

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
<b>DATE</b>	7 March 2023
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen Cross City Connections – Active Travel Scheme Development
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/23/052
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Ken Neil
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	7,8

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the outcomes of the Review of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Part 2 Appraisal Report, draft Outline Business Case and Programme Delivery Plan undertaken for the Aberdeen Cross City Connections Active Travel schemes. A discussion on the findings from the various reports is provided along with recommendations on the next steps for the options identified.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the findings and outcomes of the Review of STAG Part 2 Appraisal Report, – Aberdeen Cross City Transport Connections (Appendix 1);
- 2.2 Agree that the Active Travel options 7, 8, 9, 11 and 20 identified in the STAG Part 2 report (and listed in Appendix 1) for Aberdeen Cross City Connections are the preferred priority Active Travel options that should proceed to further development work;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to seek external funding to allow the continued development of the options agreed in 2.2, including the full development of the draft Outline Business Case (OBC) (Appendix 2) for these options; and
- 2.4 Subject to external funding being secured, instruct the Chief Officer - Capital to progress the next stages of project delivery, including but not limited to, surveys and investigations, design development, obtaining all necessary approvals, permissions, licences, agreements, and consents required to fully develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project, as defined in Paragraph 3.9, and to report back to this Committee upon completion of the OBC, and to provide an annual update on progress of detailed design and delivery thereafter.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### **Background**

- 3.1 The Aberdeen Cross City Transport Connections project is a study of potential sustainable transportation interventions being progressed by Aberdeen City Council. The purpose of the project is to examine public transport and active travel connections between new areas of development 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. Private vehicles are a significant contributor to carbon emissions so increasing sustainable travel opportunities will be necessary to achieving this sector's required emissions reduction and assisting in the delivery of the Council's Net Zero goals. The aim of the project is focussed on connecting major planned developments and to maximise the sustainable transport-based accessibility associated with the developments.
- 3.2 Reference is made to a report to the City Growth and Resources Committee on 06 June 2019 titled '[Aberdeen Cross City Connections – STAG Part 2 Appraisal](#)' which approved further development work on the active travel options identified through the STAG process, subject to future funding being identified to progress these proposals.
- 3.3 The aforementioned report highlighted various active travel options, that emerged from the STAG process, for connections between new areas of development (both housing and employment). This included a long-list of 22 preferred options for improvements to the active travel network serving these development sites.
- 3.4 To further develop these options, Nestrans funding was secured and utilised to commission Jacobs consultants to identify the most viable/advantageous options to take forward for further development as a priority among the 22 options previously reported to Committee, along with devising initial concept designs and a draft Outline Business Case (OBC) for the delivery of the priority options.

#### **STAG Part 2 Appraisal Review**

- 3.5 The first task undertaken was a review of the preferred active travel options identified through the STAG Part 2 appraisal, completed in 2019. This employed the following outline methodology:
- Desktop review of the long-list of active travel options identified in 2019 to examine the scoring applied and develop an initial assessment on the viability of the active travel route options. The long-list of options is available in Table 2 of Appendix 1.
  - Mapping exercise to establish the proximity of these routes to major trip attractors/generators, potential barriers/constraints, and existing provision.
  - High-level analysis and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data, including socio-economic and demographic, to gain insights about the areas close to the route options.

- Site visit assessments to identify other potential issues and constraints, to observe any existing pedestrian and cycle user movements or identify issues, e.g., severance or deliverability, not evident from the desk-based activities undertaken.

3.6 The scoring exercise undertaken for the STAG Part 2 appraisal was then revised and a reassessment made to rank all 22 options and identify those to be taken forward for further consideration at this time. The methodology utilised during the STAG Part 2 appraisal remained the same, with each option appraised against:

- the relevant transport planning objectives (TPOs) developed through the STAG process;
- the STAG criteria of environment, safety, economy, accessibility and social inclusion, and integration; and,
- the additional scoring criteria of feasibility, affordability, and public acceptability.

