

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee
DATE	12 November 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Wellington Road Junction Improvements (WRJI) – Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/24/299
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Ross Stevenson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	8

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on progress to date and outline the outcome of the Wellington Road Junction Improvements (WRJI) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 Route Option Assessment Report and to advise on the next steps in development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 2 Route Option Assessment report, appendix 1;
- 2.2 notes the relationships between the Wellington Road Junction Improvement Scheme and the ongoing development of the Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road project, currently progressing through the detailed planning & design process;
- 2.3 notes the linkages between the Wellington Road Junction Improvement project and the routeing of Aberdeen Rapid Transit as agreed by Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee on 11 June 2024;
- 2.4 Agrees the preferred option (K) outlined in the DMRB Stage 2 report and instructs the Chief Officer Capital to progress further development of the preferred option including undertaking a tailored Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Stage 3 Scheme Assessment; and
- 2.5 Instructs the Chief Officer - Capital and the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to investigate funding opportunities for the future development and implementation of the project and report an Outline Business Case and conclusion of Stage 3 Scheme Assessment to the Finance and Resources Committee in autumn 2025.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 On 10 November 2021, the City Growth and Resources Committee reviewed the Wellington Road Multimodal Corridor Study (WRMMCS) STAG Part 2 report. The committee agreed to:

- (a) note the outcomes of the Wellington Road STAG Part 2 Appraisal; and
- (b) approve the progression of the recommended hybrid package as detailed in section 3.10 of the report; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officers – Capital and Strategic Place Planning to progress outline design, route option assessment and Outline Business Case as soon as funding and resource is identified and report the outcomes back to this Committee once completed.

3.2 On 10 June 2022, Aberdeen City Region Deal (ACRD) Joint Committee agreed funding within the Strategic Transport Appraisal to “*Progress to Outline Business Case key elements of A956 Wellington Road Corridor Study, including junctions at Hareness Road and Souterhead Roundabout.*” This focuses on the section of the WRMMCS of Wellington Road between Craigshaw Drive and Charleston Road North, termed Wellington Road Junction Improvements (WRJI) (Figure 1), building on the work of the WRMMCS and complementing Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road project.

3.3

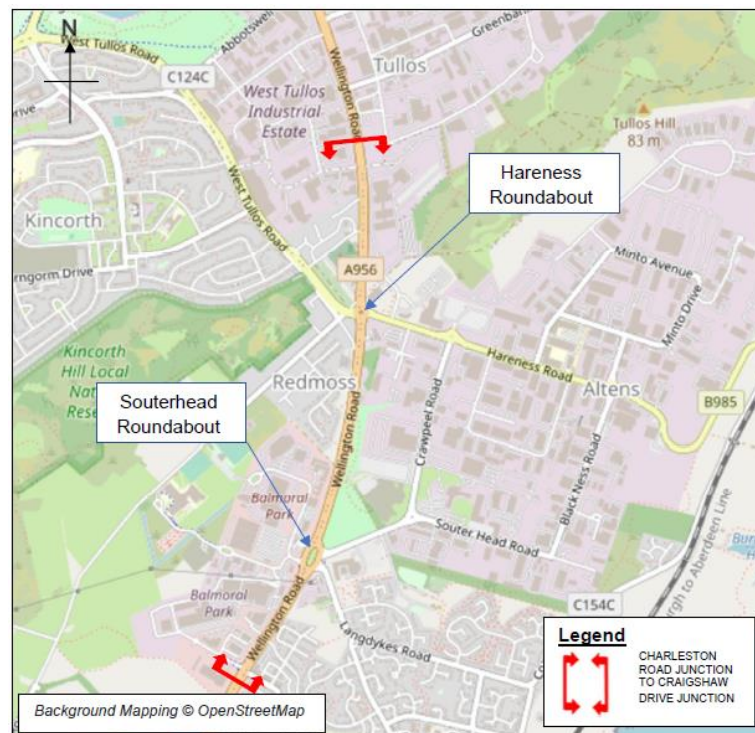


Figure 1

3.4 The project considers the road corridor between the signalised crossroads junction of Wellington Road (A965), Charleston Road North, and Wellington Circle and the signalised crossroads junction of Wellington Road (A956), Craigshaw Drive, and Altens Farm Road. A section of Wellington Road

approximately 2km long, encompassing Souterhead and Hareness Roundabouts.

