

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	28 October 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Bridge of Don to City Centre Active Travel Corridor
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/160
DIRECTOR	-
CHIEF OFFICER	Gale Beattie
REPORT AUTHOR	Kevin Pert
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.2 and 3.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the outcomes of the Bridge of Don to City Centre Active Travel Corridor study, and seeks Committee approve the preferred routes and approve further work to develop the interventions recommended with respect to the routes as detailed in the Executive Summary- Appendix A and full report- Appendix B.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Agrees that the 11 packages of preferred options described in the Executive Summary (Appendix A) all have merit in contributing to a cohesive network of active travel routes across the north of the City to the City Centre, with options 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11 providing the most benefit, and
- 2.2 Agrees that Options 4 (Golf Road/ Park Road) and 6 (King Street) are now included within the ongoing Ellon to Garthdee Multi Modal Study which will be reported to Committee next year, and
- 2.3 Agrees that Option 5 (Industrial Estate to City Centre via Esplanade) preliminary design is to be taken forward following monitoring and evaluation of the temporary works on the Beach Esplanade and Beach Boulevard and reported back to Committee in due course, and
- 2.4 Agrees that Options 10 (Whitestripes to City Centre) and 11 (Haudagain to City Centre) are now included within the A96 Corridor Multi Modal Study which is currently underway and will be reported to Committee next year, and
- 2.5 Agrees that work to design the remaining options is included in the forthcoming revised Active Travel Action plan for future prioritisation and will take into account performance and usage of any temporary active travel interventions.
- 2.6 Notes that these active travel proposals help to support the Councils ambitious Net Zero carbon plans for Aberdeen.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 From August 2019 to March 2020, an options appraisal study was carried out to determine active travel (walking, cycling, wheeling) interventions from the Bridge of Don area to the City centre. The area covered spanned from the Parkway/ Ellon Road roundabout west to Persley Bridge/ Haudagain/ A96 and into the City Centre boundary, as shown on Page 5 of the Executive Summary at Appendix A. This study was grant funded by Sustrans – Places for Everyone.
- 3.2 To aid shape the outcome of the study, the following public consultations were held: a stakeholder workshop, a public drop-in session and an online consultation questionnaire was published for a period of 3 weeks. Following the responses received from these consultations, sifting and assessment using a STAG- based approach, the outcome of the study identified eleven (11) option routes to be of sufficient merit to be taken forward in more detail towards improving the active travel network in the study area. *(Please see Executive Summary and full report.)*
- 3.3 The eleven (11) option routes were then prioritised for corridors that would immediately benefit from active travel interventions. As detailed in Appendix A, these are:
- **Packages 4** (Golf Road/ Park Road), **5** (Industrial Estate to City Centre via Esplanade) **and 6** (King Street), which would all provide an active travel route along or parallel to King Street, the main north-south alignment connecting Bridge of Don to the city centre. The appraisal scores for each option are very similar and each brings specific opportunities and constraints. These are shown in Appendix A and in full detail in Appendix B.
 - **Packages 10** (Whitestripes to City Centre) **and 11** (Haudagain to City Centre), which would provide connectivity between the city centre and areas in the northwest of the study area, with large trip generators at the centre of each route. It is noted that Package 11 scores higher than Package 10 in the appraisal, but this is mainly due to the benefits of linkage with the Berryden Corridor Improvement Project.
- 3.4 Following the appraisal study, the next stage would usually be to develop preliminary designs of the preferred options. However, given the on-going Multi Modal Corridor studies for Ellon to Garthdee and the A96 Corridor, it would be more appropriate for Options 4, 6, 10 and 11 to be moved into these studies for inclusion to ensure continuity with the measures being developed therein. This would enable a complete package of integrated measures to be brought back to Members for consideration to progress to design and delivery.
- 3.5 Option 5 overlaps with the recent temporary implemented at the Beach area and data and learning from these measures will be incorporated into proposals.
- 3.6 The remaining options 1 (Kittybrewster to City Centre), 2 (Clifton Road to City Centre), 3 (Danestone to Hospital), Option 7 (Parkway to Balgownie Bridge), 8 (Parkway to Hospital) and 9 (Tillydrone to Hospital), are all lower priorities in terms of the overall benefit of the interventions when compared with the other

options and the outcomes of the assessment process. However, each has merit in contributing to the overall active travel network that is needed to connect the Bridge of Don area with the City Centre, which is the overall purpose of the project. The refresh of the Active Travel Action Plan is currently underway and this will identify a further range of actions necessary to improve the City wide active travel network to facilitate not only the latent demand for active travel improvements but also the recent and significant increase in walking and cycling recorded since the start of the C19 Health Pandemic restrictions on 23 March 2020. These 6 options should be included within this action plan refresh and their priority considered alongside other actions proposed to be contained within it. The refreshed Action Plan is anticipated to be reported to Members in spring 2021.

