

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Service:</u>	Strategic Place Planning
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UPDATE:

The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2016-2021 was adopted in 2016 and sets out the policies and interventions adopted by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the period to 2021, under the topic headings of Support, Maintenance, Management, Sustainable Development and Travel, and Improvements.

This Service Update provides information on recent progress made on a range of strategic and local transport projects and initiatives that are contributing to the successful delivery of the LTS, as well as wider transport aims and objectives.

1 SUPPORT

1.1 Strategic Rail Network

1.1.1 Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvement Project

The next phase of delivery of the Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Improvement Project is in progress. In a similar style as Aberdeen to Dyce in 2018, a blockade is in place between Dyce and Inverurie until August 2019, with a bus replacement service running during this period.

Closures are taking place in three phases between Aberdeen, Dyce, Inverurie and Huntly:

- 4 May to 14 June (6 weeks) – Bus replacement for Dyce to Inverurie – Construction;
- 15 June to 9 August (8 weeks) – Bus replacement for Dyce to Huntly – Signalling;
- 10 August to 12 August (3 days) – Bus replacement for Aberdeen to Inverness; and
- 13 August to 19 August (6 Days) – Bus replacement for Aberdeen to Huntly – Commissioning.

These works comprise of 16 miles of new track. There will be a continued rail service between Dyce and Aberdeen during the blockade.

1.2 Trunk Road Network

1.2.1 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR)

In February 2019, the full route was opened to the public.

1.2.2 A96 East of Huntly to Aberdeen Dualling

Following option exhibitions in October 2018, further option sifting took place, and in May 2019 further exhibitions were held to allow members of the public to view and comment on the remaining options for dualling of the 26-mile section of the A96 between East of Huntly and Aberdeen, and to see how proposals are developing. Options can be viewed on the [project website](#).

Transport Scotland aims to confirm a preferred option for the scheme by the end of 2019. Further public exhibitions will be held when the preferred option is announced to provide an opportunity for comments and feedback from stakeholders, local communities and members of the public.

2 MANAGEMENT

2.1 Air Quality

2.1.1 Low Emission Zone (LEZ)

A project group, comprising representatives of various ACC teams, and partners Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans, NHS Grampian, Transport Scotland and SEPA (the Scottish Environment Protection Agency), has been established to guide the process of identifying and testing options for a LEZ in Aberdeen.

The group is currently developing a range of scenarios for testing and appraisal. SEPA's air quality model is in the process of being updated with 2019 data so that any air quality impacts arising from the recent opening of the AWPR can be factored into future modelling outputs.

In June 2019, Transport Scotland opened their 2019/20 LEZ Support Fund for city authorities developing LEZ schemes. Officers are in the process of putting together an application to the fund that will allow for an upgrade of the city centre traffic model, again using 2019 traffic data, with which to test the impacts of the various LEZ scenarios being developed, and to engage consultancy support to undertake appraisal of different scenarios, including public and stakeholder engagement, culminating in the identification of a preferred LEZ option. The application period closes on 5th July.

3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL

3.1 Land Use Planning

3.1.1 Strategic Development Plan and Cumulative Transport Appraisal

The Proposed Strategic Development Plan (SDP) covers key issues which will help to shape this City Region over the coming years. These include the spatial strategy, the level of housing and employment land required, and regional and national infrastructure projects. A Cumulative Transport Appraisal (CTA) was undertaken to help understand the possible cumulative impacts of new development across the transport network particularly in Aberdeen and along

the main commuter routes into and out of the city and to identify where traffic interventions may be required to mitigate impacts. The full study and Executive Summary can be found on the [SDPA](#) website.

The findings of the CTA help to identify the “worst case” transport impacts associated with the Proposed Plan, understand the value of potential mitigation options, and ultimately support the delivery of the SDP and help ensure the transport implications of the emerging Local Development Plans are fully considered.

The CTA option testing demonstrated that measures can be identified and implemented to help mitigate the main congestion hot spots that are predicted to arise from proposed development. These congestion benefits will vary by location and depend heavily on the feasibility of interventions and as such, the conceptual proposals tested through this study will be developed further within the context of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). This will include establishing the full value for money associated with the different interventions identified.

The potential mitigation options will be considered alongside the options being developed through the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal and will feed into the national Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) where appropriate. The outcomes will also help inform the development of the next Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and the subsequent Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS).

The proposed SDP and appropriate supporting documents, including the CTA, was submitted to Scottish Ministers in March 2019 for examination in public.

3.1.2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ALDP)

The ALDP Main Issues Report consultation ended on 13th May 2019. The consultation drew 633 respondents who raised 1,265 issues. Officers will be considering the comments prior to preparing a Proposed ALDP for consideration by Full Council around the turn of the year.

