate, or whether different types of schemes may now be considered more relevant. While at this stage no one can accurately predict the long-term impacts to travel of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ramifications could be profound, and any

option being progressed for more detailed consideration beyond this stage of option appraisal should recognise and consider this.

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