

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	21 June 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	A96 Multi-Modal Study
REPORT NUMBER	COM/22/095
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Ken Neil
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.2 & 3.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the outcome of the A96 Transport Corridor Study (part of the Bus Partnership Fund programme) and to seek Committee approval to further progress the project to more detailed appraisal and an Outline Business Case.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Agree that work to further develop the options outlined in paragraph 3.7 below be progressed to a more detailed appraisal and an Outline Business Case;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to develop the Outline Business Case in accordance with the Transport Scotland governance decisions on the gateways for the Bus Partnership Fund;
- 2.3 Note that the Bus Partnership Fund programme has been enabled through Scottish Government funding and that officers will continue to work with partners to deliver the projects in accordance with the grant conditions; and
- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report back to this Committee with the Outline Business Case and next steps by December 2023.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Reference is made to the City Growth and Resources Committee meeting of 25 August 2021, report number COM/21/178, wherein the Committee was advised of the success of the North East Bus Alliance Bid to the Scottish Government Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). This corridor is one of a suite of corridors in Aberdeen City covered by the fund for a Business Case Development and is a core component of the wider vision to develop [Aberdeen Rapid Transit](#).
- 3.2 To provide context regarding the study, the North East Bus Alliance had identified the A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen corridor as one of its bus priority corridors for future improvement given that it is also a Park & Ride route and

connects to other major facilities around the corridor such as the Aberdeen International Airport, The Event Complex Aberdeen (TECA), Dyce and Kintore train stations, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), residential, commercial, and industrial areas. However, a number of hotspots were identified along the route which regularly cause delays to buses.

- 3.3 Aberdeen City Council, on behalf of the Bus Alliance, commissioned a multi-modal study to appraise options for improving public transport and active travel (walking, cycling, and wheeling) on the corridor. This was undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) in order to identify options that would be of most benefit to improving travel on the corridor.
- 3.4 In 2021, the bid by the Bus Alliance to the Scottish Government Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) for the Business Case Development of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), incorporated this corridor as part of the proposed ART network. Thus making this corridor a strategic one in the transport network for delivering significant bus priority upon which a successful ART system will depend and can operate in the future.
- 3.5 The multi-modal study was concluded in April 2022, with outcomes presented in an Executive Summary (Appendix A) and greater details presented in the Final Report (Appendix B). The study is scheduled to undergo a Gateway Review by Transport Scotland in May/June 2022 - a condition of the BPF grant award. Members will be updated verbally at Committee on the outcomes.
- 3.6 The key outcome of the study is the recommendation to progress the options outlined in Table 1 below to a more detailed appraisal amongst other risks and considerations. *Please see Executive Summary and Final Report for more details.* To aid the option development process, the corridor was segmented into four sections from Inverurie to Mounthooly roundabout. Figure 1 shows the schematic for a visual perspective of the full length of the study corridor.

