

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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| COMMITTEE | Net Zero, Environment and Transport |
| DATE | 31 October 2023 |
| EXEMPT | No |
| CONFIDENTIAL | No |
| REPORT TITLE | Aberdeen City Council Travel Plan (2023) |
| REPORT NUMBER | COM/23/326 |
| DIRECTOR | Gale Beattie |
| CHIEF OFFICER | David Dunne |
| REPORT AUTHOR | Anthony Burns |
| TERMS OF REFERENCE | 8 |

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval for the adoption of a revised and refreshed Travel Plan for Aberdeen City Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the work undertaken to date to prepare the Aberdeen City Council Travel Plan (2023);
- 2.2 Approve the adoption of the Aberdeen City Council Travel Plan (2023) as detailed in Appendix A; and
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to monitor the impact of the Plan and to report progress on a biennial basis to the relevant Committee.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Council Travel Plan is a document setting out the Council's aspirations for encouraging all employees and Elected Members to travel sustainably to, from, and during work no matter which ACC site, school or office location they are based at. By helping to facilitate and encourage sustainable transport options amongst staff, the document helps engineer a shift away from reliance on driving alone in a private car to alternatives such as walking, cycling, public transport and shared vehicles. This will help to foster positive outcomes for staff health and air quality in the city whilst helping the Council to be seen to lead by example. Given that a travel plan is often a requirement for new developments, it is important that the Council is able to demonstrate that its own plans are competent and that it is actively planning to reduce the impact of staff travel. A Council Travel Plan can also be a useful tool in attracting funding to implement sustainable transport initiatives.

- 3.2 Since the last Travel Plan for Aberdeen City Council was produced and published, there have been many changes to the Aberdeen transport network and the way people move around. Major changes to the physical transport network include increased city cycle infrastructure, the growing popularity of ebikes, more pedestrian space across the city, enhanced rail capacity and additional stations across the North East while, for road, the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route fully opened in 2019. For vehicles, the growth of plug-in and hydrogen powered vehicles and refuelling infrastructure has also brought change while the launch of a car club in the city has changed the way in which people access cars. In terms of people's behaviour, greater availability of information, awareness of climate and air quality issues, the impacts of COVID-19 and the resulting long-term changes to the way people work and travel, coupled with changes at Council level to the workforce size, locations of workplaces and working patterns, have all resulted in a very different transport context. Therefore, to ensure that the Council is able to adapt to this, and provide the best information to its employees, a new, more up to date document is required. The larger list of changes can be found in the Council Travel Plan (2023) (Appendix A to this report).
- 3.3 In terms of key policy, strategy and plan drivers, the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and six enabling strategies, including mobility, were approved in February 2022 while, at Council Level, the Council Climate Change Plan (2021-2025) contains commitments to reduce the Council's impact on the environment. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) also contains outcomes around improving the physical health and wellbeing of people in the city, while National commitments around a 20% reduction in car kilometres travelled, reaching Net Zero by 2045 and phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 all require a travel plan which can help achieve this. The next Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy is also currently being developed with a draft due to go out for public and stakeholder consultation this year. The full list of key drivers can be found in the Council Travel Plan (2023) (Appendix A to this report).
- 3.4 Refreshing the Council's Travel Plan will help to set the context for changes to the Council's Staff Travel Policy, planned for later in the 2023/4 financial year. The main differences between the Council Travel Plan and the Staff Travel Policy are:
- The Staff Travel Policy deals with staff travelling around for work and what forms of transport should be authorised for carrying out Council business. The Council Travel Plan is mainly concerned with how staff travel to and from work and how they can be encouraged to do this more sustainably by promoting and facilitating access to the available travel options. However, it will also look to influence and compliment the Staff Travel Policy by ensuring staff are encouraged to travel sustainably whilst working too.
 - The Staff Travel Policy will outline how authorisers of staff travel should book and pay for their travel during work. The Council Travel Plan will look at how to incentivise all staff to travel more sustainably.
 - The Staff Travel Policy looks at what is the most appropriate form of travel for staff to be using in different journey circumstances including

whether the journey actually needs to be made at all. The Council Travel Plan will look at how to encourage staff to pick the most sustainable option and will also deal with the behaviour change/ awareness raising aspects of travel and how the Council can promote sustainable alternatives for travel to staff, rather than just the policy itself.

