

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
<b>DATE</b>	27 March 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	A92 Murcar North – Active Travel Scheme Development
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/24/069
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Ken Neil
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	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) Appraisal Report undertaken for the A92 Murcar North Active Travel scheme. A discussion on the findings from the reports is provided, along with recommendations on the next steps for the option identified.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the findings and outcomes of the A92 Murcar North Active Travel Infrastructure STAG-Based Appraisal (Appendix 1);
- 2.2 Agree that the Active Travel option on the East side as identified in the STAG report (Appendix 1) for A92 Murcar North is the preferred Active Travel option for the route;
- 2.3 Subject to the approval of 2.2, instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to progress the preferred option for the A92 Active Travel scheme to the completion of an Outline Business Case (OBC) and report this to the Finance and Resources Committee in May 2024.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

#### **Background**

- 3.1 Transport Scotland and Aberdeen City Council have a Service Level Agreement to deliver a number of environmental mitigation projects to offset the environmental impact of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR), which opened fully to traffic in February 2019. Delivery of an active travel route between the Murcar Roundabout and Blackdog is one of the projects covered by the agreement, with an overall objective to improve conditions for people

walking, wheeling and cycling in the area. A plan showing the location of the area can be found on Page 5 of Appendix 1.

3.2 Initial design work for the active travel route was consulted upon in August 2019, with the Council's then City Growth and Resources Committee approving detailed design proposals in December 2019 (Report Reference PLA/19/359).

3.3 In 2020 work on the project had to be paused to allow resources to be focused on the Covid-19 public health emergency. Work on the project resumed in 2023 however, due to changes in the policy position and wider context since 2019, a review of the approved scheme has been required. Recent changes in context include:

- Publication of updated Cycling by Design guidance by Transport Scotland,
- Progression of the Ellon Park & Ride to Garthdee Transport Corridor Study through the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund programme; and,
- New developments at Blackdog and Cloverhill, including progression of 536 new homes as part of the Council's new build housing programme .

### **STAG Appraisal Review**

3.4 In light of the new developments mentioned above, a STAG Appraisal was carried out by consultants AECOM on behalf of the City Council. This appraisal reviewed 3 potential route options for the Active Travel infrastructure, as described in Table 1 below.

*Table 1 – A92 Murcar North: Route Options*

<b>Option</b>	<b>Route Description</b>	<b>Summary</b>
West	Active travel infrastructure on the West side of the A92.	From Murcar roundabout, the route follows the western side adjacent to the A92 and then alongside Tarbothill Farm Cottages. Options then exist to cross to the east side to provide connection into Blackdog or continue north to Blackdog junction.
Central	Active travel infrastructure in the centre of the A92.	Routes along the A92 carriageway via redistribution of carriageway space. Dependant on the alignment, this could tie into Blackdog via a new path link to Hareburn Road or at Blackdog Junction.
East	Active travel infrastructure along the East side of the A92.	From Murcar Roundabout, the route follows the eastern side adjacent to the A92 and around the rear of existing properties to tie into Hareburn Road.

3.5 Public and stakeholder engagement on the 3 options was carried out between 18<sup>th</sup> of October and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023. via an online survey on Citizen Space

and a face-to-face exhibition carried out at Kings Church in Bridge of Don. The survey received 133 responses, with an overwhelmingly positive response to the proposals and 92% of respondents supporting the principle of an active travel link between Murcar and Blackdog. The East option was identified as the preferred option, with 86% agreeing that this was the option that should be taken forward. Additionally, 86% of respondents noted that the implementation of the East option would make them more likely to travel by active travel means between Murcar and Blackdog.

- 3.6 The East option has also been identified as the preferred option through the appraisal process. Full details of the option scoring exercise are available in the A92 Murcar North Active Travel Infrastructure STAG-Based Appraisal (Appendix 1, pages 37-48).