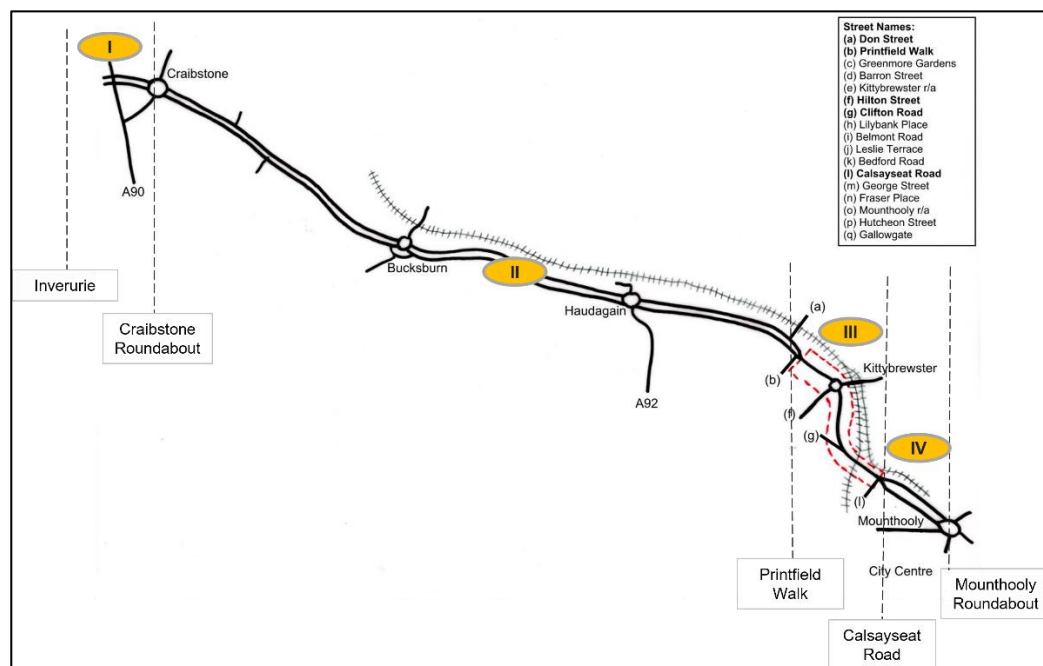


Figure 1: Showing the A96 corridor Inverurie to Aberdeen segmented into four sections

3.7 As mentioned above, Table 1 below outlines the options to be taken forward for a more detailed appraisal. They cover the full length of the study corridor and together have the potential to create a transformational change towards providing a continuous bus and active travel route from Inverurie to Aberdeen in line with the wider vision for the North East region.

Table 1: Options to be taken forward for a more detailed appraisal

Section	Options	
Inverurie to Craibstone (section I)	→ Active Travel + → Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the shared use path existing along the A96 between Inverurie and Kintore. • A new shared use path parallel to the A96 between Kintore and Craibstone. • A standalone junction improvement (left turn slip lane) between Port Elphinstone Road and the A96 eastbound carriageway to enable buses easily exit Inverurie onto the A96.
Craibstone to Printfield Walk (section II)	→ Active Travel + → Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way segregated (<i>with-flow</i>) cycle tracks [on both sides of the carriageway] or • Two-way segregated cycle track [one side of the carriageway], as well as footway and junction improvements to improve the pedestrian environment. • Continuous Standard bus lanes¹ or Enhanced bus lanes² in both direction of the carriageway.
Printfield Walk to Mounthooly roundabout (sections III & IV)	→ Active Travel + → Bus	<p>Continuous from the previous section,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way segregated (<i>with-flow</i>) cycle tracks [on both sides of the carriageway] or • Two-way segregated cycle track [one side of the carriageway], as well as footway and junction improvements to improve the pedestrian environment. • Continuous Standard bus lanes or Enhanced bus lanes in both direction of the carriageway. <p>Due to the committed Berryden Corridor Improvement Project (BCIP) which crosses the A96 at this section as it extends to Kittybrewster roundabout, and to enable the bus lanes remain continuous from the previous section through this section, there are three proposed variants to the bus route from Kittybrewster roundabout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Variant B routes along the committed BCIP between Kittybrewster roundabout and Powis Terrace then continues on to Mounthooly roundabout. — Variant C routes along the committed BCIP between Kittybrewster roundabout and Powis Terrace with road widening at Belmont Road railway bridge, then continues on to Mounthooly roundabout. — Variant E routes along Great Northern Road (does not use the BCIP) between Kittybrewster roundabout and Powis Terrace, but with road widening at Belmont Road railway bridge, then continues on to Mounthooly roundabout.

¹ Standard bus lanes have the end of the bus lanes set back a certain distance from the junction stop line, while

² Enhanced bus lanes are achieved by extending the bus lane to the junction stop line to enable bus priority through junctions.

