

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	25 <sup>th</sup> August 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Consultative Draft Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/075
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present Members with a draft Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan and to recommend that this be released for a period of public and stakeholder consultation.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Members:

- (a) Approve the release of a Consultative Draft Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2016-2021 for a period of public and stakeholder consultation; and
- (b) Instruct officers to prepare a final Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan following this period of consultation and present the final plan to a future meeting of this Committee.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the proposed consultation, other than staff time to collate and report on feedback. A detailed summary of the financial implications of implementing the Plan will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee along with the finalised Plan.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications arising from the report.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 In January 2016, the final Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2016 was adopted. A series of supporting Action Plans are now being developed to sit beneath the LTS, giving additional detail on the actions that the Council will pursue, under various themed headings, to meet the vision, aims, objectives and outcomes of the LTS. The draft Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan is one such document.
- 5.2 The Plan identifies a series of actions and interventions that the Council will pursue over the next five years, and in some cases beyond, to enable and encourage more active travel, specifically walking and cycling, in Aberdeen. Increasing the proportion of trips undertaken by active travel is a key outcome of the LTS, as well as the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), Let's Get Scotland Walking: The National Walking Strategy and the Cycling Action Plan for Scotland. The actions identified in the Plan largely spring from the outcomes of a public engagement exercise on walking and cycling undertaken by the Council in the summer of 2015 and are therefore based on the needs and desires of those currently undertaking active travel and those who may be encouraged to do so in the future.
- 5.3 Accompanying the draft Action Plan is an Active Travel Network Plan. While it is anticipated that the Action Plan will have a five year timeframe in line with the LTS (2016-2021), the network plan will be updated annually and will identify, for each financial year, the walking and cycling infrastructure improvements that the Council intends to implement, as well as estimated costs and sources of funding. In this way, it will be clear what the Council's short-term priorities for active travel are and how these contribute towards meeting our longer-term outcomes for the City.
- 5.4 The draft Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2016-2021 can be viewed at:  
<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=13004,13309>.  
It is recommended that Members approve its release for a period of public and stakeholder consultation. This will primarily take the form of a web-based consultation, inviting comments on the draft document (which will be available on the Council's website), with letters and emails sent to key stakeholders to advise of the consultation and how they can respond. Paper copies of all consultation materials will also be available on request.
- 5.5 Following the consultation period, responses will be analysed and used to inform the development of a final Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2016-2021 which will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

## 6. IMPACT

### **Improving Customer Experience –**

Implementing an Active Travel Action Plan will have many benefits for the people of Aberdeen. The Plan seeks to encourage and facilitate more walking and cycling which will enable people to be more physically active and maintain a healthy weight, thus improving health and wellbeing, including mental health. Regular exercise is known to prevent many health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and various types of cancer. Safety is a key theme of the Action Plan – implementation of the plan will make walking and cycling safer activities, thus reducing the number of accidents and casualties involving pedestrians and cyclists. Increasing opportunities for walking and cycling, both of which are inexpensive modes of transport, can increase access to jobs, services and education for those without access to a car or unable to use public transport, thus contributing to equality of opportunity and preventing people becoming isolated as a result of limited transport options. It is known also that those on low incomes typically spend a higher proportion of their household budget on transport than those on higher incomes. Increasing opportunities for individuals in such households to travel by relatively inexpensive forms of transport therefore frees up more of the household budget to be used on other goods and services. Encouraging a shift in travel from motorised to non-motorised forms of transport will have environmental benefits, improving air quality and reducing noise (both of which also impact upon health), as well as contributing to a decline in carbon dioxide and other harmful emissions.

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

Staff living and/or working in the City will experience the same benefits from implementation of the Action Plan as those described for the customer above. In addition, studies have shown that employees who travel to work by active modes of transport are more productive and typically take fewer sick days than less active employees, thus resulting in a more content workforce with reduced levels of stress.

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

The Department for Transport has estimated that every £1 spent on cycling results in an economic return of £3 (*Cycling Demonstration Towns: Development of Benefit-Cost Ratios*, 2010). The long-term health benefits to the individual accruing from a more physically active lifestyle should reduce public sector expenditure on health and social care in the future. Similarly, the long-term environmental benefits resulting from an increase in active travel at the expense of motorised travel could have financial benefits for the organisation through the reduced likelihood of fines being imposed as a result of air quality breaches and a reduced need for expenditure on responding to events attributable to climate change and on infrastructure measures to cope with such events in the future. Having an Active Travel Action Plan in place will also increase the Council's ability to attract external funding for active travel projects in future years.

### **Corporate –**

The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all.

The proposals contained within the Action Plan contribute towards the delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of Aberdeen – The Smarter City: *We will encourage cycling and walking and We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.*

Implementation of the Action Plan 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 SOA contains targets to increase the percentage of journeys to work made by walking and cycling and to increase the percentage of children travelling actively to school, which the Action Plan will help achieve.

Implementation of many of the projects arising from the Action Plan and Network Plan will afford opportunities for partnership working, especially with Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans on the development on cross-boundary strategic walking and cycling routes.

### **Public –**

The volume of responses to the initial active travel consultation exercise in 2015 suggests that there is a significant demand for improvements to the walking and cycling environment in Aberdeen, therefore this report is likely to be of interest to members of the public, especially those who contributed to the consultation exercise and who may wish to see the outcomes of this.

An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has not been undertaken as the Action Plan flows directly from the adopted Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2016, which has itself been subject to a lengthy and detailed EHRIA.

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) has not been undertaken as neither the proposed public consultation nor the implementation of the Action Plan should impact on the privacy of any individual. Consultation responses referred to within the document and its appendices have been anonymised and a similar approach will be taken when analysing responses to this further round of consultation.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Much of the external funding for active travel infrastructure that Aberdeen City Council has benefitted from in recent years has come from Transport Scotland and is administered by Sustrans Scotland, a sustainable transport charity. With bids for this funding becoming

increasingly competitive, one of the criteria for awarding funding is that projects link with a local authority's active travel strategy or action plan, thus demonstrating how such projects contribute to meeting the local authority's long-term vision for active travel and making it clear the projected benefits of the expenditure incurred. Many local authorities in Scotland have developed or are developing active travel strategies or plans accordingly. While Sustrans were content with Aberdeen City Council using an early draft document as the basis for 2016/17 funding applications, there is a risk that not having an adopted Active Travel Action Plan in place for future years' funding rounds will negatively impact on the Council's ability to attract external funding for active travel projects. Conversely, having an adopted Plan in place should significantly increase the Council's ability to attract external funding.

Having a local Active Travel Action Plan that aligns with the Nestrans Regional Active Travel Action Plan should also increase the likelihood of receiving funding from Nestrans for active travel projects that are identified in both local and regional documents.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2016

## 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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