

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	6 June 2019
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen Cross City Connections – STAG Part 2 Appraisal
REPORT NUMBER	PLA/19/016
DIRECTOR	N/A
CHIEF OFFICER	Gale Beattie
REPORT AUTHOR	Ken Neil
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the outcomes of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Part 2 report that has been submitted by Peter Brett Associates for Aberdeen Cross City Connections. A discussion on the findings from the STAG Appraisal is provided along with recommendations on the next steps for the schemes identified.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the findings and outcomes of the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Part 2 Report – Aberdeen Cross City Connections Appraisal;
- 2.2 Agree that the Public Transport options C1, C2 and E1 and all the Active Travel options identified in the STAG Part 2 report (and listed in Appendix 1) for Aberdeen Cross City Connections are approved for further development work subject to future funding being identified to progress these proposals; and
- 2.3 Agree that officers work to secure external funding to allow the continued development of the schemes agreed in 2.2.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reference is made to a report to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee of 24 May 2017 titled 'Aberdeen Cross City Connections – STAG Pre and Part 1 Appraisals' which approved the commissioning of a STAG Part

2 Appraisal. The key outcomes from the appraisal are summarised in the following sections.

3.2 Aberdeen Cross City Connections – STAG Part 2 Appraisal

3.2.1 In 2013, Aberdeen City Council published its Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP). The SIP focusses on the delivery of the Strategic and Local Development Plans and identifies five key infrastructure goals around housing supply, digital connectivity, skills and labour, transport and providing a better image for Aberdeen.

3.2.2 In relation to transport, the SIP identifies a new project: Cross City Transport Connections and states that:

We will carry out a feasibility study and start to investigate ways to maximise connectivity between new developments arising from the Local Development Plan, including continuing discussions with Nestrans and Transport Scotland in relation to planning and funding.”

3.2.3 This study is focussed on considering transport connections between new areas of development (both housing and employment) on the periphery of Aberdeen, and in areas of Aberdeenshire close to the Aberdeen City boundary, with the aim of providing viable, attractive and direct linkages, as an alternative to the private car. Using STAG methodologies, the study considers the most efficient and effective network of connections between these areas, based on alternative modes of sustainable transport. Key issues are determining patterns of demand, technical and operational feasibility of alternative modes, and commercial viability.

3.2.4 A summary of the key outcomes of the Pre-Appraisal and STAG Part 2 work is provided below. Full details of work undertaken can be found in the key study Report (*Aberdeen Cross City Transport Connections STAG Part 2 Report, SIAS, Peter Brett Associates, April 2019*). An Executive Summary is appended to this report and the full reports are available on request.

3.3 Public Transport Options Appraisal Summary

3.3.1 An appraisal summary is provided below of the Public Transport Options that were approved for further appraisal work through the STAG Part 1 process. Diagrams and descriptions of the routes under consideration can be found in the Executive Summary in Appendix 1.

3.3.2 Option A1 - Blackdog - Dubford - Grandhome - Stoneywood – Dyce Rail Station - Dyce P&R – Newhills – Kingswells P&R – Westhill

Option A2 - Blackdog - Dubford - Grandhome - Stoneywood – Newhills - Dyce P&R – Newhills – Kingswells P&R – Westhill

Option B1 - Blackdog - Dubford - Grandhome - Stoneywood – Dyce Rail Station - Dyce P&R – Newhills – Kingswells P&R – Westhill

Option B2 - Blackdog - Dubford - Stoneywood – Newhills – Dyce P&R – Newhills - Kingswells P&R – Westhill

These options do not provide any economic benefit and would require considerable subsidy to operate. There is also significant risk surrounding the construction and financial costs associated with the required bridge infrastructure which offsets any journey times.

- 3.3.3 Option C1 - Dyce P&R – Newhills – Kingswells P&R – Countesswells (with a potential extension from Countesswells to Chapelton of Elsick via Loirston)

Option C2 - Dyce P&R – Kingswells P&R – Countesswells (with a potential extension from Countesswells to Chapelton of Elsick via Loirston)

These options provide economic benefits if 10% modal shift from car to bus can be achieved. The options also do not require any new infrastructure which removes significant financial and construction feasibility risk. Provides good integration between travel modes as links a number of Park & Ride sites.

- 3.3.4 Option D1 - Blackdog - Dubford – Grandhome - Stoneywood - Dyce Rail Station - Dyce P&R

Option D2 - Blackdog - Dubford – Grandhome - Stoneywood – Newhills - Dyce P&R

These options do not provide any economic benefit and would require considerable subsidy to operate. While not requiring any new infrastructure to operate, the routes are too circuitous to provide any significant journey time benefits and is unlikely to be well utilised by bus users.