### **Concept Design Development**

- 3.7 Utilising the inputs and outcomes from the STAG Appraisal, preliminary concept designs were developed for the preferred option (East). The appropriate type of provision for walkers, wheelers and cycle users was informed by relevant current design guidance and budget considerations.
- 3.8 The preliminary concept design drawings generally illustrate the horizontal alignment and location of the proposed active travel route and are provided in Appendix 1 (pages 62-67(Appendix B)).

### **Outline Business Case Development**

- 3.9 Should Committee agree Recommendation 2.2 then the next step would be completion of an Outline Business Case for the preferred (East) option. The Outline Business Case will gather the outputs of the STAG process and appraisal review, and details the case for the investment by outlining the benefits, costs and key risks associated with the preferred option. The completed Outline Business Case would be reported to the May 2024 meeting of the Council's Finance and Resources Committee.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 To date this project has been funded through a budget allocation from the AWPR Service User agreement between the AWPR/B-T Managing Agent and the Transportation Team.
- 4.2 Initial cost estimates are outlined on pages 85 to 88 (Appendix D) of Appendix 1, and summarised in the East Option Developed Design – Outline Cost Estimate. There is sufficient remaining budget from the AWPR Non-Motorised Users fund to proceed with further development work and detailed design should the Outline Business Case be approved by the Council's Finance and Resources Committee.
- 4.3 There is, however, currently insufficient budget for the project to proceed with the implementation (construction) of the scheme and therefore, should further

approval be given by the Finance and Resources Committee to proceed to delivery, progress will be dependent on the sourcing of additional funding.

- 4.4 It should also be recognised that, should the project proceed towards delivery, there will be future costs associated with maintaining any new or upgraded infrastructure. Initial cost estimates have not yet been compiled for any future costs. Any future development work will identify implications for the Council's 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 in the next stages of project progression and delivery.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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 Environmental considerations are part of the STAG criteria which has influenced the recommendations of this report in terms of the preferred option to be taken forward. There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Any subsequent design stages shall include an Environmental Impact Assessment to inform any environmental implications of the project.

## 7. RISK

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

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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Delivery of active travel measures supports a number of the Council's strategic priorities, particularly in terms of a sustainable economy, a	Continue to work with 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	Yes

	<p>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>			
<b>Compliance</b>	<p>Should approval 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.</p>	<p>Compliance with statutory processes, procurement regulations, grant conditions (if required) and Scheme of Governance with regular progress and spend reporting to external funders and the Transportation Programme Board.</p>	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	<p>There will be costs associated with maintaining the infrastructure associated with the active travel proposals,</p>	<p>Future development work shall identify implications for the Revenue budget as schemes are developed further and refined. To minimise</p>	L	<b>Yes</b>

	should these reach the implementation stage.	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.		
<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 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.	Continue to work with 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>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	The Council's Net Zero vision and strategic	Continue to work with project partners to deliver the strategic	L	<b>Yes</b>

	<p>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, the Council 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>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>		
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</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 Aberdeen a cyclist friendly city and provide covered secure cycle storage in suitable locations across Aberdeen.</li> </ul>
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</a></u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcomes 1 to 3 as a good transport</p>

<p>1. <i>No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.</i></p> <p>2. <i>400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026.</i></p> <p>3. <i>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>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>11. <i>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>13. <i>Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate.</i></p> <p>14. <i>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</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><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</li> </ul>

	Action Plan, and the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) by looking to improve opportunities for travel by low/zero emission forms of transport.
<b>AWPR NMU – Service Level Agreement</b>	<p>The proposals within this report support the following aims and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aim of the service level agreement which is to provide safe access to pedestrians and cyclists around the proposed route corridor and address issues of Non Motorised Users fragmentation.</li> <li>• To upgrade/provide new paths to allow safe, improved access between local communities and recreational areas.</li> <li>• To enable opportunities for a range of different users to undertake commuter, recreational and utility trips.</li> </ul>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	A new Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Neither a brief DPIA or full DPIA is required at this stage
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Ref: PLA/19/359 (City Growth and Resources Committee, December 2019)

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – A92 Murcar North Active Travel Infrastructure STAG-Based Appraisal

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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