3.2 **Travel Plans**

3.2.1 Workplace Travel Planning

Through the EU project Civitas Portis (2ABZ3 Developing Travel Plans), plans are underway for engagement with employers in the South Dee (Altens and Tullos) area over ways in which staff could be encouraged and enabled to travel to and from work more sustainably.

A Business Breakfast event for businesses and employees in the North and South Dee areas was held on the 20th March highlighting active and sustainable travel options and links with public health and provided attendees the opportunity to comment on how their journeys to work could be improved.

3.3 **Car Club**

New Toyota Yaris Hybrid cars have been deployed at 4 sites - Mae Baird Avenue, Cornhill, the former Craiginches prison site and Auchinyell Road. Two hydrogen-powered Toyota Mirais are now available for public use during evenings and weekends. These are based at Gallowgate Car Park and East Craibstone Street.

3.4 Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles

3.4.1 Electric Vehicle Charge Points

Two new electric vehicle rapid¹ triple charge points and a double fast² charge point have been installed in Aberdeen. The two rapid chargers are publicly-available and located in Gallowgate Car Park and Kingswells Park and Ride where they “double up” the existing rapid charging capacity there. The fast charger has been installed at Tanfield Walk in Woodside and has one publicly-available socket with the other to serve a new Co-wheels car club vehicle. This takes the total number of publicly-available charge points installed by the Council to 62 with an additional 16 serving car club vehicles.

All units will link up to the National Chargeplace Scotland network. The two rapid chargers have been funded by Transport Scotland, with the fast charger and car club car to be funded via Civitas Portis.

In addition, the Council has been awarded £92,000 from Transport Scotland to extend the warranty and maintenance agreements on 39 electric charge points, which are part of the National Chargeplace Scotland network, until the end of December 2022. These charge points have been funded in previous financial years since 2013 and their current agreements are now about to run out.

3.5 Travel Information and Awareness

3.5.1 Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP)

The proposed 2019/20 SCSP programme, which was approved by the City Growth and Resources Committee in April (PLA/19/225), has also gained approval from Paths for All, the funding administrator, and work has now commenced to deliver the programme. As in previous years, SCSP projects will be delivered via Getabout, the sustainable transport brand for the North East of Scotland, concentrating on the following four themes:

- Getabout in the City, including events, marketing and evaluation of SCSP initiatives – to date, support has been provided to the Tour Series event in May 2019 while planning for the annual In Town Without My Car Day event in September is underway;
- Getabout for Education, including the continuation of the I-Bike Officer post (see section 3.6.1), Road Safety Magic Shows, School Travel Tracker, cycle training and support for travel planning to the University of Aberdeen;
- Getabout by Active Travel, including a refresh of the Aberdeen Cycle Maps, bicycle roadshows, the annual Scottish Workplace Journey Challenge and the production of new city centre walking trail maps;
- Getabout by Sustainable and Environmentally-Friendly Vehicles, including further Liftshare events, Car Club promotions, support and expansion, and public transport promotion.

¹ Rapid triple charger – capable of recharging 2 cars at once. Typically, will recharge a standard vehicle from 0 to 80% charge in 30 Minutes.

² Double fast charger – capable of recharging 2 cars at once. Typically, will recharge a vehicle from 0% to 100% in around 2-4 hours.

3.6 School Travel and Young People

3.6.1 I-Bike Project

The I Bike project officer is working in the Northfield Associated School Group (ASG) during the 2018-19 academic year. Northfield Academy and all seven feeder primary schools are fully engaged with the project. I-Bike activities that have taken place to date include led bike rides, led walks, scooter sessions, smoothie bike sessions, active travel breakfasts and many more. There are now ten I-Bike volunteers in Aberdeen City meaning that the I Bike project has an excellent support network. During the 2019/20 academic year, the I Bike project will work with the Aberdeen Grammar School ASG.

3.6.2 Hands-up Survey

The annual “Hands up Scotland Survey” 2018 results and corresponding report has been released and is available for view on the [Sustrans](#) website. Officers are currently analysing the results and recent trends for Aberdeen schools. The survey run by sustainable transport charity, Sustrans asks schools across Scotland every September to record the method of transport each of their pupils normally took to school by means of a “hands up” count in class.

4 IMPROVEMENTS

4.1 Walking and Cycling

4.1.1 River Don Paths

Farburn Bridge - Both landowner agreements have been reached and an updated ecological survey has been completed. The project will see the existing Farburn Bridge, which is not suitable for bicycle or wheelchairs, raised and widened to make it suitable for all users, and the path around the bridge, currently a washed-out granite dust surface, widened and upgraded to a sealed surface path, thus completing a missing link in the River Don corridor path network. Construction work is scheduled for September and October 2019, funded by Sustrans.

