

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources
DATE	21 September 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections
REPORT NUMBER	RES/22/177
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne/ John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Katherine Duncan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.4 & 1.1.6

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Programme progress and to seek approval of the outline business case.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 notes the contents of the business case for the Ashgrove Connects project;
- 2.2 agrees the recommendations within the business case for the Ashgrove Connects project appended to this report;
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to submit a bid to Scottish Government’s Places for Everyone scheme for funding to enable the detailed design of the Ashgrove Connects project and implementation, subject to the identification of suitable match funding;
- 2.4 notes the content of the Skene Square to City Centre route option assessment report;
- 2.5 agrees the preferred option within the Skene Square to City Centre route option assessment report and instructs the Chief Officer - Capital to progress the development of detailed design and, subject to 2.6, its implementation concurrently with the Berryden Corridor Improvement project;
- 2.6 instructs the Chief Officer - Capital as part of the detailed design to develop a detailed estimate for the Skene Square to City Centre active travel connection project (being the preferred option as described in the Skene Square to City Centre route option assessment report) and if required, refer any additional funding requirement to this year’s budget process;

- 2.7 instructs the Chief Officer - Capital to progress all necessary approvals, permissions, licenses, agreements, and consents required to develop and implement the Ashgrove Connects & Skene Square to City Centre active travel connection projects; and
- 2.8 delegates authority to the Chief Officer – Capital, following consultation with the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services, to consider and approve business cases (including estimated expenditures) for the Ashgrove Connects and Skene Square to City Centre active travel connection projects for the purposes of Procurement Regulation 4.1.1.2 and 4.1.1.4; thereafter to procure appropriate works and services, and enter into any contracts necessary for the delivery of the projects.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The existing Berryden corridor facilitates journeys between the city centre, the north of Aberdeen and beyond. The Berryden Corridor Improvement (BCI) project will provide two lanes in both directions throughout the length of the corridor, widening the existing road between Skene Square and Ashgrove Road and creating a new road between Ashgrove Road and St Machar Drive. Alongside the new carriageway there will be segregated infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists along the majority of its length.
- 3.2 The new infrastructure delivered by the BCI project will reduce congestion, shorten journey times and improve journey time reliability. Thus, it provides much improved access to the city centre and relief on less appropriate routes through adjacent neighbourhoods. The improved standard of design will increase road user safety and the perception of safety along the corridor.
- 3.3 The BCI project will provide improved, continuous, and dedicated infrastructure for active travel modes along its length. This active travel infrastructure will provide a step change in provision, encouraging modal shift and improving perceptions of active travel safety. It will also provide a significant opportunity to further expand the provision of high-quality infrastructure on the surrounding network connecting neighbourhoods to the city centre.
- 3.4 During Public and Stakeholder consultations for the BCI project it was highlighted that for the full benefits of the new infrastructure for cycle traffic to be achieved, the proposed off-carriageway cycle infrastructure should extend further, providing continuity of provision for likely journeys, with suggested links between the NHS Foresterhill Campus and the University of Aberdeen, along with the city centre and the University of Aberdeen cited as specific examples. Cycle infrastructure provided by the BCI project is being developed to address these demands on roads covered by the project, however, much of what was identified is outwith the BCI project's scope. The Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Programme has, in parallel with the BCI and with funding from Nestrans, considered options for the development of connections from the BCI cycle infrastructure which would maximise active travel opportunities on the corridor, leveraging the maximum active travel benefits of the BCI project.

- 3.5 The connection routes identified as important to onward travel from the Berryden Corridor were:
- Kittybrewster Roundabout to Haudagain Roundabout (A96 Great Northern Road);
 - Kittybrewster Roundabout to Tillydrone Avenue/ Diamond Bridge (St Machar Drive);
 - Skene Square to City Centre; and
 - Berryden Corridor to Cornhill/ Foresterhill/ Mastrick (Ashgrove Road & Ashgrove Road West).

An Overview Plan of the routes is shown in Appendix A of this report.