- 3.7 In summary, the outcomes of this study are an evidence base for substantial permanent active travel measures across the study area, some of which now best sit within the appropriate corridor studies, and some included within the emerging Active Travel Action Plan refresh. All future design work will continue to involve the public and stakeholders.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Sustrans provides 100% of funding for design stages and has now increased their funding proportion of construction costs from 50% to 70%, with the remaining 30% to be found from other external funders. Having fully funded the options appraisal stage, Sustrans provides room for continuity to obtain further funding for subsequent stages of projects in its Places for Everyone programme.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	There is the risk of a shortfall in contribution towards the Council's strategic objectives and outcomes of 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 as detailed in the LOIP.	L	Seek approval from committee to further the project to the next stage.
Compliance	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operational	There is an indirect risk of customer need not being met, nor new	L	On obtaining committee approval, progress project works to the next stage

	<p>methods to improve customer service and reduce demand not being utilised given public demand for active travel infrastructure provisions especially following the impact of COVID-19 on travel, noting the significant increases in walking and cycling since lockdown was first brought in on 23 March 2020.</p>		<p>and continue to work with consultees to deliver infrastructures that are fit for purpose and future-proof.</p>
Financial	<p>External funding application might not be successful.</p>	L	<p>Ensure application process and requirements are thoroughly adhered to, to reduce the risk of application not being successful.</p>
Reputational	<p>Risk of public perception of unwillingness to implement sustainable travel infrastructure.</p>	L	<p>Follow through on works leading to the next stage and continue to work with consultees to deliver a design and infrastructure that is fit for purpose and future-proof.</p>
Environment / Climate	<p>Risk of not achieving the aims of the Council's Net Zero Vision and Infrastructure Plan.</p>	L	<p>Follow through on works leading to the next stage and continue to work with consultees to deliver a design and infrastructure that is fit for purpose and future-proof.</p>

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>PLACE Policy Statement 3</u> - <i>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.</i> ✓ <u>PLACE Policy Statement 4</u>- <i>Cycle hire scheme</i> ✓ <u>ECONOMY Policy Statement 4</u> – <i>Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens.</i> 	<p>This report seeks approval to further progress works to the next stage following conclusion of the options appraisal study stage which identified options for active travel improvement of which on implementation, supports the delivery of Place policy statement 3 with regards to providing and promoting cycle and pedestrian routes.</p> <p>Ultimately, the active travel infrastructure that will result from this project will support the delivery of Place policy statement 4; as Aberdeen will have a robust cycle and pedestrian network that will encourage cycle hire.</p> <p>The infrastructure resulting from this project will also support the City Centre Masterplan delivery aim of increasing footfall to the city centre.</p>
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
<p>Prosperous Place</p>	<p>The proposals within this report supports the delivery of LOIP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stretch Outcome 14 Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by 42.5% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate • key driver 14.1 - Reducing emissions across the city through delivery of

	<p style="text-align: center;">Aberdeen’s Sustainable Energy Action Plan ‘Powering Aberdeen’.</p> <p>Creating new active travel route and or upgrading existing ones to standard, increases the attractiveness of walking and cycling, and indirectly providing support towards influencing a behavioural change and modal shift of travel choice from private vehicles to an active travel means for short journey purposes; thereby contributing in the long run to this outcome target of reducing harmful carbon emissions.</p> <p>➤ Stretch Outcome 15 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key driver 15.1 - Supporting different ways for active travel in everyday journeys, using partners and volunteers to address safety, infrastructure, fitness, well-being, and confidence. <p>Again, introducing a comprehensive active travel network by implementing new infrastructure or upgrading existing ones, will help increase the appeal of sustainable travel within the City and in turn contribute to the target figures in stretch outcome 15.</p> <p>The proposal in this report also supports the Aberdeen Local Development Plan Policy NE1 - Green Space Network; one of the key policies in creating prosperous places that enhances the Green Space Network and connectivity to the surrounding and wider Network and habitats.</p>
Prosperous People	<p>The proposal within this report supports the delivery of:</p> <p>➤ Stretch Outcome 11 Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key driver 11.3 - Increasing satisfaction and use of community facilities and green environment to increase the health and well-being for older people and people managing long term conditions <p>Infrastructures resulting from this project aligns with the public’s desire for a comprehensive active travel network around the City, which will enable anyone</p>