A summary of the 2019 STAG Part 2 appraisal and the 2022 review is provided in Table 8 of Appendix 1, which also includes route descriptions of all 22 options assessed. The outcomes of this review recommended that five routes should be progressed as priority active travel options for further development. These options are highlighted in Table 1, and illustrated via the concept design drawings in Appendix 3:

*Table 1 – Cross City Connections: Priority Active Travel Options*

Option	Route Description	Summary
7	Bridge crossing of River Don between Grandhome and Stoneywood	A bridge crossing over the River Don has been noted as a feasible option through a preliminary engineering assessment. It has been identified as a standalone active travel route that will make adjacent routes more feasible in providing a continuous route between the Grandhome development to Stoneywood and Dyce. Developer Obligations towards the delivery of the project have been secured with a total of £102,856 collected to date and a further £250,000 due to be paid on confirmation that the contract for the construction of the bridge has been signed.
8	Market Street (Stoneywood ) and Stoneywood Terrace	There are no major constraints, e.g., land, and this option requires low cost, feasible upgrades on Stoneywood Terrace. Market Street is quiet and residential, although has limited options for improvements due to on street parking. There is the potential to link into Option 7 via Stoneywood development street network or National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCN1).
9	Underpass on Millhill Brae to Newhills Bowling Club	This route has no major constraints, and it is being recommended to substitute Option 39. Although Option 9 ranks lower than 39, it serves a greater benefit to the wider active travel network. Therefore, as a standalone option, route option 9 is concluded to be more feasible and

	on Waterton Road	supplements Option 7 and 8 to potentially create a high-quality active travel network within Bucksburn.
11	Kingswells to Newhills Development	There are no major constraints identified. The route would require upgrading of an internal path network. As noted in the 2019 STAG Part 2 appraisal, this option provides the “greatest benefits” and ties with Kingswells Park and Ride and links northwards to the Newhills development area. Several uncontrolled crossings along the route could be upgraded to provide a high-quality continuous route.
20	Deeside Way to Friarsfield Development	This route would make use of the alternative route at its northern section, making use of the internal network of the CALA development which is accessed from Friarsfield Road. The route onto Craigton Road has a relatively steep gradient and potential land issues through the former school site. The progression of this route would have the potential for linking into Countesswells development subject to the progression of Option 19 further north.

Full details of the option scoring exercise are available in the Review of STAG Part 2 Appraisal Report, – Aberdeen Cross City Transport Connections (Appendix 1). It should be noted that this option scoring exercise provided a prioritisation ranking for all active travel options stemming from the preceding STAG Part 2 appraisal (see Table 8 of Appendix 1). Options not identified for progression as a priority at this stage shall be considered at a future date, subject to prioritisation against other active travel projects being developed across the city.

### **Concept Design Development**

- 3.7 Utilising the inputs and outcomes from the review of the STAG Part 2 Appraisal, and previous STAG work, preliminary concept designs were developed for the re-evaluated options selected for further consideration (as per Table 1, above). The appropriate type of provision for walkers, wheelers and cycle users was informed by relevant current design guidance.
- 3.8 The preliminary concept design drawings generally illustrate the horizontal alignment and location of the proposed cycle and walking routes and are provided in Appendix 3 - Concept Designs.

### **Draft OBC Development**

- 3.9 The next substantive stage of work would be the formal design process for the five options identified, and to inform that a draft Outline Business Case (OBC) (Appendix 2) has been prepared by Jacobs, along with a draft Programme Delivery Plan (Appendix 4). Both documents will require further development as the project progresses. The draft OBC gathers the outputs of the STAG process and appraisal review, detailing the case for the investment by outlining the benefits, costs and key risks associated with the preferred options. The Programme Delivery Plan provides a forward plan for the execution of the design process and subsequent stages in progressing the five options identified.

## 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.

*Table 2 – Initial Cost Estimates: Priority Active Travel Options*

Option	Total CAPEX Costs (2022 prices)	Total CAPEX Costs (2022 prices with 15% Optimism Bias)	30-year maintenance costs (2022 prices)	30-year maintenance costs (2022 prices with 15% Optimism Bias)
7	£1,473,000	£1,696,000	£3,200	£3,700
8	£321,000	£369,000	£0	£0
9	£319,000	£367,000	£600	£700
11	£715,000	£822,000	£5,400	£6,200
20	£321,000	£369,000	£0	£0

- 4.2 Initial cost estimates are outlined in the draft Outline Business Case (Appendix 2) and summarised in Table 2. There is currently no budget for the project to proceed with further development work, or for the implementation of the schemes, therefore progress will be dependent on the sourcing of continued external funding from Nestrans or any other appropriate funding sources. As per 2.3 It is recommended that the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning is instructed to seek external funding to allow the continued development of the five priority active travel options.
- 4.3 Should these options proceed towards delivery there will be future costs associated with maintaining any new or upgraded infrastructure. Initial cost estimates are outlined in the draft Outline Business Case (Appendix 2) and summarised in Table 2. Any future development work will identify implications for the revenue budget as options are developed further and refined. To minimise the requirement for revenue response maintenance in the future it is crucial to strive for the highest standards of quality in infrastructure, which shall be a key consideration of the next stages of project delivery.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Should funding be secured to move forward then there will be a need for land acquisition, Traffic Regulation Orders, planning and other approvals and the detail of this will be developed as part of the design process. Further procurement exercises to deliver this project and its wider benefits shall also be required.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, any subsequent design stages shall

include an Environmental Impact Assessment to inform any environmental implications of the project. It should be noted however that Environmental considerations are part of the STAG criteria which has influenced the recommendations of this report in terms of the options to be taken forward.

