

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	City Growth and Resources
<b>DATE</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Consultation Response to the draft Regional Transport Strategy and draft Strategic Transport Appraisal
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/20/153
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	N/A
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Alan Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	3.3 "Approve key actions required by the Council to facilitate the delivery of strategies (including partnership strategies) and the Inward Investment Plan to support city growth and place planning".

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to gain the approval of the Committee to submit the Council's response to the draft Regional Transport Strategy and draft City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal consultations.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approves the proposed responses to the draft Regional Transport Strategy contained within Appendices C and E, and
- 2.2 Approves the proposed response to the draft City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal Preliminary Options Appraisal contained within Appendix D, and
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning to submit these responses to NESTRANS.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020, NESTRANS, the Regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland, launched a consultation on the draft Regional Transport Strategy, NESTRANS 2040, which represents the proposed transport strategy for the North East of Scotland for the next 20 years. The document has been informed by consultation, as outlined on Page 4 of Appendix A, by an appraisal of the current transport context in the North East of Scotland as well as a range

of National, Regional and Local strategies, policies and plans. A major tool to inform the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) is the Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal (CRD STA). Both the draft RTS 2040 and the draft CRD STA Preliminary Options Appraisal are being consulted upon by NESTRANS with Aberdeen City Council, as a consultee and constituent authority of NESTRANS, invited to respond by the end of October 2020. The RTS and CRD STA Summaries form Appendices A and B to this report respectively and provide more detail on both documents. The full documents can be found at [draft RTS 2040](#) and [draft CRD STA Preliminary Options appraisal](#).

- 3.2 Pending consultee feedback and Ministerial Approval, it is expected that the RTS 2040 will be adopted by the end of 2020. Aberdeen City Council will then begin work on a new Local Transport Strategy (LTS), which will take its lead from the RTS 2040 which has been informed by the CRD STA. Therefore, the content of both documents will have a major role in shaping the City's transport future.
- 3.3 The "Initial appraisal: Case for Change" stage of the CRD STA, identified 42 option recommendations and their reasoning, and this was approved by Aberdeen City Council (City Growth and Resources Committee, September 2019), Aberdeenshire Council, NESTRANS and the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Board committees, allowing the CRD STA Preliminary Options Appraisal to be undertaken.
- 3.4 Taking into account the changes in the transport context since the 42 options were developed – a new [National Transport Strategy](#) and associated Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency declaration, the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the principles of the draft RTS 2040 – these options were developed, refined and appraised with the resulting outcome of 29 options. These were then appraised against the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) criteria and the 6 Regional Transport Strategy objectives (See 3.8). These 29 options are contained in Appendices B and D. They have been grouped into 5 categories, with a proposed allocation of "Core" or "Supporting" and each has a recommended delivery pathway.
- 3.5 All 29 of the Options were then recommended for inclusion in the Regional Transport Strategy along with a further 7. The further 7 were not assessed, as they were Options which were not NESTRANS' responsibility to take forward but it was felt they should be included as NESTRANS could still influence them.
- 3.6 The proposed response to this is in Appendix D. In summary, the Council is in agreement with the CRD STA option outcomes, with a few proposed amendments as follows:
  - Moving of some supporting 'options' into 'core' options
  - Clarification on some option titles
  - Inclusion of Aberdeen City Council in some additional delivery pathways
  - Inclusion of a vehicle sharing option in the assessed options list