	<p>(able-bodied/disabled, high/low income, etc) to travel by their preferred means, actively and safely.</p> <p>It is also well known that an active lifestyle contributes to personal well-being health wise and thus can improve life expectancy.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regional Transport Strategy (<i>draft 2040</i>), ✓ Local Development Plan, ✓ Local Transport Strategy- <i>Active Travel Action plan</i> ✓ Strategic Development Plan ✓ Regional Economic Strategy ✓ Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen 	<p>The proposal within this report supports Regional and Local Transport Strategies, which all aim to deliver a sustainable transport system.</p>
<p>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ National Transport Strategy ✓ Cycling Action Plan for Scotland ✓ Scottish Planning Policy ✓ National Walking Strategy ✓ Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy 	<p>Infrastructure arising from this project will contribute to a joined-up active travel network and support the objectives of the Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish National Transport Strategy, Cycling Action Plan for Scotland, National Walking Strategy, Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy, and compliance with UK and Scottish legislation on Air Quality Standards and Objectives.</p> <p>Provision of a comprehensive and cohesively joined up active travel network will supplement the ambitions of a LEZ zone in Aberdeen as it would be easy to sustainably travel into the city centre.</p> <p>Scottish Planning Policy identifies qualities of successful places as being places with public spaces that are better linked into a route that is well used by people walking, places that encourage cycling and places that pedestrians go to and from which are connected by more direct routes. A coherent and joined up active travel network will contribute to making Aberdeen a city with successful places.</p>

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
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Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the next phase of the project following approval of the recommendations in this report.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Executive Summary

Appendix B – Full Report

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix A

Executive Summary

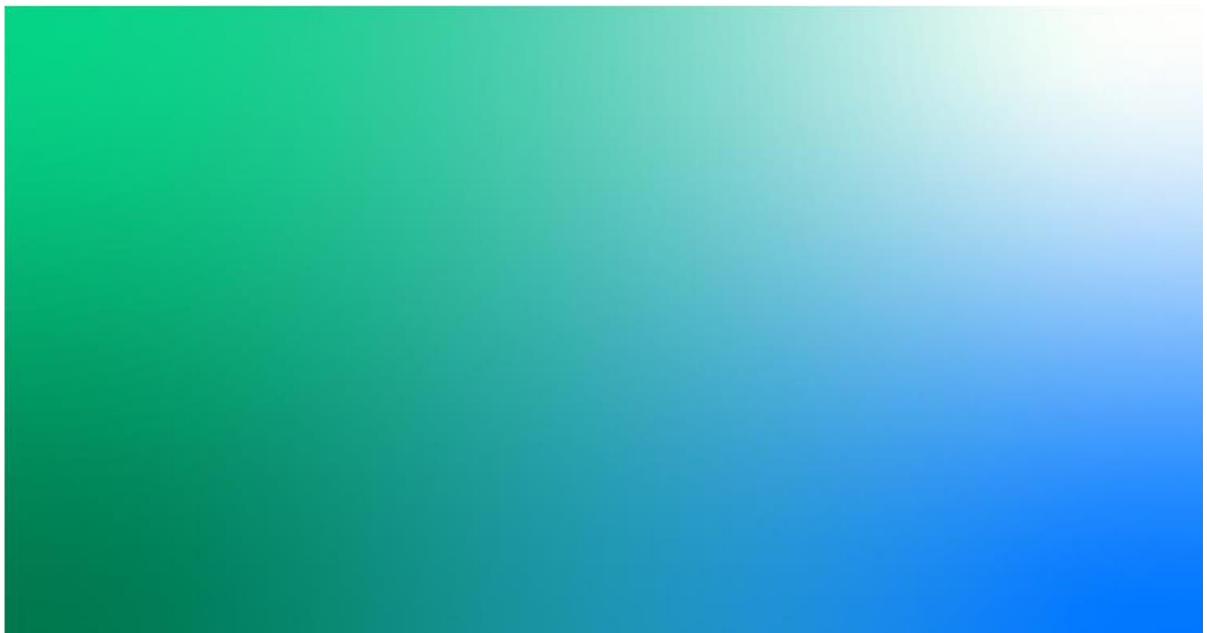


Bridge of Don to City Centre Active Travel Corridor Appraisal Report - Executive Summary

