

ABERDEEN CITY REGION DEAL:

Powering Tomorrow's World

Report Name	Strategic Transport Appraisal
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Date of Report	10 June 2022
Governance	City Region Deal Joint Committee

1:	Purpose of the Report
To seek approval of proposals for a programme of development work for the Strategic Transport Appraisal, following confirmation of regional and national transport priorities.	

2:	Recommendations for Action
Support the following activities in FY 22/23 and FY 23/24 in relation to the Strategic Transport Appraisal budget.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update the Case for Change and Preliminary Options Appraisal for A90N / A952 Ellon to Peterhead and Fraserburgh;2. Progress to Outline Business Case key elements of A956 Wellington Road Corridor Study, including junctions at Harness Road and Southerhead Roundabout;3. Undertake an options study on assessing, and accommodating future potential growth in local Rail Freight, focussed on the Craiginches Rail Freight facilities adjacent to East Tullos;4. Application of the regional Transport and Land Use Model (ASAM19) to inform strategic land use decisions for future Development Plans;5. Progress to Outline Business Case the development of two innovative "Live Lab" demonstration projects following the scoping exercise undertaken in the previous year;<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Regional Hydrogen Re-fuelling Facilities (demountable), aimed at extending the range of hydrogen vehicle use beyond Aberdeen City, facilitating broader geographic range of applications;b) Mobility Hubs, in both urban and rural settings, enabling vehicle e-charging and uptake of alternative mobility solutions, supported by digital applications.	

3:	Summary of Key Information
3.1	The Deal Commitment
The City Region Deal agreement (2016), set out the following commitment in terms of the Strategic Transport Appraisal.	

Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council commit up to £2 million to work with Transport Scotland and NESTRANS [Regional Transport Partnership] to scope out requirements for the next 20 years, building on the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and other planned investments.

Scottish Government, through **Transport Scotland**, commits up to an indicative amount of £2.5 million to work with NESTRANS and Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council to scope out requirements for the next 20 years, building on the completion of the AWPR and other planned investments. A transport appraisal will take a long-term strategic view of the transport implications of the investment unlocked by this Deal across modes including road and rail. This work will commence in 2016 and will be based on Scottish transport appraisal guidance and will recognise the priorities of local, regional and national transport plans and programmes.

The **UK Government** also made a commensurate commitment of £2.5 million.

3.2 Business Case and Progress to Date

A business case for the Strategic Transport Appraisal was approved by the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 10 November 2017 (Item 6). This established the plan to focus on specific scheme development work, following completion of Regional Transport Strategy, Local Development Plans, national Strategic Transport Projects Review, and National Planning Framework.

This Strategic policy work has now largely been completed, enabling priorities to be determined. Of the £7.0m total funding allocated to the Strategic Transport Appraisal, £5.7m remains uncommitted (£1.8m from Council allocations, £3.9 from UK Government and Scottish Government allocations).

3.3 Strategic Focus

Proposals have been identified considering four key criteria.

- a) Ensuring that it contributes to delivery of the regional transport strategy, and fits with national transport objectives and priorities.
- b) Ensuring that it corresponds to the objectives of the City Region Deal, and the Regional Economic Strategy;
- c) Avoiding duplication with an established funding or delivery mechanism;
- d) Being mindful of the deliverability of the proposed activities within the remaining years of the City Region Deal, and any capital projects that arise following the end of the Deal.

Priorities have been identified aligning with decarbonisation, supporting energy transition, inclusive accessibility in rural and urban areas, and complementing other activities.

Other activities (such as active travel, public transport, city centre initiatives) have not been included, as funding and delivery mechanisms already exist outwith the City Region Deal.

3.4 Proposals

A summary presentation of each proposal is provided in **Appendix 2**.

1. Update Case for Change and Options Appraisal for A90N/A952, Ellon to Peterhead/Fraserburgh.

- Justification – Forms the key corridor linking the region’s major ports, is the focus of the Green Freeport bid, and a core freight route. The AWPR project has delivered substantial benefits on the route south of Ellon, but issues remain north of Ellon. Previous work demonstrated the potential benefits of targeted interventions, including at Toll of Birness.
- Policy Fit - Forms an important element of RTS. National transport policy does not support infrastructure that enables unconstrained traffic growth, with an investment hierarchy prioritising the maintenance and safe operation of existing assets, and making better use of existing capacity, prior to any targeted infrastructure improvements.
- Key Benefits – Reliable freight links (energy transition, seafood), regeneration, supports future investment decision on the route.
- Delivery Mechanism – Consultancy study, managed by Nestrans.
- Fees/Timescales – £160k, between Q3 FY22/23 and Q4 FY23/24.

2. Progress to Outline Business Case key elements of A956 Wellington Road Corridor Study, including junctions at Hareness Road and Southerhead Roundabout.

- Justification – Complements ETZ master-planning work, and External Links to Aberdeen South Harbour. STAG 2 on Wellington Road identified the requirement for further, more detailed assessment of options in these locations, prior to ongoing corridor assessment;
- Policy Fit – Recognised as a key corridor for freight, public transport and active travel in the regional strategy, fits with ongoing work for Bus Partnership Fund;
- Key Benefits – Outcomes can feed into next stage of External Links to Aberdeen South Harbour and ETZ masterplan;
- Delivery Mechanism – Design Study, managed principally by Aberdeen City Council.
- Fees/Timescales - £170k, between Q2 FY22/23, and Q1 FY23/24.