- Inclusion of the A96 (T) Dualling in the unassessed options which can still be influenced
- 3.7 The draft RTS 2040 is based around a vision, four pillars and six key priorities which can be found in pages 6 and 7 of Appendix A. These are then realised by 18 proposed policy areas, each with a list of Actions, which can be found in Appendix E. To ensure that these fully incorporated the 29 Options and further 7 recommendations from the CRD STA draft options appraisal (including the two extra inclusions suggested by The Council), officers cross-checked these against the draft RTS 2040 Actions and can confirm that these have all been covered. This evidence is presented in Appendix F.
- 3.8 Having thoroughly examined the draft RTS 2040, officers have prepared a draft response which can be found in Appendix C. A summary of the findings is below:-
- 3.8.1 The Four Pillars of the draft RTS 2040 – Equality, Climate, Prosperity, Wellbeing - align perfectly with those of the National Transport Strategy ensuring a consistent transport approach filters down to regional level. They would also appear in keeping with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Net Zero Vision and Regional Economic Strategy
- 3.8.2 The vision, “To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and accessible transport system in the north east, which contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities” is in keeping with the NTS pillars and links to the North East context. However, it is felt that, given the changes to the transport network experienced by the COVID-19 public health pandemic, “resilient” should be added.
- 3.8.3 The six key priorities are listed below
- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity
  - Reduced carbon emissions to support Net-Zero
  - Accessibility for all
  - A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split
  - No exceedances of WHO safe emissions levels
  - Zero fatalities on the road network
- 3.8.4 The priorities are ambitious but should be supported. In particular, the “Reduced carbon emissions to support net-zero” priority complements ACC’s Net Zero Vision. However, while the “Step Change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split” priority aspires to car making up only 50% of journeys in the region and sustainable modes the other 50%, the Council would recommend an even larger split for public transport and active travel. Although it is acknowledged in the draft RTS 2040 that, “not everywhere across the region will be able to achieve this target so urban areas should be aiming for higher than 50% sustainable”, the COVID-19 public health pandemic has shown that there is an appetite for more walking and cycling, while the Climate Change (Scotland) Act sets net zero targets for greenhouse emissions by 2045 which will need huge commitment to reach. Furthermore, given the LOIP target of 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as their main mode of travel

by 2026 and the aspirations of the Aberdeen Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) the Roads Hierarchy Study, the Low Emission Zone and Council's Net Zero vision, aiming for a higher sustainable transport mode share than 50% in Aberdeen by 2040 seems reasonable.

- 3.8.5 A seventh key priority should be added of "High quality information enabling informed transport choices" or similar. It is felt that this would assist in realising the 4 pillars, especially in respect of wellbeing. Recognition of climate risks to transport should also be made in this section. It would be beneficial to attach some targets to the priorities to quantify them,
- 3.8.6 The draft RTS 2040 introduces a series of Actions, all of which are detailed in Appendix E. A summary of those which are likely to involve new avenues of work for ACC are presented below.
- Implement regional cycle hire schemes, which can include bike hire, eBike hire and cycle share schemes.
  - Develop the principle of an Aberdeen Rapid Transit scheme, with a view to an additional public transport option providing express service journey times, frequency and reliability to encourage a mode shift along with a series of supporting actions.
  - Identification of the most appropriate charging regimes in and around Aberdeen, such as Workplace Parking Levies or other charging options, which could manage the demand for travel and provide revenue to support a step change in transport provision.
  - Investigate the opportunities for mainstreaming Mobility as a Service (MaaS) measures to consolidate the costs of travel and ensure the best price is paid, focussing on integration across different modes of travel
  - Support and facilitate the introduction of trials of new and emerging transport technologies in the region e.g. Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- 3.8.7 Given the Direction of the National Transport Strategy, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Council's own approaches within the LTS, LDP, LOIP, SUMP, Roads Hierarchy, Air Quality Action Plan, Net Zero Vision, Regional Economic Strategy and City Centre Masterplan and, the 20 year lifespan of the RTS, the Council supports the Actions in the RTS, as outlined in Appendix E.
- 3.8.8 In addition, officers have suggested further actions and information in the draft RTS 2040 around environmental issues, MaaS, adult cycle training, links to TECA and the airport, general information provision, engagement with children, service and rest areas along the trunk roads, the importance of access to transport for both mental and physical wellbeing, car clubs and shared vehicles, powered two wheelers, and further inclusions about new technologies such as hydrogen and "vehicle to grid" solutions for electric vehicles. The questions are also asked around whether Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire should be providing flexible working spaces to support staff and businesses in not having to commute and what the position should be on electric scooters. These are all outlined in Appendix C.

3.8.9 Support for the principle that this strategy seeks to make best use of our existing assets and encourage behaviour change rather than relying on significant new infrastructure to accommodate unconstrained growth.

3.8.10 The RTS includes a set of proposed indicators but there are no targets.

3.8.11 Generally in the document, there is a need to reference climate more strongly including reference to the Net Zero plans in more detail and the observation that there is still some confusion around emissions (carbon/climate change) and air quality (NO<sub>2</sub>). The RTS should also address the balance of economic growth being planned for within the regional economic strategy versus the environmental impact and present this in terms of actual numbers. Furthermore, it should make reference to the key economic drivers such as the National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 and Energy Transition Fund projects and contain more detail in terms of global connectivity of the city in a post Brexit world. It is silent on free ports for example. Lastly, commitments in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, especially around trade and zero/ ultra low emission city centres should be taken into account.

