

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing & Infrastructure
DATE	13 th January 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Local Transport Strategy – Consultative Draft
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/14/063
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present members with the Consultative Draft of the Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2015-2020 (Appendix 1) and to seek authorisation to undertake a consultation process with the public and stakeholders subject to comments from Members.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a. Approve the content of this report and the Council's consultative draft Local Transport Strategy, following incorporation of comments by Members;
- b. Approve a period of consultation on the draft Local Transport Strategy and Strategic Environment Assessment with members of the public and stakeholders; and
- c. Report back to this Committee with the results of the public consultation and a final draft Local Transport Strategy in May 2015.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that any costs for undertaking the consultation process can be met within existing budgets.

Delivery of projects will rely on a number of funding sources which will be identified through the Action Plan. The estimated financial requirements to implement the Action Plan will not be identified until the final draft LTS is produced.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The refresh of the LTS has involved, and will impact upon, many other Council services, public bodies, stakeholders, partners and the travelling public.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Purpose of a Local Transport Strategy

Local transport strategies communicate a local authority's strategy and proposals for transport to its citizens, under the umbrella of the Community Plan. Their preparation involves other departments within an authority and includes stakeholders in strategy development in order to ensure joined up working and delivery. An up to date transport strategy is a requirement for securing funding from a number of external funding organisations.

The Aberdeen City Local Transport Strategy (LTS) has been developed to set out the policies and interventions adopted by Aberdeen City Council to guide the planning and improvement of the local transport network over the next five years. In doing so it must take into account national and regional transport, planning and economic development policies, as well as being fully integrated with the Council's wider objectives and outcomes.

The purpose of this consultative draft is to engage with citizens of Aberdeen and our many stakeholders in a discussion on key issues.

5.2 Local Transport Strategy 2008

The underlying principle behind the LTS 2008 was that the AWPR opened up opportunities to free up capacity on the City's road network, thereby reducing congestion, pollution and improving journey times. The Strategy also acknowledged that without further intervention the benefits of the new road would quickly erode due to additional traffic growth that would usually be forecast over time.

The LTS 2008 proposed to preserve and 'lock in' the congestion, pollution and journey time benefits of the new road, giving over the additional space to public and active transport modes, thereby providing adequate infrastructure to allow these modes to become viable, safe, efficient and provide a comparable and competitive journey in both time and convenience to the private car.

5.3 Work to date on a new Strategy

Various update reports to Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee have detailed progress on a refreshed Local Transport Strategy (LTS). These reports have highlighted that due to delays in delivery of the AWPR a complete rewrite was not required; rather an update or 'refresh' was more appropriate.

The first stage in the development of the refreshed LTS was a public and stakeholder consultation exercise. Respondents were invited to take part in an online questionnaire, which asked:

- If they felt that the vision and aims of the original LTS were still relevant going into the future;
- If they would prefer to see general objectives replaced with specific outcomes;
- To identify any main issues that had come to the fore since the adoption of the previous LTS that should be reflected in the updated document; and
- If they felt there were any areas of the LTS that required strengthening.

The responses received reflected the opinions of a broad range of stakeholders, including business representatives, Community Councils, bus operators and specific user groups. Officers also met with groups representing the views of vulnerable members of society, such as the elderly and disabled, for more specific views.

These engagement exercises:

- Confirmed that there was broad agreement that the vision and aims of the refreshed LTS should remain the same;
- Confirmed that respondents wished to see outcomes articulated in the refreshed LTS;
- Confirmed that issues and concerns remained broadly similar to those expressed in 2007/8 and that there was concern among stakeholders at the rate of progress since then;
- Broadened the range of views and policy and legislative changes that have been incorporated into the revised LTS.
- Informed the content of the revised document by articulating new problems that should be given attention in the LTS, including
 - The rate of development in the City compared to the scale of infrastructure improvements;
 - The need to encourage more travel to the City Centre, in particular increasing footfall on Union Street;
 - Rising levels of obesity; and
 - An ageing population, many of whom are prevented from using mainstream transport;

Feedback obtained from the initial engagement exercise has therefore shaped the development of the consultative draft refreshed LTS.

5.4 Specific changes from the previous LTS (2008)

The 2008 Local Transport Strategy took the lead from the National Transport Strategy (NTS) and Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and set out a clear vision with associated aims and objectives that were developed with stakeholders and members of the public. The Refresh

therefore needs to take cognisance of the framework of national and regional transport, as well as other policy areas, which have been updated. Although the consultation exercise / Main Issues Report determined that a fundamental change in the overall policy approach was not required, a review of the vision, aims and objectives to take account of new policies has been undertaken. The consequence is that the vision has been maintained and the aims streamlined and complemented by high level outcomes, with individual objectives now related to specific transport modes. Although the vision hasn't changed for ease of reference it has been included:

Vision

The vision for the Aberdeen City LTS is to develop 'A sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy and minimises the impact on our environment'.