Revision No | 0

10 March 2020

Aberdeen City Council



Bridge of Don to City Centre Active Travel Corridor

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Document history and status

Revision	Date	Description	Author	Checked	Reviewed	Approved
0	10-03-20	Executive Summary - Initial Draft	CB	CW	AK	AK

Executive Summary

The focus of this study is the Bridge of Don to City Centre Active Travel Corridor, which is a key scheme in the Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017 - 2021. The purpose of the study was to carry out an appraisal to identify a network for active travel provision which connects the Bridge of Don area to Aberdeen's city centre. The client team included Sustrans, Nestrans and University of Aberdeen, led by Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Place Planning team.

The appraisal was undertaken using the principles of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG), but also took account of Sustrans' Places for Everyone design criteria. Key steps in the process included:

- ✦ Review of previous studies and key documents;
- ✦ Broad stakeholder and public engagement;
- ✦ Examination of key problems and opportunities in the local active travel network;
- ✦ Development of transport planning objectives (TPOs) for the study;
- ✦ Generation of a long list of potential options;
- ✦ A high level appraisal to sift the long list into a shorter list of options; and
- ✦ A detailed appraisal against the TPOs, STAG criteria and 'implementability' issues, along with the Sustrans design criteria.

The study area is approximately 9 square km, comprising a core study area south of the River Don and a wider study area north of the river. The core area extends from Persley Bridge at the A92 in the west, to Beach Boulevard in the east and the city centre boundary to the south. The wider study area, which takes account of proposed future development consists of the area enclosed by the A92, A90 and the river, from the Parkway roundabout in the east, to Persley Bridge in the west.

The first stage of the study entailed a critical review of relevant national, regional and local policies, as well as consideration of relevant local projects. This established the context for the study, along with an evidence base for the assessment of the principal problems and opportunities in the active travel network. This was informed by site visits and a comprehensive programme of stakeholder and public consultation, carried out in association with the client team.

The study team then carried out a thorough analysis of this evidence base, which was used to identify key themes to inform the development of a set of relevant and applicable TPOs.

Table E 1 - Transport Planning Objectives

TPO	Description
TPO1	Improve quality of pedestrian and cycle provision on the transport network within the northern area of Aberdeen (to allow improved journey experience by users: direct, comfortable, attractive, safe, cohesive)
TPO2	Increase access to safe and integrated active travel network between Bridge of Don and Aberdeen City Centre (to maximise the number of people with direct access to the network)
TPO3	Improve the level of safety, comfort and personal security on the active travel network in the northern area of Aberdeen, to benefit travel experience of all users (to remove real and perceived safety and security issues that act as barriers to travel)

TPO4	Increase the number of trips made by foot or bike to contribute towards the aim of improved health and reduce impact of travel on the environment (to maximise the impact of walking and cycling uptake and modal shift on health and environment outcomes)
TPO5	Improve connectivity by foot or bike to key centres of employment, education and health facilities (to improve active travel's contribution to economic and social objectives)

The next stage was the generation of a long list of intervention options, derived from within the project team, the wider client group and from public and stakeholder consultation. Options were then sifted against their relevance to the agreed TPOs. Remaining options were grouped into packages that would provide a deliverable and complementary set of interventions, enabling the development of a preferred future network which would increase the number of people walking, wheeling and cycling. This resulted in a set of eleven packages which were considered in the appraisal.

These are shown in Figure E 1 and described in Table E 2 below.