- 3.5 The project aims are to provide greater priority for sustainable transport modes locking in the benefits of the AWPR, while also reducing and managing traffic demands. This also links with the proposed routeing of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART), as agreed by Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, which utilises the southern section of Wellington Road and West Tullos Road. ART aims to deliver a high quality, high frequency bus rapid transit system on two cross city corridors. The project focuses on delivering bus priority to improve bus journey times and reliability and promoting active travel by improving the level of service provided. The WRJI project generally involves repurposing existing grassed and vegetated areas to accommodate these facilities.
- 3.6 The DMRB Stage 2, Route Options Assessment has been completed and has identified a preferred option (K) that includes a combination of different interventions providing the optimum solution to address the Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs). A copy of this assessment and its appendices are included with this report (Appendix 1).
- 3.7 As part of the DMRB Stage 2 appraisal process, a long list of options was identified for Wellington Road Junction Improvements, this long list included the recommended hybrid options previously identified as part of WRMMS. The long list of options were further reviewed with a series of shortlisted options taken forward. The following table sets out the identified Hybrid Package from the WRMMCS and details whether these were taken to shortlist stage.

WRMMCS Hybrid Option	Description	Taken forward as shortlist option
1: Charleston to Souterhead Roundabout	With-flow cycleway from tie-in with existing shared use facilities to the west of Old Wellington Road to Souterhead Roundabout.	Not within scope of current funding allocation
	Additional lane northbound between Charleston Road North and Souterhead Junction.	Included in shortlist options
2: Souterhead Junction	Reconfiguration of Souterhead Junction.	Thirteen options were reviewed as part of the long list options assessment, however due to traffic modelling predicting detrimental impacts on queue lengths only active travel options on arms of the existing roundabout and similar with the inclusion of bus priority on Wellington Road northbound approach, and Langdykes Road were taken forward to the short list.
3: Souterhead Junction to Hareness Junction	With-flow cycleway between Souterhead Roundabout and Hareness Roundabout.	Due to the physical constraints on the corridor it is possible to provide a higher level of service to pedestrians and cyclists with the implementation of two-way segregated cycle facilities along this length of Wellington Road to one side.

3: Souterhead Junction to Hareness Junction	Additional lane northbound between Souterhead and Hareness Junctions.	Included within shortlist options.
4: Hareness Junction	Removal of the roundabout for introduction of a signalised junction with improved crossing facilities for active travel users.	Nine options were reviewed as part of the long list options assessment. Traffic modelling indicates that this junction operates significantly better as a roundabout than any form of signalised cross roads, therefore the only option taken forward to shortlist was the introduction of active travel measures in this area.
5: Hareness Roundabout to Craigshaw Road	Cycleway between Hareness Roundabout and Craigshaw Road.	Included within shortlist options.
	Northbound bus lane between Craigshaw Drive and Abbotswell Road, avoiding the approach to and the junctions at Craigshaw Road, Greenbank Road and Abbotswell Road.	Not within scope of current funding allocation.
6: Craigshaw Road to Balnagask Road	Cycleway between Craigshaw Road and Balnagask Road.	Not within scope of current funding allocation.
7: Balnagask Road to Queen Elizabeth Bridge (QEB)	Cycleway between Balnagask Road and QEB.	Not within scope of current funding allocation.
	Northbound bus lane (small extension to existing bus lane towards QEB)	Not within scope of current funding allocation.

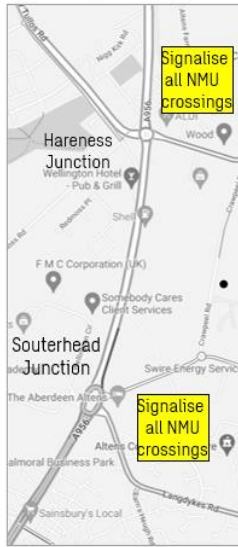
3.8 Following completion of the longlist options appraisal, the best performing components to be assessed in combination at the DMRB Stage 2 Option Appraisal were:

- 1No. junction option at Hareness Junction; existing roundabout with additional signalised crossings at 20m setback.
- 2No. junction options at Souterhead Junction; existing roundabout with improved signalised crossings; and existing roundabout with improved signalised crossings and signalised bus priority entry lanes.
- 4No. carriageway link options: Existing road carriageway cross-section retained; existing road carriageway cross-section retained with lane 1 reallocated for buses; existing road carriageway cross-section retained with lane 1 reallocated for buses and freight; and additional northbound bus lane between Charleston Road North and Hareness Roundabout.
- All shortlist options to have segregated two-way flow active travel provision relative to the combination of interventions.