Aims

As part of the refresh we asked stakeholders if our aims are still relevant; the consensus was that they are. Taking into account the Scottish Government's strategic objectives (wealthier and fairer, safer and stronger, smarter, greener, healthier), the City Council's 'smarter mobility' objectives and the 2008 LTS, the aims have been updated to:

1. A transport system that enables the efficient movement of people and goods
2. A safe and more secure transport system
3. A cleaner, greener transport system
4. An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system
5. A transport system that facilitates healthy and sustainable living.

Outcomes

In response to the Main Issues consultation a number of stakeholders commented that the Council did not appear committed to the vision, aims and objectives as little progress appeared to have been made, particularly in relation to public transport, active travel, safety and well-being. As part of the LTS refresh we asked stakeholders whether clear outcomes for the City, i.e. the changes and benefits that we should be aiming towards, rather than objectives, should be included. The majority of stakeholders responded positively as long as the outcomes were SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound), and there was a clear link to the existing objectives. The following outcomes have therefore been produced:

In five years Aberdeen's transport system should have:

- A. Increased modal share for public transport and active travel;
- B. Reduced the need to travel and reducing dependence on the private car;

- C. Improved journey time reliability for all modes;
- D. Improved road safety within the City;
- E. Improved air quality and the environment;
- F. Improved accessibility to transport for all; and
- G. Promoted a higher quality of life.

Policies and Actions – Amendments and Removals

The 2008 LTS contains a number of policies that remain valid and only require updating in the new consultative draft. However, the Main Issues identified some key areas that required an update.

Reference to particular areas, such as taxicards or Dial-a-bus service, have been removed due to funding no longer being available/ a Council priority, while reference to actions that have been delivered, such as the Guild Street interchange, or support for delivery of Laurencekirk station, have also been removed.

Other areas have been strengthened due to recent local, regional or national legislation, policies, updated guidance or best practice. These include: air quality, noise, climate change, car clubs and urban realm/ pedestrian priority in the city centre.

Reference to hydrogen buses, a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, rapid transit, Dyce Drive link road and potential Strategic Transport Fund projects to be delivered as part of the Strategic Development Plan/ Aberdeen Local Development Plan have also been added.

Further detail on Locking In The Benefits projects and the work that needs to be undertaken prior to the opening of the AWPR in Winter 2017 has also been included.

5.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) and Health Impact Assessment

Alongside the updated LTS a full SEA and EHRIA are being prepared. Both the SEA (Appendix 2) and the EHRIA (Appendix 3) are currently at draft stage and will be finalised and presented alongside the final LTS, with the draft SEA also going out for consultation with the consultative draft LTS. The SEA has assisted in identifying any significant effects of the strategy, both positive and negative, on the environment, while the EHRIA has emphasised areas which can be improved for meeting the social and inclusion aims and objectives within the LTS. It is also intended to undertake a Health Impact Assessment alongside the consultation process in liaison with NHS Grampian to ensure that the document is robust in terms of health outcomes. Any recommendations following this exercise will then be added to the final draft for Committee approval, alongside the completed SEA and EHRIA.

5.6 Consultation Process

If approved it is proposed that the consultative draft and its associated appendices will be made available for public and stakeholder consideration over a minimum of an eight week period. The document will be made available in a variety of paper and electronic formats in a number of locations. A survey will also be set up on surveymonkey to allow members and stakeholders to respond. Workshops/ drop in sessions will be undertaken although the exact format of this has yet to be determined as this is being investigated with the Aberdeen Local Development Plan team.

6. IMPACT

The development of a Local Transport Strategy links to the Community Plan vision of creating a *sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all*.

The vision, aims, outcomes, objectives and actions referred to in the LTS will contribute to delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of Aberdeen – The Smarter City: *We will develop, maintain and promote road, rail, ferry and air links from the city to the UK and the rest of the world. We will encourage cycling and walking, and We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.*

The LTS will assist in the delivery of actions identified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013, in particular the Thematic Priority of Safer Communities (Safer Roads) and the Multi-lateral Priority – Integrated Transport (Aberdeen is easy to access and move around in).

The listed projects in the LTS will assist delivery of the 5 year Corporate Business Plan, in particular the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Directorate's aims to *Protect and enhance our high-quality, natural and built environment and Support the delivery of a fully integrated transport network.*

The purpose of the LTS is to ensure joined up working with partner organisations in the delivery of transport projects. A specific section of the LTS is dedicated to support for regional activities.

An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been undertaken on this report. A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) has not been considered as the document is publicly accessible and responses to the consultation will be subject to data protection rules.

This report will be of interest to members of the public and a specific consultation exercise is proposed so that they may contribute to the final Strategy.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is quite a significant risk to not having an up to date transport strategy. This includes: non-adherence to national, regional and local transport and other policy in the development of transport schemes, as well a lack of a coherent approach in meeting national, regional local objectives in relation to planning, economy, health, safety, social inclusion and the environment. In addition many funding sources now require an up to date transport strategy in order to bid for grant funding (for instance, Sustrans now requires an up to date Cycling Action Strategy and Plan to secure funding).

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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