- 3.6 The Active Travel Action Plan adopted in 2019 includes actions to improve infrastructure for cycling along routes which follow these programme corridors:
- Mastrick to ARI and Tillydrone active travel improvements; and
 - Whitestripes to city centre active travel Improvements

Combinations of the routes identified in 3.5 alongside planned infrastructure on the BCI Project and that which has already been delivered as part of the completed Third Don Crossing/ Diamond Bridge project would fulfil the objectives of the Active Travel Action Plan.

PROGRESS

- 3.7 **A96 Great Northern Road** (from Kittybrewster Roundabout to Haudagain Roundabout) lies to the north of the BCI. It is included in the A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen Multi-modal transport study and therefore has not been considered as part of the Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Programme.
- 3.8 Consideration of additional active travel provision along the A96 north of BCI falls within the scope of the Inverurie to Aberdeen Multi-Modal corridor transport study, which commenced in 2021 as part of the programme of work funded by the Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). As such the options for improvements and integration with BCI are being considered by this larger study, the outcome will be reported as part of the BPF programme.
- 3.9 **St Machar Drive** (from Berryden Corridor to Tillydrone Avenue) lies to the east of the BCI, tying into the corridor at the Kittybrewster roundabout. An initial feasibility study project has now been undertaken. This has identified that implementing a high-quality segregated facilities for cycle traffic is feasible. All the assessed options redistribute road space with some making greater use of the current carriageway than others. St Machar Drive is a key link within the road network and without traffic modelling to assess the impact of these options on network performance, a preferred option cannot be presented at this time. A major update to the Aberdeen area traffic model is currently underway. Once complete, the BPF programme plans to progress a traffic modelling assessment considering the cumulative impact of its bus priority and bus rapid transit proposals. This work will consider the operational requirements for St Machar Drive. Depended on the outcome of this assessment the progression of cycle infrastructure improvements maybe included in the scope of the A96 BPF corridor or as a standalone project.

- 3.10 **Skene Square to City Centre** (Berryden Corridor to City Centre) lies to the south of the BCI. Skene Square to City Centre route forms part of the Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Programme. The current BCI project finishes by tying into the existing dual carriageway section just south of the Skene Square/ Rosemount Place junction. This is where the current segregated infrastructure will also conclude and there is currently no infrastructure for cycle traffic from this junction onward to the city centre. Cycle traffic travelling to/ from the slower and less busy streets of the city centre utilising the improved Berryden Corridor would therefore need to mix with general traffic on the dual carriageway with a 30mph speed limit for this section. A high-level route option assessment has been undertaken considering possible routes and infrastructure provision, Appendix E. Due to its limited length and proximity, it is recommended that the Spa Street/ Skene Square option is the preferred choice for the northbound route, and Skene Square/ Woolmanhill roundabout route is the preferred choice for the southbound route. These options provide the most appropriate direct routes to/ from the proposed segregated cycle facilities on BCI and both provide opportunities for future connections to other routes should they be progressed. It is proposed that these options be taken forward as part of the BCI project.
- 3.11 **Ashgrove Road & Ashgrove Road West** (Berryden Corridor to Mastrick) lies to the west of the BCI. Ashgrove Road & Ashgrove Road West forms part of the Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Programme. The project was branded 'Ashgrove Connects' for consultation purposes and covers a length of approximately 2km. A Scheme Assessment (Appendix B) has been undertaken considering the options for active travel improvements along the route. The assessment has concluded that a number of proposals be further development during the detailed design stage. The proposals included; a reduction in speed limit from 30mph to 20mph, reduced carriageway widths, segregated cycle tracks, new controlled crossings, an increase in the number of street trees and green infrastructure areas, public realm gateway features, and enhanced bus stop facilities.
- 3.12 An outline business case, Appendix C considers the options for development and implementation of the preferred option, including a cost estimate, funding options and programme.
- 3.13 There are a number of transport projects currently ongoing on routes near to the Ashgrove Connects corridor. These projects have similar complementary aims and objectives to Ashgrove Connects. The A92 (Anderson Drive and the Parkway) Multi-modal Corridor interacts with the Ashgrove Connects project at the North Anderson Drive/ Ashgrove Road West junction. Ashgrove Connects has been progressed with due cognisance of the A92 Corridor Study and will continue to be as it progresses.