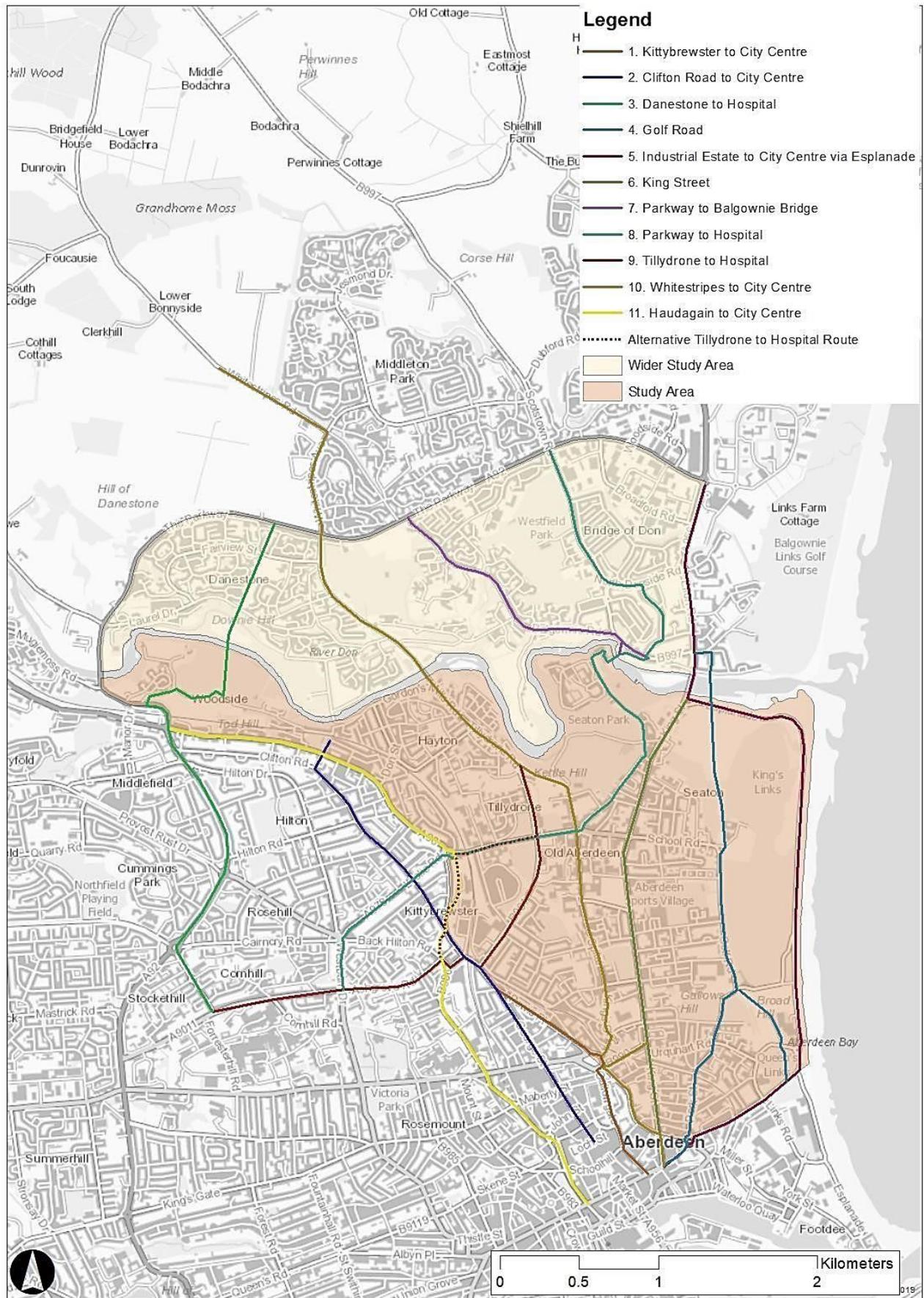


Figure E 1 - Map of option packages

Table E 2 - Option packages for appraisal

Package	Route Name	Description and Key Features
1	Kittybrewster to City Centre	New active travel route from Powis Terrace to the city centre using existing alignments with increased on-road and segregated cycle lanes. A possible alternative alignment to Option 2, for the section south of Powis Terrace. This route utilises the width on Powis Terrace albeit this route is still identified by ACC as a Primary Route in the Roads Hierarchy.
2	Clifton Road to City Centre	New active travel route from Woodside area (and National Cycle Route (NCN) Route 1) to the city centre using existing alignments with increased on-road cycle lanes, crossing and junction improvements, incorporating elements of the Berryden Corridor Improvement (BCI) Project. This route uses quieter streets to route southwards from the existing interface with the NCN 1 and crossing facilities on the A96 Great Northern Road.
3	Danestone to Hospital	New active travel route between Danestone and the major hospitals, using a mix of existing carriageway and a new segregated route, with a new river bridge in the northern section. The route makes use of an existing pylon corridor from the residential area of Danestone to the existing NCN 1. This was viewed as a ready-made route which provide links into the adjacent residential areas.
4	Golf Road / Park Road	New active travel route east of King St, using a mix of existing carriageway and new segregated routes, with new river bridge at northern extent. Park Road has been identified as a route that ACC are considering for a HGV ban and was therefore identified as being suitable for a cycle route.
5	Industrial Estate to city centre via Esplanade	New active travel route from the A92 Parkway roundabout to the city centre via the Esplanade, using existing alignments with increased segregation, shared-use paths and footway improvements. This route makes use of the considerable road and footway space available on the Esplanade and aims to serve the leisure facilities from both the city centre and from Bridge of Don.
6	King Street	New active travel route along King Street from just south of the Bridge of Don to Castle Street, with significant segregation, junction upgrades and full resurfacing. This route looks to improve upon the main corridor from the city centre to Bridge of Don while considering that King Street will remain as a Primary Route in terms of the Roads Hierarchy and will be the main HGV route north from the city centre.

7	Parkway to Balgownie Bridge	New active travel route from the A92 Parkway to Balgownie Bridge using existing alignments with increased segregation and improvements to two crossings and a flight of steps. This route is through the centre of the wider study area and utilises a wide verge on the west side of Balgownie Road to access Balgownie Bridge. Onward routing to the city centre would be provided by connecting with route 8 southwards from Balgownie Bridge.
8	Parkway to Hospital	New active travel route from the A92 Parkway to Westburn Drive via Seaton Park using existing alignments with increased segregation and improvements to crossings and junctions. This route follows quieter streets in Bridge of Don, a number of which have been signed as a preferred route by Aberdeen Cycle Forum. The route will cater for student trips between the Hillhead campus and the Hospital with linkages into NCN 1 and the University of Aberdeen buildings located off High Street.
