

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee
<b>DATE</b>	31 October 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	North East Scotland Active Travel Network Review
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/23/332
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Donald Kinnear
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	8

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress of the North East Scotland Active Travel Network Review, a strategic active travel project currently being co-ordinated by Nestrans.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the progress that has been made on the North East Scotland Active Travel Network Review pertaining to the Aberdeen City area (as the responsible Roads Authority);
- 2.2 Note that, subject to Nestrans Board approval, the initial outcomes of the Network Review will proceed to public and stakeholder consultation, and that this will be co-ordinated by Nestrans; and
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report further progress to this Committee at an appropriate time following the public consultation process, within the next 12 months.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 There is a consistent policy ambition regarding active travel across Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council, and at present there are a number of existing active travel proposals, ongoing studies, and identified network gaps, albeit at different stages of development. These span interventions within neighbourhoods, towns and villages; along key transport corridors; on the core paths network; and along the region's longer distance strategic active travel routes. However, at present there is no clearly defined active travel network for the North East of Scotland. Furthermore, within the mix

of current and potential schemes, it can be difficult to establish different delivery priorities and match these to the different funding sources that are available.

- 3.2 As a result, and following a Nestrans-led tender exercise carried out earlier this year, transport consultancy firm Jacobs were commissioned to carry out an Active Travel Network Review for the North East of Scotland. The purpose of the review is to identify a coherent and holistic aspirational walking, wheeling and cycling network for the region. The outcomes will be used to develop a costed and prioritised Active Travel Network Plan, setting the strategic direction and establishing a 'pipeline' of projects for delivery within the region over the next 10-20 years. By clearly establishing an active travel network and delivery priorities, partners will be able to capitalise on opportunities arising from Scottish Government's commitment to increased year upon year funding for active travel.
- 3.3 The commission is being overseen by a client steering group formed from representatives of Aberdeen City Council, Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council and has been broken down into 3 individual work packages covering:
- Aberdeen City Area,
  - Main Towns in Aberdeenshire, and
  - Strategic Regional Connections.

These are led by the respective authorities, whilst still contributing to the direction of the study overall.

- 3.4 In terms of the Aberdeen City area, the aim will be to develop a city-wide network of safe, connected and coherent active travel routes, which are suitable for users of all ages and abilities. It is anticipated that, if delivered, this network will further encourage modal shift away from the private car towards more healthy and sustainable forms of travel and deliver a range of safety, accessibility, health and environmental benefits. These will all contribute to many of the aims and outcomes associated with the Local Transport Strategy (LTS), Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP), Net Zero Vision etc.
- 3.5 This network of routes has been categorised as follows:
- Primary Routes – these link key trip attractors and attract the highest usage. These routes are often used for commuting trips and will potentially form active travel freeways in urban areas.
  - Secondary Routes – these provide links to the local centres within the city.
  - Local Access Routes – these provide connections from the Primary and Secondary routes into local neighbourhoods and streets at the beginning and end of journeys.
  - Long Distance Routes – these are often used for recreation and touring (cycling) purposes but can also correspond with the other route types outlined above.
- 3.6 Although the development of the active travel route network for the Aberdeen City area has been managed by officers in the Transport Strategy and

Programmes team, the process has benefitted from input by colleagues from across the Transportation and Planning teams, and from early engagement with key stakeholders including the Disability Equity Partnership (DEP), Aberdeen Cycle Forum and Grampian Cycle Partnership.

- 3.7 Subject to Nestrans Board approval on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Nestrans intend to undertake a six week period of public and stakeholder consultation, beginning immediately after the festive break in early January 2024. Holding a consultation exercise into the draft network proposals will be a vital step in gauging the acceptability of the proposals as they stand, and highlighting to those who involve themselves in the process what considerations have informed the development of the proposed network. A consultation will also ensure that the input of key stakeholders and members of the public is incorporated into the final proposed active travel route network.
- 3.8 Following the consultation period, time will be required for Jacobs and officers to review the comments received and update the draft active travel route network into a set of finalised proposals. It is envisaged that the finalised active travel route network proposals, including high level costs, proposed network prioritisation and impact assessments will be reported to the Nestrans Board in spring/summer 2024 before coming to this Committee for adoption as Roads Authority later in 2024.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of undertaking the Active Travel Network Review is currently being met by Nestrans and an allocation from the Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) programme, as agreed at the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 meeting of this Committee.
- 4.2 There will be financial implications associated with delivering the outcomes of the review, and these will be identified and quantified as the study progresses.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications at this stage. There may be implications with delivering the outcomes of the review, and these will be identified as the study progresses.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications at this stage. Delivery of the outcomes of the review is anticipated to have environmental improvements arising from a modal shift from vehicular to active forms of travel, with associated carbon reduction and air quality improvements. These will be further assessed as the study progresses.