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 3.14 **St Machar Drive** - Stakeholder groups such as; the emergency services, business associations, schools in the local area, the University of Aberdeen and North East Scotland College were contacted for their feedback. St Machar Academy pupils, who may be directly impacted by any changes made to St

Machar Drive, have been involved in focus groups held at the school. The focus groups were attended by pupils from 1st to 4th year. The discussions clarified how the pupils used the existing infrastructure and the main areas of concern for pupils when accessing and egressing the school. The school has stated that they would be happy to be involved as the project progresses.

- 3.15 **Skene Square to City Centre-** Consultation will be undertaken as part of BCI project statutory processes.
- 3.16 **Ashgrove Road & Ashgrove Road West** - As part of the Ashgrove Connects project, the community was approached with a blank canvas so that any design proposals could be directly influenced by those who live/ work in the area and/ or use the route. Public, school children, and other stakeholder consultations online and face to face were undertaken and asked participants for their comments on the existing infrastructure and what improvements they would like to see. Following the completion of the initial concept designs further consultations have been undertaken. The comments from both consultations were analysed and incorporated into the design where appropriate, Appendix B.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The initial appraisal work has been funded by Nestrans. There is currently no dedicated budget for the next stages of work.
- 4.2 For the Skene Square to City Centre active travel connection project further development of the design can be progressed within the available Nestrans project budget (subject to approval), however, due to its proximity and extension of provision from the BCI project the adjustment of the current capital projects scope to include the implementation of the Skene Square & Gilcomston Steps section is the most practical approach to delivery. Following the development of a detailed estimate any identified additional funding requirement for implementation will be referred to a future budget process for approval.
- 4.3 For Ashgrove Connects, the intention is that the Council will apply to the Transport Scotland/ Sustrans, Places for Everyone fund. The aim of Places for Everyone is to create safer, more attractive, healthier, and inclusive places which are enjoyed equitably by increasing and diversifying the number of trips made by walking or cycling for everyday journeys. It is funded by the Scottish Government through Transport Scotland and is administered by Sustrans. The fund can provide up to 100% of design work costs and 70% of the construction costs. The final 30% of construction costs need to be secured through match funding. Ongoing conversations with Sustrans are being held to determine if proposed BCI project infrastructure, already funded as part of the capital plan, can be considered as the Council match funding contribution. If applications are successful, all development and implementation costs will be met from external funders.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The project will be developed and implemented under Roads & Traffic Authority powers. There are no direct legal implications beyond business-as-usual support from Legal Services.
- 5.2 Any external support required for future stages of work will be undertaken in line with the Council's Procurement Regulations.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The associated modal-shift anticipated from improvements to active travel infrastructure proposed by the Ashgrove Connects and Skene Square to City Centre active travel connection projects has significant potential to contribute positively to the Council's net zero targets and biodiversity commitments.
- 6.2 An initial Ecological Impact Assessment for Ashgrove Connects has been undertaken and is included in the Appendix D of this report.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.
- 7.2 For Ashgrove Connects, further information regarding risk can be found within the outline business case which is attached to this report, Appendix C.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls /control actions	Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Delivery of active travel measures supports a number of the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in terms of a sustainable economy, a sustainable transport system, the continued health and prosperity of our citizens, reductions in carbon emissions	Continue to work with partners to deliver the projects	L	Yes

	<p>and a high-quality environment.</p> <p>Failure to deliver active travel improvements where there is evidence of their effectiveness could undermine the Council's ability to realise these aspirations including the Local Transport Strategy and Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan.</p>			
Compliance	No significant risks identified	Compliance with statutory processes, grant conditions and Scheme of Governance with regular progress and spend reporting to the Transportation Programme Boards and ACC Procurement Regulations.	L	Yes
Operational	The Project will upgrade the existing infrastructure and extend the design life of existing assets. New assets will also be introduced which will require to be maintained and may put pressure on existing budgets.	On completion, the Project may increase operational budgets and/ or require reallocation of funding from other budgets.	M	Yes
Financial	<p>No dedicated funding currently in place. Places for Everyone funding is not guaranteed. No appropriate committed project found to enable match-funding for construction phase.</p> <p>The Council may not be prepared to take advantage of funding opportunities for active travel projects as they arise.</p>	Continue to work with partners to secure funding.	M	Yes
Reputational	Failure to deliver the Project could hinder implementation of the	Obtain Committee approval to progress the works.	L	Yes

