

## 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>	Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	COM/24/094
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Anthony Burns
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	8.

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to review and refresh the Council's Staff Travel Policy alongside the Council Travel Plan.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Chief Officer – Finance, to set up an internal officer working group to review and refresh the Council's Staff Travel Policy;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to update the Council's Travel Plan to align with any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy resulting from 2.1;
- 2.3 Instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Organisational Development to thereafter undertake consultation with Council staff and trade unions on any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy and/or the Council Travel Plan; and
- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Organisational Development, following analysis of the consultation and finalisation of the documents, to report both the updated Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan back to this Committee and / or other relevant committees by Summer 2025 for approval.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Both the existing Aberdeen City Council Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan were written before 2019. Since then there have been numerous changes to the Aberdeen transport network and significant changes in 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, and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route fully opening in 2019. For vehicles, the growth of plug-in and hydrogen powered vehicles and refuelling infrastructure has also brought change, and the launch and subsequent growth of the car club has also changed the way in which people access cars.

- 3.2 In addition, the impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency have resulted in long-term changes to the way people work and travel. These have manifested in changes to working patterns, including more remote, flexible and hybrid working. There has also been greater awareness of the issues associated with physical inactivity and mental health and the health benefits of active travel.
- 3.3 There have also been changes in the policy context since the Staff Travel Policy and Travel Plan were last refreshed, including the adoption of Net Zero Aberdeen, the Council's Climate Change Plan and, nationally, commitments around a 20% reduction in car kilometres travelled and phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030.
- 3.4 In response, the Council is at a point where both its organisational Travel Plan and its Staff Travel Policy should be refreshed to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- 3.5 Both documents will cover the full council operations, so will be applicable to all staff and elected members. In terms of key differences between the two:

<b>Staff Travel Policy</b>	<b>Council Travel Plan</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Staff Travel Policy deals with staff travelling around for work and gives detail on which forms of transport should be authorised for carrying out Council business.</li> <li>• The Staff Travel Policy will outline how authorisers of staff travel should book and pay for their travel during work.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The Council Travel Plan will look at how to incentivise all staff to travel more sustainably to and from work.</li> <li>• The Council Travel Plan will look at how to encourage staff to pick the most sustainable option, including whether a journey needs to be made at all, and will also deal with the behaviour change/ awareness raising</li> </ul>

	<p>aspects of travel and how the Council can promote sustainable alternatives for travel to staff, rather than just the policy itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
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- 3.6 Whist noting the above differences, there is also significant interrelation between the two documents. The Council's Travel Plan sets the strategic context for the Council's approach to staff travel and the Staff Travel Policy will sit under this. As the Staff Travel Policy is pitched at delivery level for the day to day business of the Council, it contains a lot of the detail that will directly impact on the Council's operations, finances and staff. Therefore, to make sure this is fully considered, the refreshed Staff Travel Policy will require input from different teams across the Council to shape it.
- 3.7 Traditionally, the Staff Travel Policy has been written by Finance colleagues in the Council and ensuring best value for money for the Council has been the key driver. However, while this continues to be important, especially given the huge cost pressures on the public sector during recent years, the need to ensure that the Council is able to meet commitments around Net Zero, health and to lead by example in promoting and enabling alternatives to private, single occupancy car use, is also important.
- 3.8 In terms of next steps, should Members approve the recommendations then the first step would be to establish a cross-Council officer working group to refresh the Staff Travel Policy. This group will include, as a minimum, officers from the Strategic Place Planning, Internal Comms, People and Organisational Development, Equalities, Accounts, Finance, Facilities, Staff Travel Section, Fleet and Procurement teams. Appropriate dialogue will also take place with Trade Unions where necessary. The existing Staff Travel Policy document will be comprehensively reviewed to collectively assess what is still relevant, what needs to change and what are the gaps. Consideration will also be given to what changes may be required to the Council's Travel Plan at the same time.
- 3.9 Once revised documents have been prepared then these would be consulted upon with staff. It is likely that this process will take around 12 months due to the complex nature of the Staff Travel Policy, its reach and the consultation required.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The cost of refreshing the Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan can be met from existing budgets.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Subsequent changes to the Council Travel Plan and Staff Travel Policy could however help enable staff to make more sustainable travel choices. This supports the Aberdeen Net Zero Vision, the Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap and Mobility Strategy, the Council's own Climate Change Plan associated 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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Should the recommendations of this report 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 recommendations	L	Yes

<b>Compliance</b>	Should the recommendations of this report 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 recommendations	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	Should the recommendations 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 amongst staff.	Approve the recommendations	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	The Council will not be seen as leading by example and may be accused of expecting other organisations to have travel plans and policies whilst not maintaining one itself if the recommendations are not approved and delivered upon	Approve the recommendations	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Should the recommendations not be approved, the Council will forgo means to encourage staff to travel by sustainable and	Approve the recommendations	L	<b>Yes</b>

	active travel, risking continued reliance on the private car and the negative environmental and climate consequences of this.			
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u></b>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<b><u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016 - 26</u></b>	
<b>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</b>	<p>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 Policy and Plan should seek to reduce car use and increase public transport and active travel use among staff.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<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 which produce documents 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

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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