- The Council Travel Plan will look at how the Council can minimise the impact of travel from staff, foremost for the benefit of the transport system and the environment but will also stress the money-saving and health benefits of active and sustainable travel.

3.5 The Council Travel Plan (2023) contains a vision, aims and series of actions as well as a monitoring plan. These have been informed by a comprehensive review of the previous Plan, a full appraisal of the plans, policies, strategies and schemes which make up the wider transport context and several rounds of consultation. Consultation was firstly undertaken amongst identified stakeholders and then two rounds of engagement amongst all staff. It was also reported to the Council's Strategy Board on 5th June 2023. The proposed Plan is included as Appendix A to this report. The Plan will be graphically enhanced should Members agree with the recommendations attached to this report. The final Plan would then be promoted to staff. It would be made available on the Council's Intranet and signposted to within new staff induction processes. Should Members approve recommendation 2.3 then the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning will monitor the Council Travel Plan on a biennial basis and report progress back to the relevant Committee.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Funding may be required to help deliver some of the actions within the report. However, where this cannot be accommodated within existing internal budgets, opportunities for external funding will be sought first to reduce the financial burden upon the Council.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 By helping to make staff more aware of sustainable travel and make it a more attractive option to them, an updated Council Travel Plan has the potential to bring positive environmental impacts as people are encouraged to be less car dependent with the associated benefits this will have for the city's environment. This supports the Aberdeen Net Zero Vision, the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, the Council's own Climate Change Plan and the new Low Emission Zone among others and will help the Council to meet its own Net Zero targets.

7. RISK

| 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 | Should the Plan not be approved and delivered, the Council's ability to support the Aberdeen Net Zero Vision, the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap, Local and Regional Transport Strategies, the Council's own Climate Change Plan, Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the new Low Emission Zone would be reduced | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |
| Compliance | Should the Plan not be approved and delivered, this could negatively impact upon perceptions of the Council's desire to implement priorities contained in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Local and Regional Transport Strategies and to meet its Net Zero targets | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |
| Operational | Should the Plan not be approved, it is less likely that projects which would have resulted from the Plan seeking to reduce car use and increase public transport and active travel use among staff will go ahead | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |

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| Financial | Should the Plan not be approved, it could weaken the case for external funding applications for the Council as it would be less able to evidence that it takes sustainable transport seriously and that it has steps in place to promote it. | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |
| Reputational | The Council will not be seen as leading by example and may be accused of expecting other organisations to have travel plans whilst not maintaining one itself if the Plan is not approved and delivered | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |
| Environment / Climate | Should the Plan not be approved, the Council will forgo a means to encourage staff to travel by sustainable and active travel, risking continued reliance on the private car and the negative environmental and climate consequences of this. | Approve the refreshed Council Travel Plan | L | Yes |

8. OUTCOMES

| <u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u> | |
|--|--|
| Impact of Report | |
| <u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016 - 26</u> | |
| Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes | The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP 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 – in that projects resulting from the Plan should seek to reduce car use and increase public transport and active travel use among staff. |

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| | The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 14 – Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 – again due to the encouragement of active and sustainable travel over private car use for staff. |
| Regional and City Strategies | <p>The proposals within this report support both the Regional (RTS) and Local Transport Strategy (LTS) in that they should lead to the delivery of projects that encourage sustainable travel and a reduction in harmful and climate changing emissions.</p> <p>The proposals in this report support the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and six enabling strategies, particularly the Net Zero Mobility Strategy and Aberdeen Adapts.</p> |

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

| Assessment | Outcome |
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| Integrated Impact Assessment | Full impact assessment not required. Stage 1 Assessment completed. |
| Data Protection Impact Assessment | Not required |
| Other | None. |

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A - Proposed Council Travel Plan (2023)

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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