3.9 Following shortlist review, three additional hybrid options were identified incorporating an additional bus and freight lane to the south of Souterhead Roundabout and options between Souterhead and Hareness Roundabouts. North of Hareness Roundabout, the solution remains consistent across all options.

- 3.10 Figure 2 below shows a schematic representation of the 11 design options progressed at DMRB Stage 2 Option Appraisal. Note that these do not include the segregated two-way cycle track interventions that are common to all options.
- 3.11 The inclusion of controlled crossings facilities for non-motorised users on all arms of both roundabouts (Option A) as part of the active travel facilities is considered necessary as a minimum level of provision given the location of the corridor and ongoing development of the area. The safer crossing provision would provide an improved level of service for pedestrians and cycle traffic, lessening the impact of these large junctions on current and prospective users. These measures are common to all of the shortlisted options. It should be noted that including this safer crossing provision within the traffic modelling assessment process, introducing a regular and repeated level of demand on these proposed crossings results in an adverse journey time impact on general traffic within the corridor. The design options shown all seek to offset some of the adverse impact of the crossing facilities by providing differing levels of bus and freight priority, with either the creation of new carriageway, or the reallocation of existing carriageway space.

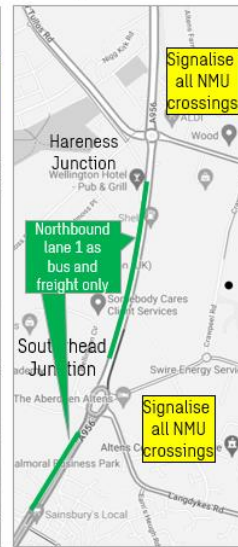
Option A



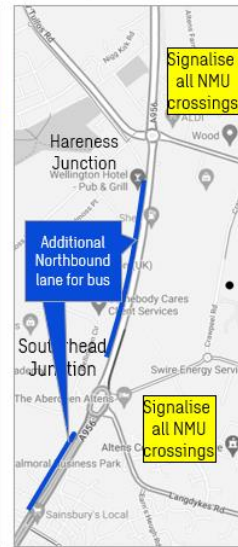
Option B



Option C



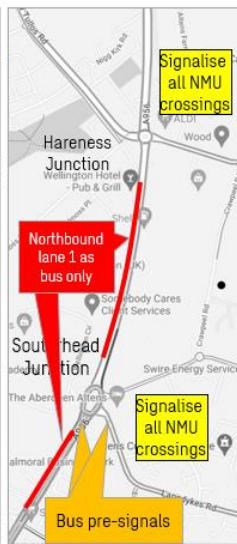
Option D



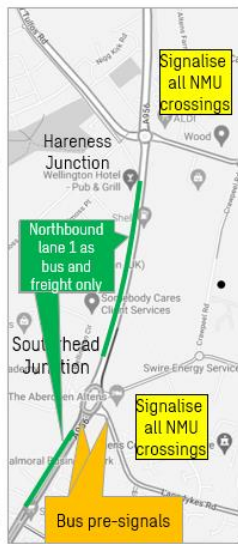
Option E



Option F



Option G



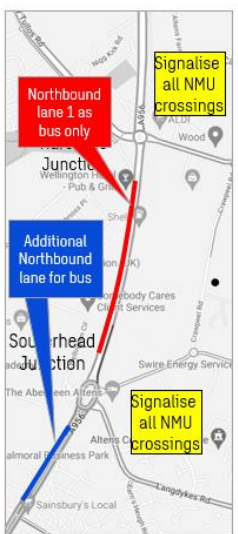
Option H



Option I



Option J



Option K



3.12 Following the option appraisal work, Option I and K were identified as the best performing options. Whilst option I scores marginally higher, option K aligns better with policy. As shown in Appendix 2 Option K includes:

- Additional signalised pedestrian crossings on Hareness Roundabout.
- Improved signalised crossing facilities on Southerhead Roundabout.
- Carriageway widening to accommodate a dedicated bus and freight lane between Charleston Road North to Southerhead Roundabout.
- Two-way segregated cycle track on the west side of the corridor from Charleston Road North to Hareness Roundabout.
- Reallocation of carriageway space to create a dedicated bus and freight lane between Southerhead Roundabout to Hareness Roundabout.
- Two-way segregated cycle track on the east side of the corridor from Hareness Roundabout to Craigshaw Drive.
- No change to existing carriageway between Hareness Roundabout to Craigshaw Drive.

3.13 The factors that make Option K the preferred option are as follows:-

- Prioritising facilities for sustainable transport modes along the corridor.
- Provision of improved, safer, more inclusive active travel facilities.
- Recognition of the strategic importance of freight on the corridor.
- Less disruption to traffic and the existing carriageway through the construction phase.
- Having the potential for a relatively lower impact on utilities.
- Providing a cost-effective solution.

3.14 Despite the overall performance of Option K, it is acknowledged that there are secondary traffic impacts on the southbound approach to the Hareness Road roundabout. This is likely to be due to the modelled simulations allowing for altered gap opportunities for southbound traffic giving way at the roundabout. Therefore, it is recommended that this potential effect be further examined in the future Stage 3 design development to explore in more detail how any adverse impacts can be mitigated.

3.15 There are currently discontinuous substandard shared use active travel facilities on Wellington Road on both sides, between Charleston Road North and Hareness Road Roundabout, in the form of narrow shared cycle tracks. Between Hareness Road and Craigshaw Drive only footway provision is provided and is narrow in places. The preferred option aims to modernise and extend this provision. Connections to other nearby walking and cycling infrastructure will be considered in greater detail during future design development and Stage 3 Scheme Assessment

3.16 The Preferred Option aligns with Aberdeen's goal of achieving net zero emissions and will improve access by sustainable travel modes to greener jobs

and infrastructure within the city, including the proposed Energy Transition Zone to the northeast of the scheme boundary.

- 3.17 Subject to committee approval the next stages of the project would be to advance the DMRB Stage 3 Scheme Assessment, including public and stakeholder engagement on the preferred option, and continue development of the Outline Business Case.

Milestones	Dates
Preferred Option Engagement	Winter 2024/ 25
DMRB Stage 3 Scheme Assessment:	Spring 2025
Outline Business Case	Spring 2025
Detailed Design:	Winter 2025/26
Acquisition of Land:	Spring 2026
Construction:	2027/28

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.0 In 2022 the Aberdeen City Region Deal allocated £170k of funding towards the Wellington Road Junction Improvements project. In February 2024 the Aberdeen City Region Deal agreed a further contribution of £650k to allow for continuation of design development on the A90/ A956 corridor.

- 4.1.1 Developer Obligation funding currently totalling £1.2million is identified as being required to be spent on improvements to Wellington Road, Hareness and Souterhead junctions all of which were incorporated into the WRJI project. These developer obligation contributions have all been paid in full with £125k to be spent by April 2025 and a further £200k by December 2025, the remainder have no spend by date or have long term deadlines at present. Future Developer Obligation funding contributions of approximately £1.1million, with conditions to spend on improvements to Wellington Road, are expected to come forward as part of ongoing development of the area.

- 4.1.2 To date £605k has been paid or contractually committed on the WRJI project in financial years 2023/4 and 2024/5. Future design development and the progression of the Business Case is currently estimated at £800k. Funding for the construction phase of this project will be investigated as part of the Business Case process and reported back to the Finance and Resources committee. Current budget estimate of capital expenditure for Option K, excluding optimism bias but including a risk allowance, is approximately £11 million. This will be updated as the Outline Business Case is developed at DMRB Stage 3.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The project will be developed and implemented under Roads & Traffic Authority powers. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The associated modal-shift anticipated from improvements to active travel infrastructure and bus priority measures proposed by the Wellington Road

Junctions Improvement project has significant potential to contribute positively to the Council's net zero targets and biodiversity commitments.

