

Executive Summary

Aberdeen City Council has commissioned a study to assess options for improved walking/cycling provision along the area between the Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire boundary near the community of Marywell, northwards to the A956 Wellington Road. The study, which will involve appraisal utilising Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) principles, will identify a preferred option for the link. AECOM has been commissioned to undertake this study.

A key requirement of the work is the need to ensure connectivity with the cycle route between Stonehaven and Marywell currently under design with Aberdeenshire Council. Due cognisance has also been paid to a recent STAG Study (Part 1 appraisal) looking at options to improve the A956 Wellington Road corridor, which was completed by AECOM on behalf of Aberdeen City Council in 2018. The A956 (Wellington Road) STAG Study recommended outline walking and cycle infrastructure improvements along the A956, which will be further investigated as part of a STAG Part 2 appraisal.

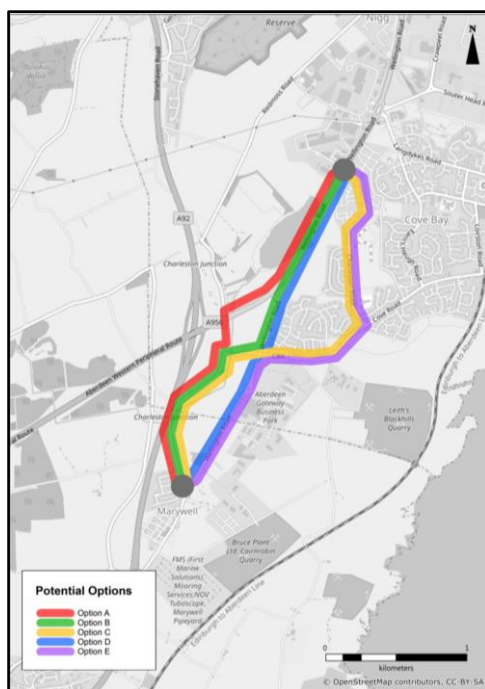
With this in mind, the study area of this project has been identified as the city section of the aspirational Stonehaven – Aberdeen Strategic Active Travel Route identified by NESTrans in their Active Travel Action Plan.

Chapter 2 details the early stages of the project, where a desktop review was established to understand the baseline data and evidence base to set out and establish the existing situation of the wider study area. This process was used to develop an initial understanding of the region.

Chapter 3 details an extensive active travel audit that was undertaken using the results from Chapter 2 along with a number of site visits to the study area. This process involved conducting a more specific look at the study area, with a focus on how the existing situation would inform the main constraints and opportunities available for improved active travel provision in the area.

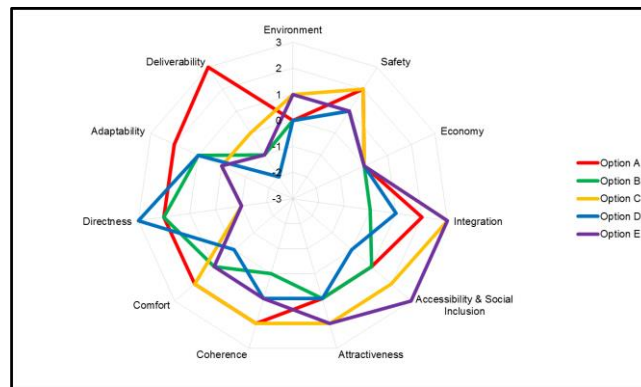
The main issues identified in the active travel audit related primarily to the lack of a cohesive and connected active travel network in the area, and the associated safety concerns that the lack of suitable infrastructure have for the wider community. However, as well as the wider goal of providing the connecting link between the potential corridor improvements occurring north and south of the study area, a number of good opportunities were identified to connect key trip generators (housing) with key trip attractors (such as the local schools, shops, and wider recreational facilities).

This section included the development of Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs) in line with STAG guidance, and a list of outline route options was developed. These are illustrated below.



Chapter 4 details the results of a thorough engagement process involving a wide array of interested parties, including: members of the local community; key stakeholder groups such as NESTrans, SUSTrans, and other active travel groups; and local officials from community councils and local government. As part of the engagement process an online survey was conducted to maximise the level of public engagement (over 200 responses were collected on the questionnaire). The engagement process served to solidify the evidence base for the issues and constraints identified in Chapter 3, confirming the lack of supply with regards to active travel provision and associated safety concerns, as well as highlighting the relatively large demand for active travel improvements in the area.

Chapter 5 used the strong evidence base detailed in Chapters 3 and 4 to identify the preferred route alignment along with any complementary measures which would be appropriate for the study area. As per the project brief, this process was undertaken in line with STAG and SUSTrans guidance, and due cognisance was given to design guidelines regarding active travel provision. Of the route options identified above, **Option A** was identified as the preferred option to meet the aims of the study. The below figure illustrates the scoring for each option.



Chapter 6 details the specific interventions that would be required to achieve the preferred option, distilled into an Action Plan. However, in addition to the preferred option, a number of complementary measures were identified throughout the study area, mainly seeking to fill in gaps to the existing active travel infrastructure, for example on sections of Cove Road. Each measure has been allocated an estimated timescale for completion, and outline cost estimates have been provided for measures included in the preferred option. Chapter 6 also details the likely phasing that would be required to complete the project, as well as identifying potential funding opportunities available.

The preferred route and proposed interventions are shown in the below figure.