3.9 Subject to approval from this committee and any amendments the committee might make, it is proposed to submit Appendices C, D and E as the Council's response to the consultations.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Other than the costs associated with the staff time to prepare the responses, there are no financial implications involved with the consultation responses. There are financial implications for the delivery of the draft RTS 2040 and this will be identified by Nestrans in partnership with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Aberdeen City Council will be expected to use the RTS 2040 as the platform and framework for the next LTS, due to be developed in 2021. This will outline the high level costs of delivery to the Council and its delivery partners during its lifespan.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 established Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) in Scotland with all Local Authorities as members of their RTP. The Act also placed a statutory duty on RTPs to produce a Regional Transport Strategy for their area. Therefore, ACC, as a member, has a responsibility to ensure they play a part in developing the RTS.

5.2 As Roads Authority for Aberdeen City, Aberdeen City Council is responsible for authorising any works which take place on the adopted roads in the city. Therefore it is important that ACC takes a role in shaping the plans of partners when they have an implication for the roads of Aberdeen

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk that the CRD STA and draft RTS 2040, although following the NTS principles, may not be specific enough to fully reflect the Aberdeen context	M	Once the RTS 2040 is approved by Scottish Ministers, Aberdeen City Council will develop a new Local Transport Strategy which will be presented to the appropriate Council Committee.
	Not responding to the consultation delays the finalising of the RTS 2040 and CRD STA draft options appraisal and subsequently ACCs next LTS meaning that ACC does not have an up to date LTS	M	The date of this committee is after the consultation deadline. However, ACC has already approached NESTRANS to explain this, given the need to report these proposed responses to committee and has requested a later consultation submission.. Using the consultation period to give feedback on the proposals will help mitigate the risk.
	Risk that ACC, as Roads Authority, does not agree with what is being proposed by NESTRANS for the city in the RTS 2040 and in the CRD STA draft options appraisal.	M	Officers from ACC have already been able to input in shaping both documents and have taken the opportunity to do so. Four ACC Members sit on the Nestrans Board and have therefore been involved in shaping the draft RTS 2040.
	An approved RTS will shape transport operational priorities via its framework for the next LTS so there is a risk that if ACC does not agree with the RTS, then this will make it difficult to develop an LTS that	L	Officers across services are contributing to the draft response and will continue to be involved via the development of the next LTS. All elected Members have been invited to CRD STA workshops and Members will determine the response to this and the RTS, as well as the next LTS.

	reflects the Council's aspirations		
<b>Compliance</b>	NESTRANS have a statutory duty to produce an RTS and ACC, as a member, are therefore part of this.	M	Being involved in the development of the new RTS 2040 by input to the consultation will therefore help NESTRANS to meet this statutory requirement.
<b>Operational</b>	Preparing the response to the CRD STA draft options appraisal and draft RTS 2040 means that other pieces of work cannot be progressed as time is needed to formulate this.	M	Given the importance of the CRD STA and RTS 2040 in shaping the transport strategies of ACC over the next 20 years, this should be treated as a priority piece of work.
<b>Financial</b>	A lack of a transport strategy leads to Nestrans and ACC not being able to secure external funding or encourage partners to deliver priority actions, This could lead to the burden of delivery being borne by Nestrans and ACC.	M	Having an evidence based strategic direction makes the case for investment and influencing partners to work collaboratively to achieve the objectives of both the CRD STA and the RTS 2040. Therefore, inputting to the CRD STA draft options appraisal and draft RTS 2040 will help to shape the new LTS and budget planning with partners to deliver it. The approved RTS 2040, CRD STA and subsequent new LTS will maximise the opportunities to secure external funding to the region and positive collaboration with partners.
<b>Reputational</b>	If ACC does not respond to the Consultation, members of the public and stakeholders may question ACCs commitment to the transport future of the city.	H	Prepare and send a response to the CRD STA draft options appraisal and draft RTS 2040 consultation.
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Risk that partner strategies do not fully represent National strategies around climate or align with	M	Continue to take opportunities to ensure that ACC is able to shape these documents, and the detail of policy and actions contained