- 6.2 The DMRB Stage 2 report incorporates an environmental appraisal of the options to identify key differentiators between options from an environmental perspective. This assessment was supported by a Preliminary Economic Appraisal (PEA)

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/ Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	<p>Delivery of active travel 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 active travel improvements where there is evidence of their effectiveness could undermine the Council's ability to realise these aspirations including the Local Transport Strategy, Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan and Nestrans draft .</p> <p>Public Transport proposals are inline with the recently approved Aberdeen Rapid Transit programme, failure to deliver bus priority measures in this area risks undermining the Council's ability to achieve a range of transport, health, environmental and economic objectives associated with</p>	Continue to work with partners to deliver the projects	L	Yes

	<p>delivery of a step change improvement in public transport provision.</p> <p>Freight proposals within the WRJI project align with the infrastructure measures being brought forward as part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal project Aberdeen South Harbour Link Road, failure to support the freight priority measures may impact on the aspirations set out in the Aberdeen Strategic Infrastructure plan to support the Aberdeen South Harbour expansion and the development of a special economic zone focusing on offshore renewables and sub-sea engineering.</p>			
Compliance	No significant risks identified	Compliance with statutory processes, grant conditions and Scheme of Governance with regular progress and spend reporting to the Transportation Programme Boards and ACC Procurement Regulations.	L	Yes
Operational	The Project will upgrade the existing infrastructure and extend the design life of existing assets. New assets will also be introduced which will require to be maintained and may put pressure on existing budgets.	On completion, the Project may increase operational budgets and/ or require reallocation of funding from other budgets.	M	Yes
Financial	<p>No dedicated funding currently in place for the construction phase of the project.</p> <p>The Council may not be prepared to take advantage of funding opportunities for</p>	Continue to work with partners to secure funding.	M	Yes

	active travel or bus priority projects as they arise.			
Reputational	Failure to deliver the Project could hinder implementation of the Council's (and partners) strategic transport objectives and undermine 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 the works. Continue working with partners to deliver Projects.	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.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</p> <p>Greener Transport, Safer Streets, Real Choices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Scottish Government and NESTRANS to improve the city's bus network, including considering options for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network, with the support of the Scottish Bus Fund, and consider options for council-run services in the city.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving cycle and active transport infrastructure, including by seeking to integrate safe, physically segregated cycle lanes in new road building projects and taking steps to ensure any proposal for resurfacing or other long-term investments consider options to improve cycle and active transport infrastructure. - Working with partners to improve the infrastructure supporting access to the Harbour expansion at the Bay of Nigg. - Making a real and continued investment in Aberdeen's roads and pavements with the objective of resurfacing and improving an average of at least 40km of roads and 40km of pavements a year from 2023/24 for at least ten years so that by 2032 at least 80% of roads and pavements are in good condition.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u>	
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>10. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 – 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 within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes:</p> <p>13 - Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate, in that measures to encourage modal shift from private car to active travel and public transport will have a positive impact on emissions; and</p> <p>14 - Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026, in that the projects look to support more people travelling by walking, cycling and public transport.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p>	<p>The project supports Regional and City Strategies, including but not limited to NESTRANS Freight Action Plan, Nestrans Active Travel Action Plan (2014), Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Regional Economic Strategy (2015), Aberdeen City Region Deal (ACRD) (2016), Regional Transport Strategy</p>

	(RTS:2040) (2021), Economic Impact of Aberdeen Harbour Nigg Bay Development – BiGGAR Economics (2013), Aberdeen Strategic Infrastructure Plan (2014), Bay Of Nigg Development Framework (2015), Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (2016-2021), Aberdeen Roads Hierarchy Study (2019), Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) (2019), Aberdeen Strategic Infrastructure Plan – Energy Transition (2020), Aberdeen Local Development Plan (2023), Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP) (2021-2026), NESTRANS draft Regional Active Travel Network
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with John Wilson, Chief Officer Capital on 31 October 2024..
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	NA

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Wellington Road Multi Modal Study](#)

10.2 [Aberdeen Rapid Transit – Recommended Network Routing](#)

10.3 [Aberdeen City Region Deal – Strategic Transport Appraisal](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Route Option Assessment

11.2 Appendix 2 – Option K – Preferred Option

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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