3. Undertake options study on assessing, and accommodating future growth in local Rail Freight, focussed on the Craiginches facilities.

- Justification – Complements wider energy transition initiatives and potential future opportunities at Port of Aberdeen.
- Policy Fit - Supports regional and national rail freight growth policy, with work designed to nest with National Strategic Rail Freight study, opportunities arising from Aberdeen to Central Belt rail project, and ETZ masterplanning exercise.
- Benefits – Ensuring that viable options for future growth at the rail freight terminal are maintained or facilitated.
- Delivery Mechanism – Consultancy study, managed by Nestrans.
- Fees/Timescales –£45k FY 22/23, possible further £40 FY 23/24.

4. Application of the regional Transport and Land Use Model to support strategic land use decisions for future Development Plans.

- Justification – The finalisation of the transport model (updated to post AWPR opening) provides the tool to inform strategic decisions that will influence the next Local Development Plans;
- Policy Fit – Builds on work undertaken to support the Strategic Development Plan, and the growth corridors set out in the National Planning Framework.
- Benefits – Ensuring that land use decisions and transport measures are tied together, facilitating an informed “infrastructure first” approach.
- Delivery Mechanism – Consultancy study, managed by Nestrans.
- Fees/Timescales – £40k, FY 22/23.

5. Progress to Outline Business Case the development of two innovative “Live Lab” projects following a scoping exercise undertaken in FY21/22, focussing on:

- a) Demountable Hydrogen Fuelling Facilities, aimed at extending the range of hydrogen vehicle use beyond Aberdeen City, facilitating broader range of applications; and
- b) Transport Mobility Hubs, in both urban and rural settings, enabling e-charging and uptake of sustainable travel options, supported by digital applications.

- Justification – Scoping work undertaken during FY21/22 considered a wide range of potential innovative interventions, which if implemented would provide wider learning for both regional and national roll-out. When considering deliverability, added regional value, fit with policy and CRD objectives, two prospective proposals have been identified for further development to Outline Business Case.

Demountable Hydrogen Fuelling facilities provide a “frontier” fuelling option for locations outwith the direct radius of Aberdeen City, providing the means for a wide range of public and private fleets to consider hydrogen vehicles, particularly valuable in building a regional hydrogen network. Building on previous work linked to EU funded Hytrec study, and complementing the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub, the aim would be to confirm a specification, location and feasibility issues. If proven viable, the aim would be to move to procurement and implementation, as a demonstrator project within the STA funding allocation.

Transport Mobility Hubs are facilities which bring together different sustainable travel options within a specific location, supporting the usage of more sustainable and active travel modes, supported by information and e-charging. Such facilities have been identified as opportunities in national policy. The proposal is to develop different types of hubs in urban, sub-urban and rural contexts, in order to inform wider roll out of the concept. This could be supported by digital travel planning applications (such as Aberdeen City’s GoABZ tool).

- Policy Fit – Hydrogen fuelling facilities fit with regional Hydrogen ambition, and national objectives to decarbonise the road haulage freight and

logistics sector (vans and HGVs). Transport Mobility Hubs aim to provide make sustainable and inclusive travel options more accessible, fitting with national and regional policies. In rural areas, they may support tourism objectives.

- Benefits – Hydrogen re-fuelling facilities in the first instance may enable the early introduction of demonstrator van and HGV vehicles to the area, as there would be a viable re-fuelling network, and many freight trips in the area remain in the north east.
- Delivery Mechanism – Feasibility studies leading to OBC, in conjunction with regional partners.
- Fees/Timescales – £40k, Q2-Q3 FY22/23 for Strategic Business Cases
£200k Q4 FY22/23 - Q1 FY23/24 for Outline Business Cases

4: Financial and Risk Implications

The agreed funding allocation allocates £560k in the current financial year (FY22/23) and £950k in the following year (FY23/24) for STA work, and which is being sourced from the two Councils' allocations. The anticipated spend profile for the above proposals can be accommodated within this budget and is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Whilst each proposal is associated with different profiles of risk, given that all are at this stage desktop studies, are relatively low risk activities. Client project management is a medium risk due to ongoing work being undertaken in parallel with the proposed programme. Separate project management support resource will be sourced to mitigate this risk, with an estimated allocation of £45k in FY 22/23, and £80k in FY 23/24.

Procurement risk will be managed through the use of established framework arrangements, and is considered low risk.

Programme slippage is a medium risk, due to the programming risk associated with committee reporting timescales, procurement processes etc, to be mitigated through the resourcing strategy and programme management.

The development and progression of options for the A90(N) will be subject to approvals from Transport Scotland, as this is a Trunk Road. Likewise progression of any identified options for the rail freight terminals will be largely determined by demonstration of viable demand, the rail industry, leaseholders of the site, and interface with the wider ETZ master-planning process.

Implementation funding for regional hydrogen re-fuellers, and transport mobility hubs will depend on outcome of the proposed OBCs, and securing timely UK/Scottish Government support for progression of these projects to the next stage of work.

Appendix 2 – Summary Presentation of Proposals