	ACC's Net Zero Vision.		therein and to produce its own updated LTS which transposes National and Regional thinking into a local-specific context.
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## 7. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p>Place</p> <p>3. Refresh the Local Transport Strategy, ensuring it includes the results of a city centre parking review; promotes cycle and pedestrian routes; and considers support for public transport</p>	<p>The description of this policy statement reads "Review of the Local Transport Strategy will follow the review of the Regional Transport Strategy which is anticipated in 2020". Therefore, in submitting a response to the draft RTS 2040, ACC is fulfilling its role in helping shape the review of the RTS. In doing so, this will reduce the risk of a delayed approval of the final RTS 2040 by Scottish Ministers, allowing ACC to start work on its LTS in 2021 and ensuring it is in accord with the regional context which will shape the LTS.</p>
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 – 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026. One of the four pillar of the draft RTS, NESTRANS 2040, is "Helping the North East economy prosper". It then contains a range of actions around transport improvements and access improvements to enable this, which the Council supports and can be transposed into the next Aberdeen LTS.</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following LOIP Stretch outcomes</p> <p>4. 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026.</p> <p>5. 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>6. 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>7. Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026.</p>

	<p>11. Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p> <p>Two of the four pillars of the draft RTS, NESTRANS 2040, are “Promoting equality across the North East and “Improving health and wellbeing across the North East”.</p> <p>Actions around improving the transport network and cycle training will make it easier for young people to access the transport network and use it to further their opportunities. The emphasis on active travel will also benefit the health of all citizens, both mentally and physically, while improvements to the transport network will make it easier for people to get around, which will also have a positive effect on wellbeing.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following LOIP Stretch Outcomes</p> <p>14. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.</p> <p>15. 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</p> <p>One of the four pillars of the draft RTS, NESTRANS 2040, is “Reducing our impact on climate change and protecting the environment”. There are therefore actions contained around increasing provision for active travel, public transport and support for the use of low carbon vehicle technologies.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the Strategic Development Plan, the Regional Economic Strategy, the City Region Deal and locally the Local Transport Strategy, Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan, Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan, LOIP, Air Quality Action Plan, LDP and Aberdeen Net Zero Vision.</p> <p>The draft RTS 2040 has been informed by the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal and contains the vision “To provide a safer, cleaner, more inclusive and accessible transport system in the north east, which contributes to healthier, more prosperous and fairer communities” with a range of actions to achieve this.</p>

<p><b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b></p>	<p>In May 2019, the Scottish Government declared a ‘Climate Emergency’.</p> <p>The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019 sets a legally binding Net-Zero target for all greenhouse gases by 2045.</p> <p>The draft RTS 2040 responds to these with one of the four pillars of “Reducing our impact on climate change and protecting the environment”.</p> <p>The National Transport Strategy was published in February 2020. The draft RTS 2040 transposes the four NTS pillars of “Equality”, “Climate”, “Prosperity” and “Wellbeing” into its strategy.</p> <p>The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 provides new powers for Local Authorities, including providing the opportunity for greater control and operation of local bus services as well as enhanced partnership working arrangements, implementation and enforcement of Low Emission Zones and discretionary powers to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy, all aimed at improving sustainable transport and reducing car use. These are addressed in the draft RTS 2040.</p> <p>The Infrastructure Commission for Scotland was established by Scottish Government to provide independent advice on the nation’s vision, ambition and priorities to create a 30-year infrastructure strategy. In January 2020 it published its first key findings report. One of the recommendations is the statement that “most of the underlying infrastructure that will be used in 30-years’ time already exists today. It is therefore essential that these assets are most effectively and efficiently utilised, maintained and enhanced to net zero carbon readiness”. This principle carries through to the draft RTS 2040.</p>
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## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p><b>Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>Full impact assessment not required for this report. A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equalities Assessment have been prepared for the draft RTS 2040.</p>

<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
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## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[NESTRANS 2040 - Draft Regional Transport Strategy](#) for the North east of Scotland. Draft for Consultation. August 2020.

[Aberdeen City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal Draft Preliminary Options appraisal](#). June 2020

Report PLA/19/315 - Aberdeen City Region Deal – Strategic Transport Appraisal – STAG Pre-Appraisal Options

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix A – RTS 2040 At a glance – Draft for consultation

Appendix B – Draft CRD STA Preliminary Options Appraisal Summary

Appendix C – ACC Response to NESTRANS 2040 Draft RTS

Appendix D – ACC Response to CRD STA Draft Preliminary Options Appraisal

Appendix E – List of draft RTS Actions and ACC comments.

Appendix F – CRD STA options vs Draft RTS Actions and key Strategic ACC Objectives.

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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