- 3.3.5 Option E1 – Murcar – Dubford – Grandhome – Stoneywood – Dyce P&R – Dyce Rail Station – Newhills – Kingswells P&R – Countesswells – Friarsfield – City Centre – Murcar

The option provides economic benefits if 10% modal shift from car to bus can be achieved. The option does carry financial and construction risks due to the required bridge infrastructure but this can be partially offset by the additional economic benefits from the service routeing through the city centre and many other existing communities. This increases significantly general access to employment opportunities both on the periphery of Aberdeen and in the city centre. Most favoured option by the public (from on-line survey).

3.4 Active Travel Options Appraisal Summary

- 3.4.1 All the active travel routes appraised are worthy of further consideration, with any considered unfeasible already having been shifted out after the site visits undertaken at the start of the STAG Part 2 process. A full list of Active Travel options can be found in Appendix 1.

- 3.4.2 The economic appraisal considered the active travel routes as part of either an 'orbital' or 'radial' network of linking active travel connections. The orbital

network connected the development sites between Blackdog, Dyce, Kingswells and Countesswells. The radial network connected Chapelton of Elsieck with Loirston and the city centre.

3.4.3 The economic assessment of the orbital and radial networks highlighted that the orbital network of routes generated economic benefits under all the scenarios tested. The radial network however, only provided economic benefits under one of the nine scenarios tested. Given this, the recommendation would be to explore the development of routes forming the orbital network before development of the radial network.

3.4.4 In particular, **Options 6 or 7** (part of the orbital network) which connects Grandhome with Davidson Mills/Stoneywood and onwards to Dyce, provides a very high level of benefit under all the criteria considered. These options require the implementation of a new bridge over the River Don to directly connect between the Grandhome and Davidson Mills/Stoneywood sites. The options should be explored as a standalone active travel option (with the new bridge as a foot and cycle bridge only) and also in tandem with the public transport option (Option E1) which is also recommended for further consideration and includes the new bridge – in this case the bridge would be a public transport only link with active travel provision.

3.4.5 Other options (all part of the orbital network) which offer the greatest overall benefits against the criteria include:

Options 8, 9, 11 and 13 – which all provide links into the area around Dyce and the employment opportunities at Dyce and Kirkhill, with Option 11 linking between Newhills/Dyce and Kingswell).

Option 45 – which links between Kingswells and Westhill and provides greater access to the employment opportunities within both locations, as well as integration between bus and active travel modes at Kingswells Park & Ride site. This option was highly favoured in the public engagement.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 To date this project has been funded through a budget allocation from Nestrans, the Regional Transport Partnership and the Bus Lane Enforcement Fund.

4.2 £40K has been identified through the 2019/20 Nestrans budget for a review of the outcomes from the STAG Part 2 Appraisal. This would allow the identification of suitable schemes to be taken forward to the next stage of design. It is likely that Nestrans and the Bus Lane Enforcement Fund will continue to be sources of funding to allow the continued development of schemes identified through this project, however officers will seek to identify additional internal and external funding opportunities to assist with scheme development.

4.3 There will be costs associated with maintaining the infrastructure associated with both the public transport and active travel proposals. Any future

development work will identify implications for the revenue budget of any scheme being progressed.

- 4.4 All the public transport options would require a subsidy to operate given the predicted level of demand and any further development work would need to consider the challenges of generating sufficient demand to make the services commercially viable.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications at this stage of the work, however future land requirements for potential options will need to be noted as development of the options progresses.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 There is a risk inherent in not progressing key transport infrastructure improvements set out in the Strategic Infrastructure Plan which will deliver a range of benefits including sustainable transport modes. Specific risks are as follows:

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	<p>A transport network not performing to the peak of its abilities could result in city and regional economic harm by undermining the Council's ability to deliver its strategic objectives in terms of the Regional Economic Strategy, LTS and LDP.</p> <p>There could be risks associated with not implementing the recommendations in terms of potential future loss of grants to modify and improve the transport network, and possible continuing societal costs arising from ill health associated</p>	H	<p>Continue to take advantage of external funding opportunities as they arise and make appropriate use of Developer Contributions.</p> <p>Work with the Director of Resources to understand future year implications on the Capital Plan arising from delivery of schemes identified through the Aberdeen Cross City Connections study.</p>