Seaton Park Entrances – External funding is being sought for the design of an improved main entrance to Seaton Park to make the entrance, which is shared with vehicles, safer and more appealing to pedestrians and cyclists.

4.1.2 Wellheads Cycle Link

Engagement with the Local Ward Members on the proposed design of an extension of the shared use pedestrian and cycle facility on Wellheads Drive and a new shared use facility on Farburn Terrace between the Wellheads Drive roundabout and Victoria Street, has commenced and an online public survey has taken place to further inform design work. The land title search has been completed and letters asking if the landowners would be willing to consider selling the required land have been sent out.

4.1.3 A90 Parkway Cycle Route Extension

ACC Estates are seeking to purchase land at Buckie Farm to complete access through the area adjacent to tree belt toward Balgownie Road. A redesign of the cycle route is underway following comments received from funding partners

Sustrans. Once land issues are resolved and designs finalised, funding will be applied for to take this project forward to completion.

4.1.4 Marywell to A956 Wellington Road Cycle Route

A STAG-based options appraisal has been carried out along this corridor, between the local authority boundary and the A956 Wellington Road, and a preferred route for pedestrian / cycle facilities has been identified. Connections to existing active travel infrastructure have also been identified for development. The preferred route and connections were approved at the City Growth and Resources Committee on the 6th June. This project will be funded from the AWPR Non-Motorised Users Mitigation (AWPR NMU) fund to progress to a preliminary design during 2019/20.

4.1.5 Middlefield and Northfield Active Travel Project

The Nestrans-funded civils works comprising a combined cycle and pedestrian crossing on Manor Avenue, widened footpaths, improved crossings on Provost Rust Drive and a crossing at Manor Avenue, have all been completed.

4.1.6 Bicycle Hire Scheme

Sweco have been appointed to carry out an options appraisal for a bicycle hire scheme in Aberdeen, including public and stakeholder engagement. Officers are currently reviewing the consultant's draft report, and a report will be presented to September's City Growth & Resources committee, summarising progress to date and recommending next steps.

4.1.7 A96 Collective Travel Study

50 new cycle parking spaces have been approved for installation. These will be located along the A96 Aberdeen to Inverurie corridor, or nearby, at five locations - Aberdeen Arts Centre, the Powis Place / George Street junction, Hilton Road retail park opposite the Northern Hotel in Woodside and outside 729 – 735 Great Northern Road. All the spaces will be located on council-maintained footpaths. It is intended that they will be in place by the end of summer 2019, funded via Civitas Portis.

4.1.8 Cross City Connections

The final report outcomes were presented to the 6th June City Growth & Resources committee. Officers are currently preparing a brief to enable the commission of consultants for the development of a delivery programme, including identifying options that can be progressed at an early stage to detailed design, subject to the identification of suitable funding sources.

4.1.9 Craigshaw Drive Cycleway

Engagement with local Members has taken place and a public online exhibition of the design completed. The Traffic Regulation Order process is also complete and funding applications for construction works have been submitted.

4.1.10 Farburn Terrace Cycleway

A public online exhibition has taken place, with a number of comments received. Initial approaches to landowners have been made and funding applications to continue preparatory works through 2019/20 have been submitted.

4.1.11 Bridge of Dee West – Active Travel Corridor

A recent Core Project Group Meeting identified that the scope of this project should be widened to connect to the Deeside Way and to the existing path to the east of the Bridge of Dee. A brief to carry out a STAG-based options appraisal of this extended scope has been published. From this appraisal a preferred option will be identified to be taken forward. This work will commence in 2019/20 subject to successful funding applications.

4.1.12 A92 Murcar North

The detailed design for of an extension of the existing shared use pedestrian and cycle facility along the A90 Ellon Road between Murcar Roundabout and Blackdog has been completed and arrangements are currently underway for a public and stakeholder consultation in summer 2019. Following consultation, a report will be submitted to the relevant committee seeking approval to construct the shared-use path.

4.1.13 A92 Trunk Road Connections

The detailed design for these connections to the A92 have been completed. Planning approval has been given for the path running alongside the Sparrows warehouse/B&Q car park with anticipated construction in September. It is anticipated the other scheme on the Parkway (Exhibition Centre roundabout to Woodside Road) will be constructed at the same time, with both pieces of work funded by the AWPR NMU fund.

4.1.14 A96 Cycle Route – missing link at Craibstone Junction

Provisional work has been carried out on the detailed design, in anticipation of construction in a future year, funded by the AWPR NMU fund.