- 3.8 In line with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) process, the primary start point is the identification of problems and opportunities and then developing objective-led Transport Planning Objectives (TPO) in response as a benchmark towards developing possible interventions. Key to this process is participation and consultation to ensure the interests of stakeholders are considered in an inclusive and appropriate manner.
- 3.9 A wealth of consultation responses from previous studies related to the corridor were collated, and stakeholders were contacted to validate if the problems they previously stated were still existent on the corridor and to identify any new and/or emerging problems. A workshop was held with the client group - a representative team made up of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire, Nestrans, Bus Alliance representatives and Sustrans. An online consultation survey was also published for five weeks to support the options appraisal and gain wider stakeholder views. The public, interest groups, key stakeholders, community councils, et cetera were invited to give a response to the online survey. This was done through the Council's consultation website, social media releases, on-bus poster displays, emails as well as telephone calls.
- 3.10 A summary of some of the problems identified through the various consultation responses, both past and present, included: *The environment provides low amenity or unsatisfactory conditions for local walking and wheeling, safety concerns around cycling on the corridor which prevent people from cycling, bus journey times are perceived as long in particular comparison to private car and rail, bus journey times can be unreliable or are perceived to be unreliable, et cetera.* See appended reports for more details.
- 3.11 Consequently, six transport planning objectives (TPO) were objectively developed in response to these range of problems, and also to position the corridor for the future of travel considering local, regional, and national climate change mitigation efforts and the proposed Aberdeen Rapid Transit. The transport planning objectives are:

TPO 1	Improve the quality of the pedestrian experience, and address the barriers which affect people moving around as pedestrians along the A96 corridor between Inverurie and Mounthooly roundabout / Aberdeen city centre
TPO2	Improve the quality of the cycling experience, and address the barriers which prevent many people cycling along the A96 corridor between Inverurie and Mounthooly roundabout / Aberdeen city centre
TPO3	Improve the quality of bus travel in the corridor for all users, enhancing the network and the travel experience both for current bus users and to attract new users
TPO4	Reduce bus journey times and improve punctuality in the corridor, and narrow the gap between bus and car-based journey times
TPO 5	Improve active travel and bus travel integration with, and access to, rail services in the corridor
TPO 6	Manage general traffic to minimise traffic re-routeing onto secondary and local routes as defined by the North East Roads Hierarchy

- 3.12 The options recommended to be progressed in paragraph 3.7, meet these Transport Planning Objectives as well as other STAG criteria of appraisal (Environment, Safety, Economy, Integration and Accessibility & Social Inclusion) at this preliminary stage and are thus deemed worthy to be progressed to a more detailed appraisal.
- 3.13 A detailed appraisal and a corresponding Outline Business Case will inform the preferred option of interventions on the corridor as well as the next steps. These would be reported to this Committee by December 2023.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Bus Partnership Fund provides 100% of funding for staff time and consultant fees for this study and further work to produce an Outline Business Case. It is intended to bid to the Bus Partnership Fund for infrastructure works recommended in the Outline Business Case, however this will be detailed in a future report to this Committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As this transport corridor is a part of the Bus Partnership Fund programme, it is subject to condition 9 (Default & Recovery etc. of Grant) of the grant award, in which section 9.1 says *The Scottish Ministers may re-assess, vary, make a deduction from, withhold, or require immediate repayment of the Grant or any part of it in the event that:*

9.1.1 The Grantee commits a Default;

9.1.3 The Grantee fails to carry out the project.

- 5.2 There are other project level conditions associated with the Bus Partnership Fund grant that must be complied with in order to claim eligible spend for the study.
- 5.3 A number of actions might require Traffic Regulation Orders which may be subject to statutory objection; land acquisition may also be necessary for some infrastructure measures following the outcome of the Outline Business Case. However, this will be detailed in a future report to this Committee following conclusion of the Outline Business Case.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, when detailed appraisal is completed and a preferred options of intervention are identified, in the subsequent stages towards progressing designs, an Environmental Impact Assessment will have to be undertaken to inform any environmental implications of the project. It should be noted however that Environmental considerations are part of the STAG criteria which has influenced the recommendations of this report in terms of the options to be taken forward for more detailed examination.