	<p>with poor air and noise quality and physical inactivity.</p> <p>There is risk in terms of adopting a strategy with no funding for delivery.</p>		
Legal	<p>Potential acquisition of land required through the Compulsory Purchase process.</p>	H	<p>Identification of land requirements at an early stage in the design process. Design objectives will minimise the land required.</p>
Employee	<p>There may be insufficient staff resource to progress delivery of the various proposals.</p> <p>Employees who routinely drive to work may be dissatisfied with the implementation of some of the recommended actions. Conversely, those travelling by sustainable modes may see an improvement in their travelling conditions.</p>	L	<p>Monthly monitoring of project using Project Status Reports will reflect risks at the earliest opportunity with issues highlighted to the Transport Programme Board.</p> <p>Proposals do not directly target staff but treat all citizens and visitors equally.</p> <p>A robust communication plan will accompany implementation of proposals, so people are aware of why decisions have been made and what the implications are.</p>
Customer	<p>There are risks affecting customers, citizens and visitors alike relating to a transport network which does not reflect the changing needs of the economy, society and personal health and wellbeing if the recommendations are not delivered.</p> <p>Customer dissatisfaction may arise from the implementation of some of the recommendations.</p>	H	<p>Members of the public and stakeholders have already informed the study and will continue to be involved as the proposals develop and move to implementation via statutory processes for TROs etc.</p>

	The final outcomes / recommendations may not reflect the needs of certain transport users. This could result in public / stakeholder opposition to changes and / or objections to TROs.		
Environment	The projects work towards delivering the outcomes of the Local Transport Strategy which has a specific environmental objective- 'Improved air quality and environment'	M	Consideration of any potential environmental impacts for any potential option, both beneficial and detrimental, and the identification of appropriate mitigation in consultation with appropriate Council Officers and bodies.
Technology	There are no technological risks	L	The introduction of any options does not require the application of new technology although potential opportunities will be investigated as part of the detailed design process.
Reputational	Not implementing the proposals could result in reputational risk should the Council be seen as not making efforts to improve walking, cycling and public transport.	M	Maximise opportunities to progress scheme development and seek access to external funding sources to assist with the implementation.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The proposals in this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1, Key Drivers 1.3 (<i>Improving investment into Aberdeen and Aberdeen businesses</i>) and Stretch Outcome 2, Key Driver 2.2 (<i>Ensuring access for all employers to skilled labour</i>) in that a transport network which supports the efficient and effective movement of people and

	goods is critical to maintaining a healthy economy for the city and wider region and supporting access to employment opportunities for all members of society.
Prosperous People	The proposals in this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 3, Key Driver 3.4 (<i>Improving health and reducing inequalities</i>) and LOIP Stretch Outcome 11, Key Drivers 11.4 (<i>Encouraging adoption of healthier lifestyles</i>). Schemes developed through the Aberdeen Cross City Connection study will increase opportunities for people to walk, cycle or take public transport for everyday journeys, bringing health benefits and contributing to reducing harmful emissions from road transport.
Prosperous Place	The proposals in this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcome 14, Key Driver 14.1 (<i>Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of Aberdeen's Sustainable Energy Action Plan 'Powering Aberdeen'</i>) in that encouraging modal shift to active and sustainable forms of transport should contribute towards reducing harmful emissions from road transport. The proposals in this report also support the delivery of) and Stretch Outcome 15, Key Driver 15.1 (<i>Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, well-being and confidence</i>) in that schemes developed through the Aberdeen Cross City Connections will increase opportunities for people to walk, cycle or take public transport for everyday journeys, thus improving health and wellbeing.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	Will benefit residents, businesses and visitors by creating a more efficient and an expanded sustainable transport network, with an improved experience for people to walk, cycle or take public transport for everyday journeys.
Organisational Design	Will provide clarity to various Council departments on future transport priorities in Aberdeen.
Governance	Will comply with internal governance procedures.
Workforce	Will involve the workforce in sourcing external funding through available sustainable transport funds to progress Active Travel options.
Process Design	Any schemes being taken forward will be subject to appropriate process design procedures.

Technology	Recommendations recognise the need to consider new and emerging technologies in term of improved network management and supporting businesses and individuals to make more sustainable travel choices.
Partnerships and Alliances	The Aberdeen Cross City Connections study is a partnership project with ACC, Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans agreeing shared priorities and a common vision for the regional transport network.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has not been undertaken on this report as the LTS and RTS from which the transportation proposals within this report are an integral part have been subject to the appropriate assessments. Future Committee reports on the detailed design of any preferred option would be the subject of an EHRIA.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 CHI/17/091 – Aberdeen Cross City Connections STAG Pre and Part 1 Appraisal – Communities Housing and Infrastructure - Committee Report – 24 May 2017

Aberdeen Cross City Connections STAG Pre & Part 1 Appraisal Report

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Aberdeen Cross City Connections STAG Part 2 Report – Executive Summary

Please note that the full STAG Part 2 Report is available to Members on request.

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Ken Neil
Senior Engineer (Transport Strategy and Programmes)
kenn@aberdeencity.gov.uk

01224 523476