	<p>Council's (and partners) strategic transport objectives and undermine the Council's commitments to improving the transport network, achieving the PLACE outcomes set out in the LOIP (Local Outcome Improvement Plan), and supporting Scotland's Climate Change Plan commitment to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030.</p>	<p>Continue working with partners to deliver Projects.</p>		
<p>Environment / Climate</p>	<p>ACC's net zero vision and strategic infrastructure plan – energy transition: transport emissions are a significant contributor to climate emissions so increasing sustainable travel will be necessary to achieving this sector's required reduction.</p> <p>If active travel and public transport measures are not delivered, ACC would not provide conditions which could encourage more sustainable travel movements which are likely to bring environmental improvements to the city and region.</p> <p>There may be under utilisation of the proposed BCI cycling infrastructure following opening, due to a lack of continuity of quality provision over medium to long journey lengths.</p>	<p>Continue working with partners to deliver the projects.</p>	<p>L</p>	<p>Yes</p>

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Economy Policy Statement 2 and Place Policy Statement 3 through facilitating the promotion of active travel by delivering segregated cycling and walking infrastructure. By connecting to both existing and committed active travel infrastructure a segregated off-carriageway provision from the City Centre to Mastrick, Tillydrone and Bridge of Don including key destinations of NHS Foresterhill Health Campus and the University of Aberdeen's Foresterhill and Old Aberdeen Campuses.</p> <p>Economy Policy Statement 2 - Increase city centre footfall through delivery of the City Centre Masterplan, including the redesigned Union Terrace Gardens and Queen Street development.</p> <p>Place Policy Statement 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>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcomes 1 to 3 as a good transport network and infrastructure provision means anyone regardless of their social status/ economic means can choose a sustainable mode of travel for commuting. A reliable transport network supports economic growth and movement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stretch Outcome 1 - No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026. - Stretch Outcome 2 - 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026. - Stretch Outcome 3 - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026.

<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support Stretch Outcomes 5 and 11, in that they seek to improve and increase opportunities for people to walk or cycle for everyday journeys, bringing personal health benefits through increased physical activity and reducing harmful emissions from road transport.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stretch Outcome 5 - 90% of Children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026. (Key Driver 5.2 - free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing). - Stretch Outcome 11 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026. (Key Driver 11.3 - Encouraging the adoption of healthier lifestyles).
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Stretch Outcomes 13 and 14 through step change improvements to active travel infrastructure along the routes. Further expansion and connection of such facilities on the surrounding network can also be enabled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stretch Outcome 13 - Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate) - Stretch Outcome 14 - Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Transport Strategy (2040) • Local Development Plan, • Local Transport Strategy including the Active Travel Action plan • Strategic Development Plan • Regional Economic Strategy • Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen 	<p>The proposals within this report support Regional and Local Transport Strategies and related strategies, which all aim to deliver a sustainable transport system as well as enhance the connectivity of the existing transport network.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	IIA's have been prepared to accompany this report.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 OPE/19/089 North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy, City Growth and Resources Committee, 6 June 2019.
- 10.2 COM/22/095 A96 Multi-Modal Study, City Growth and Resources Committee, 21 June 2022.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – Berryden Corridor Active Travel Connections Overview Plan
- 11.2 Appendix B – Ashgrove Connects Final Report
- 11.3 Appendix C – Ashgrove Connects Business Case
- 11.4 Appendix D – Ashgrove Connects Constituent Reports and Drawings – As referenced in the Final Report
- 11.5 Appendix E – Skene Square to City Centre Route Option Assessment Report

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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