## 7. RISK

The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level</b>	<b>*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)</b>  <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	<b>*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?</b>
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>Continue to work with Nestrans and other project partners to deliver the strategic objectives of this project and its wider benefits, therefore mitigating against the risk of the council failing to deliver on its strategic sustainability priorities</p>	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	<p>Should funding be secured to move forward then there will be a need for land acquisition, Traffic Regulation Orders, planning and other approvals and</p>	<p>Compliance with statutory processes, ACC procurement regulations, grant conditions (if required) and Scheme of</p>	L	Yes

	the detail of this will be developed as part of the design process. Further procurement exercises to deliver this project and its wider benefits shall also be required.	Governance with regular progress and spend reporting to external funders and the Transportation Programme Board.		
<b>Operational</b>	There will be costs associated with maintaining the infrastructure associated with the active travel proposals, should these reach the implementation stage.	Future development work shall identify implications for the revenue budget as schemes are developed further and refined. To minimise the requirement for revenue response maintenance in the future it is crucial to strive for the highest standards of quality in infrastructure, which shall be a key consideration of the next stages of project delivery.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	Removal or reduction in potential external funding streams for further development work and implementation.	Continual engagement with external funding bodies and appropriate monitoring of any funding applications.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	Failure to deliver active travel improvements to help meet the Council's (and partners) strategic transport objectives undermines the Council's commitments to improving the transport network, achieving the PLACE	Continue to work with Nestrans and other project partners to deliver the strategic objectives of this project and its wider benefits, therefore mitigating against the risk of the council failing to deliver on its strategic	L	<b>Yes</b>

	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.	sustainability priorities.		
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	<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 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>	Continue to work with Nestrans and other project partners to deliver the strategic objectives of this project and its wider benefits, therefore mitigating against the risk of the council failing to deliver on its strategic sustainability priorities.	L	<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</a></u>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing our cycle and active transport network, and work with Aberdeen Cycle Forum to deliver our shared vision of making</li> </ul>

	<p>Aberdeen a cyclist friendly city and provide covered secure cycle storage in suitable locations across Aberdeen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving cycle and active transport infrastructure, including by seeking to integrate safe, physically segregated cycle lanes in new road building projects and taking steps to ensure any proposal for resurfacing or other long-term investments consider options to improve cycle and active transport infrastructure.</li> </ul>
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[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#)

<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p> <p><i>1. No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.</i></p> <p><i>2. 400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026.</i></p> <p><i>3. 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026.</i></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP 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.</p> <p>A reliable transport network supports economic growth and movement both locally and otherwise and affords the public the opportunity to choose a sustainable mode of travel to and from their workplaces.</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p> <p><i>11. Healthy life expectancy is five years longer by 2026</i></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 11. Active travel is known to improve a number of health conditions, potentially increasing life expectancy. Increased use of active travel produces less local emissions helping to combat the environmental risk to public health caused by poor air quality.</p>
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p> <p><i>13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the</i></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 13 and 14. Private vehicles are a significant contributor to carbon emissions so increasing sustainable travel opportunities will be necessary to help encourage greater levels of walking and cycling and achieving this sector's required emissions reduction.</p>

<p><i>impacts of our changing climate.</i></p> <p><i>14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</i></p>	
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local, Regional and National Transport Strategies, all of which aim to deliver fewer miles travelled by private car and a cleaner transport system which results in fewer emissions;</li> <li>• The Net Zero Vision for Aberdeen, the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, the Air Quality Action Plan, and the potential Low Emission Zone (LEZ) by looking to improve opportunities for travel by low/zero emission forms of transport.</li> </ul>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<p><b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>Full impact assessment not required at this stage The study is being undertaken in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance which appraises impacts across a range of categories (Economy, Environment, Accessibility and Social Inclusion, Safety, and Integration). Further detailed assessments will be undertaken through the development and design process, as appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b></p>	<p>Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Aberdeen Cross City Connections – STAG Part 2 Appraisal \(PLA/19/016\)](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Review of STAG Part 2 Appraisal Report

11.2 Appendix 2 - Draft Outline Business Case

11.3 Appendix 3 - Concept Designs

11.4 Appendix 4 - Draft Programme Delivery Plan

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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