7. RISK

Risk Appetite

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Management Of Risk

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	Target Risk Level (L, M or H)	Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	<p>Delivery of public transport measures supports a number of the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in terms of a sustainable economy, a sustainable transport system, the continued health and prosperity of our citizens, reductions in carbon emissions and a high-quality environment.</p> <p>Failure to deliver public transport improvements where there is evidence of their effectiveness could undermine the Council's ability to realise these aspirations including the Aberdeen Rapid Transit.</p>	<p>Continue to work with partners to deliver the projects within the BPF grant award and continue to work in partnership to maximise 'match in kind' to add value to the grant in terms of meeting the strategic objectives of partners and Transport Scotland.</p>	L	Yes
Compliance	See section 5 above.	<p>Compliance with statutory processes, grant conditions and Scheme of Governance with regular progress and spend reporting to Transport Scotland, Aberdeen City Council and the Transportation Programme Boards</p>	L	Yes
Financial	If non-compliant to the grant conditions, there is risk around spend being	Regular monthly reporting to Transport	L	Yes

	ineligible or rejected, and therefore having to be absorbed by this Council and partners.	Scotland will help to reduce this risk.		
Reputational	Failure to deliver in accordance with the BPF grant conditions to help meet the Council's (and partners) strategic transport objectives undermines the Council's commitments to improving the transport network, achieving the PLACE outcomes set out in the LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan), and supporting Scotland's Climate Change Plan commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030.	Obtain Committee approval to progress works to a detailed appraisal. Continue working with partners to deliver the projects within the BPF grant award and continue to work in partnership to maximise 'match in kind' to add value to the grant in terms of meeting the strategic objectives of partners and Transport Scotland.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	ACC's net zero vision and strategic infrastructure plan – energy transition: transport emissions are a significant contributor to climate emissions so increasing sustainable travel will be necessary to achieving this sector's required reduction. If active travel and public transport measures are not delivered, ACC would not provide conditions which could encourage more sustainable travel movements which are likely to bring environmental improvements to the city and region.	Continue working with partners to deliver the projects within the BPF grant award and continue to work in partnership to maximise 'match in kind' to add value to the grant in terms of meeting the strategic objectives of partners and Transport Scotland.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLACE Policy Statement 3 -<i>Refresh the local transport strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review, promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport.</i> • PLACE Policy Statement 4 -<i>Cycle hire scheme</i> 	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of PLACE Policy Statement 3 & 4 as well as ECONOMY Policy Statement 4.</p> <p>Facilitating the feasibility of encouraging an increase in public transport patronage and active travel uptake through utilisation of the Bus Partnership Fund grant to determine the best intervention towards delivering enabling infrastructure will be highly beneficial to supporting the associated Policy Statements identified.</p> <p>ECONOMY Policy Statement 4 – <i>Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens.</i></p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.</i> 2. <i>400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026.</i> 3. <i>500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026.</i> 	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 1 to 3 as a good transport network and infrastructure provision means anyone regardless of their social status/economic means can choose a sustainable mode of travel for commuting.</p> <p>A reliable transport network supports economic growth and movement both locally and otherwise and affords the public the opportunity to choose a sustainable mode of travel to and from their workplaces. The proposals within this report aim to provide journey time reliability for buses.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. <i>Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.</i> 14. <i>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5%</i> 	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Place Stretch Outcomes 13 and 14 in the LOIP.</p> <p>A robust and reliable public transport network where well-integrated with active travel infrastructures will encourage public transport uptake and patronage and subsequently contribute towards reducing transport carbon emissions given the move towards alternative forms of fuel by bus operators in the region and the Council's fleet.</p>

<i>of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</i>	
Regional and City Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional Transport Strategy (2040)</i> • <i>Local Development Plan,</i> • <i>Local Transport Strategy including the Active Travel Action plan</i> • <i>Strategic Development Plan</i> • <i>Regional Economic Strategy</i> • <i>Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen</i> 	The proposals within this report support Regional and Local Transport Strategies and related strategies, which all aim to deliver a sustainable transport system as well as enhance the connectivity of the existing transport network.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	<p>Full impact assessment not required.</p> <p>The projects funded by this grant are being undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance which appraises impacts across a range of categories (Economy, Environment, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Safety and Integration). Further detailed assessments will be undertaken through the development and design process, as appropriate.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [City Growth and Resources Committee_25 August 2021_Bus Partnership Fund Bid – COM/21/178_Item 11.2 \(pages 227-238\)](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A: Executive Summary_A96 Multi-Modal Study

11.2 Appendix B: Final Report_A96 Multi-Modal Study

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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