#### **7. RISK**

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Without a formal active travel route network, there is a risk that the city's transport network will not be able to respond to future changes in environmental, economic, health and social contexts. In understanding this, it allows the Aberdeen transport network to evolve in response to this for the benefit of users.	Establish proposals for active travel route network.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	The lack of a formal active travel route network could compromise the Council's abilities to meet national targets for carbon reduction, air quality and the reduction of journeys made by private cars.	Establish proposals for active travel route network.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	Without a formalised active travel route network, there is a risk that the overreliance on private car use will continue and the associated issues that this brings, such as congestion, air quality issues, parking issues and potential impacts on	Establish proposals for active travel route network.	L	<b>Yes</b>

	the health of the population.			
<b>Financial</b>	Establishing a formal active travel route network and delivery priorities will assist the Council to capitalise on opportunities arising from the Scottish Government's commitment to increase levels of funding for active travel projects.	Establish proposals for active travel route network	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	The lack of a formal active travel route network potentially gives residents and investors the impression that Aberdeen does not care about meeting national targets for the reduction in the number of journeys made by private car or encouraging the use of active modes of travel which may discourage them from wanting to live in and invest in the city.	Establish proposals for active travel route network.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	The lack of a formal active travel route network could compromise the Council's abilities to achieve Net Zero, air quality and noise quality targets.	Establish proposals for active travel route network.	L	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-

<p><a href="#"><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></a></p>	<p><i>Creating a Road Safety Fund with an annual capital budget of at least £1 million to be used to make roads and pavements safer for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and other road users and implement traffic management projects which improve road safety.</i></p> <p><i>Reviewing our cycle and active transport network, and work with Aberdeen Cycle Forum to deliver our shared vision of making Aberdeen a cyclist friendly city and provide covered secure cycle storage in suitable locations across Aberdeen.</i></p>
<p align="center"><a href="#"><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u></a></p>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals help contribute to Stretch Outcome 1: <i>No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026</i> – By creating conditions where more cost effective forms of travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling are better enabled, this helps ensure that people are less reliant on expensive forms of transport to get around.</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals help to contribute to the following stretch outcomes:-</p> <p><i>4. 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026</i> – By creating conditions where more cost effective forms of travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling are better enabled, this helps ensure that young people are more able to access education and have more opportunities to keep body and mind healthy while doing so.</p> <p><i>5. 90% of children and young people report they feel listened to all of the time by 2026</i> - Young people will be encouraged to participate in the consultation.</p> <p><i>6. By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026</i> - By supporting the creation of conditions where more cost effective forms of travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling are better enabled, this helps ensure that young people are more able to access education and have more opportunities to keep body and mind healthy while doing so.</p> <p><i>7. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 &amp; 2) will sustain a</i></p>

	<p><i>positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</i> - By creating conditions where more cost effective forms of travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling are better enabled, this helps ensure that young people are more able to access education and other opportunities.</p> <p>9. <i>100% of our children with Additional Support Needs/disabilities will experience a positive destination</i> - By encouraging and enabling the transport network to be more inclusive this helps ensure that young people with additional support needs and disabilities are more able to access education and other opportunities.</p> <p>11. <i>Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</i> – By supporting the creation of conditions where more cost effective forms of travel such as walking, wheeling and cycling are better enabled, this helps ensure that young people are more able to access education and have more opportunities to keep body and mind healthy while doing so.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals will help to contribute to the following stretch outcomes:-</p> <p>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> - The proposals support a reduction in the need to travel unsustainably, as well as encouraging active and zero emission travel.</p> <p>14. <i>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026</i> - The proposals support and enable mode shift, walking, wheeling and cycling proposals and the importance of planning in accordance with the National Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.</p> <p>15. <i>Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026</i> - The proposals will encourage and enable biodiversity to be considered as part of new transport developments and maintenance.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p>	<p>At regional level, the proposals within this report support the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy by transposing its content to local level, the Health and Transport Action Plan by encouraging sustainable and active travel and access to</p>

	<p>healthcare, and the Regional Economic Strategy by supporting the efficient movement of goods and people.</p> <p>At local level, the proposals within this report support the Aberdeen Local Development Plan, The Net Zero Aberdeen Route Map, the Net Zero Aberdeen Mobility Strategy, the City Centre and Beach Masterplan, the Aberdeen Core Paths Plan, the Aberdeen City Council Climate Change Plan, and Aberdeen Adapts by reducing dependence on the private car through promotion and enabling of a range of different transport options, planned in accordance with the sustainable transport hierarchy.</p>
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	Stage 1 assessment has been completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	Not required at this time.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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