9	Tillydrone to Hospital	New active travel route from Tillydrone to Ashgrove Road (near the Royal Infirmary), via the University of Aberdeen, incorporating elements of the BCI Project. This route will tie-in to the existing active travel facilities on Tillydrone Road and Gordon Brae to provide a continuous route from the wider study area linking into the University and continuing west to the Hospital.
10	Whitestripes to city centre	An alternative route option would use St Machar Road between Tillydrone Road and Great Northern Road where it would follow the BCI Project south to Ashgrove Road. This would be in lieu of routeing along Bedford Road and Powis Terrace.
11	Haudagain to city centre	New active travel route from Whitestripes Road (by Grandhome development) to the city centre via Tillydrone and Old Aberdeen, incorporating existing segregated and off-road active travel paths, including the NCN 1 and the Tillydrone Road and Gordon Brae facilities. The route also identifies improvements on the NCN 1 within the city centre.

The appraisal comprised a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the performance of each of the options against TPOs, implementability criteria (feasibility, affordability and public acceptability) and the STAG criteria (environment, safety, economy, integration, and accessibility and social inclusion). The options were then assessed against the Sustrans Places for Everyone criteria.

The appraisal concluded that there are several options for improving active travel connectivity in the Bridge of Don area which merit further detailed development and assessment. The ultimate aim should therefore be to develop a cohesive network of active travel routes to the north of Aberdeen city centre, that is linked to wider Active Travel Action Plan proposals and can deliver the many benefits identified for each package in this appraisal. To support decision making in the delivery of such a network, the appraisal has identified which packages should be considered as higher priority than others. These are:

- Packages 4, 5 and 6, which would all provide an active travel route along or parallel to King Street, the main north-south alignment connecting Bridge of Don to the city centre. The appraisal scores for each option are very similar and each brings specific opportunities and constraints.

- Packages 10 and 11, which would provide connectivity between the city centre and areas in the northwest of the study area, with large trip generators at the centre of each route. It is noted that Package 11 scores higher than Package 10 in the appraisal, but this is mainly due to the benefits of incorporating the BCI Project.

It is recommended that further work is undertaken to develop these interventions to an appropriate level of design detail to allow for a further assessment of their deliverability, including technical feasibility. This would also enable further quantification of their likely impacts, both positive and negative. As set out in this report, there is a considerable level of community and stakeholder interest in active travel improvements. To ensure stakeholders are fully informed of developments, it is recommended that further community engagement is undertaken as the proposals are refined.