4.1.15 A944 Cycle Route

Nestrans, working in collaboration with Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Sustrans, has appointed AECOM to undertake an appraisal of options for improvements to the walking and cycling facilities on the section of the A944 between the Kingswells perimeter road and the AWPR. An Inception Report and Communications Plan has been prepared, with site investigation works underway, including traffic, pedestrian and cycle surveys.

4.2 Road

4.2.1 Wellington Road Multimodal Corridor Study

Option development and modelling is taking place, with option appraisal following thereafter. This will be supported by public and stakeholder engagement at key stages of the process, and in tandem with engagement on a complementary STAG appraisal of options for improved external transport connections to Aberdeen South Harbour (see section 5.5.5).

4.2.2 Roads Hierarchy

A report on options for a revised Roads Hierarchy was approved by the City Growth and Resources Committee on 6th June 2019. A schedule of reclassification proposals is currently being finalised by officers for approval by Transport Scotland.

4.3 Public Realm and the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

4.3.1 Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

At the June meeting of the City Growth and Resources Committee, the Committee agreed to a period of public and stakeholder consultation on a draft Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) which complements the Roads Hierarchy and the transport elements of the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP). Consultation is now underway via [Citizens Space](#) and closes on 10th July. Thereafter the Plan will be revised based on the outcomes of the consultation and a final SUMP taken to the November 2019 meeting of the City Growth and Resources committee, recommending adoption.

4.3.2 Tilly-Wood Street Design Project

Following a number of community engagement exercises and a process of evolving designs in response to these, a series of concept designs for improved transport and placemaking interventions in Tillydrone and Woodside have been developed by Sustrans, working in partnership with Council officers and a Steering Group including community representatives. These designs are in the process of being handed over to the Council and a report will be taken to the relevant committee in September with recommendations for next steps.

4.3.3 Schoolhill Public Realm Enhancement

Stage 1 site works commenced on 3rd June for 10-12 weeks. External funding opportunities are being investigated for delivery of Stage 2 works.

5 OTHER

5.1 Nestrans Board Meetings

The Nestrans Board met on 13th February, 17th April and 19th June 2019, with meeting minutes available on the [Nestrans website](#). The next meeting is due to take place in September 2019.

5.2 City Region Deal

5.2.1 Strategic Transport Appraisal

Work on the Strategic Transport Appraisal continues, to determine future regional transport requirements to support the successful delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy. Following the identification of problems and opportunities and the development of objectives in 2018, consultants Jacobs have engaged with stakeholders in developing a long list of options for improvements that will be subject to STAG Appraisal. Option generation workshops took place with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council officers in November 2018, with stakeholders, and with Elected Members in early 2019. A draft list of options has been produced and these will be taken forward subject to appropriate Committee approvals.

5.2.2 External Transportation Links to Aberdeen South Harbour Study

Consultants PBA have been appointed to undertake STAG Part 2 Appraisal. The work has recently commenced and is expected to be completed by the end of October 2020.

5.3 Regional Transport Strategy

Progress of the review of this RTS (covering to 2040) is continuing, taking cognisance of the discussions of the North East Transport Consultative Forum. There will also be input from a Steering Group, Sounding Board, review of best practice, delivery programme and an initial scoping report identifying the key issues. A specific RTS review project website has been established, where all information relating to the development of the Strategy will be published, and where members of the public and stakeholders can comment on key areas of interest and the draft Strategy once it is produced:

<https://www.nestrans2040.org.uk/>

5.4 Transport (Scotland) Bill

The Bill (covering Low Emission Zones, Bus Services, Ticketing Arrangements, Pavement Parking and double Parking, and Road Works) is currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament, via the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee. It completed Stage 1 in April 2019. Officers from ACC's Traffic Management Team are currently on the national Transport Scotland Working Group to develop the Guidance Document for the footway parking and double-parking elements of the Bill.

5.5 Restricted Roads (20mph speed limit) (Scotland) Bill

The Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill was introduced by Mark Ruskell MSP on 21 September 2018. This Bill would reduce the default speed limit on most urban and residential streets in Scotland from 30mph to 20mph and would apply to all street-lit Class C and unclassified roads (except where roads have been de-restricted or are restricted under the relevant sections in Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984).

Aberdeen City Council responded to the consultation indicating general support for this for a number of reasons including safety and the environment. However, the response also makes it clear that the financial implications of this may be substantial and the Scottish Government should fully fund the implementation of this initiative should the Bill pass into law.

In May 2019, however, the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee refused to back the bill, arguing that a 'one size fits all' approach was not appropriate and did not give flexibility to local authorities, and the Bill was subsequently voted down in Parliament in June 2019.