

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) Strategic Business Case (SBC) for endorsement and makes recommendations on the preferred way forward, including future engagement and the proposed scope of the Outline Business Case (OBC).
- 1.2 This report also provides an update on the associated workstream being progressed by the North East Bus Alliance to develop a Bus Services Improvement Partnership Plan (BSIP) and the recent bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Infrastructure Fund.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Endorse the Aberdeen Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case as provided in Appendix A.
- 2.2 Endorse the progression of Aberdeen Rapid Transit to a Programme Level Outline Business Case, funded through the City Region Deal, which will further develop the overarching business case and phasing under which individual elements of the scheme can develop.
- 2.3 Endorse the progression of options 5 and 5A (as set out in Table 2 below) for further development and appraisal through the proposed Outline Business Case.
- 2.4 Endorse the progression of 'approach 3' in relation to active travel, as outlined in Table 3 of this report, for further development and appraisal through the proposed Outline Business Case.

- 2.5 Endorse the continued consideration of both Bus Services Improvement Partnership agreements and bus franchising as options for delivery of ART through the proposed Outline Business Case.
- 2.6 Note that a BSIP agreement provides a delivery mechanism that could support a phased approach to delivery in the shorter term (when compared to bus franchising) and that this would enable partners to capitalise on external funding opportunities and bring in private sector investment.
- 2.7 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with the partners of the North East Bus Alliance on a joint network review as a first and critical step in understanding to what extent Aberdeen Rapid Transit can be delivered through a Bus Services Improvement Partnership agreement, and use the outcome of this exercise to inform the proposed Outline Business Case.
- 2.8 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to continue to undertake engagement, as appropriate, with the public and stakeholders on the development of Aberdeen Rapid Transit to inform the proposed Outline Business Case.
- 2.9 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report back to Finance and Resources Committee on the conclusion of the proposed Programme Level Outline Business Case by the end of 2026/27 financial year.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The [Vision for Aberdeen Rapid Transit](#) (ART) was first identified in the 2021 approved Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) as an ambition to develop a high quality, high frequency mass transit network across the city on key strategic growth corridors and linking key destinations. ART has the potential to support long-term sustainable growth and support local priorities through delivery of fast, frequent, reliable public transport services. It seeks to provide high-capacity and high quality vehicles, that offer journey times competitive to car and a service that is fully integrated into the wider transport network. It would provide transport choice and an attractive, accessible and safe way to travel.
- 3.2 In market research undertaken in December 2022, 81% of respondents across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire stated they thought ART would be 'good' (59%) or 'maybe good' (22%) for Aberdeen, with ART being a good news story for the city region, providing improvements in access to the hospital and airport, and reducing carbon emissions being key reasons for this view.
- 3.3 Since its inclusion as a flagship project of the RTS, ART also now has national recognition in Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and as a 'National Development' in the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Since the suspension of Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund, the [Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee](#) agreed in February 2024 to continue to fund the development of the Business Case for ART until the end of the Deal period in March 2026/27.

- 3.4 At its meeting on 9th May 2023, this Committee considered the ART Detailed Options Appraisal (which was funded through the Bus Partnership Fund) and agreed to endorse the decisions of the Nestrans Board which included:
- a) Agreement to work with partners of the North East Bus Alliance to continue to develop a Bus Services Improvement Partnership (BSIP) agreement that could support the delivery of ART and explore with bus operators what could be achieved through this mechanism.
 - b) In parallel, to further explore the costs and risks associated with both a BSIP and a franchise approach in order to fully understand the likely financial implications (both in terms of set up and ongoing revenue costs).
 - c) Further consideration to establish the desired routeing and interchange points for the ART corridors and services.
 - d) Further investigation and quantification of the wider economic and social benefits that ART may bring to the region.
 - e) More detailed financial analysis of operating costs and revenues to firm up on the level of commercial viability and risk associated with both a BSIP and franchising approach.
- 3.5 Following completion of the Detailed Options Appraisal and, at the time, still under the governance of the Bus Partnership Fund, it was advised by Transport Scotland that further work on the development of ART should be undertaken through development of a Strategic Business Case (SBC).
- 3.6 In order to inform the SBC, and in line with point c) above, this Committee agreed in June 2024:
- a) that the multi-modal corridor studies be concluded at the end of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Detailed Options Appraisal and that the bus priority infrastructure options that align with the agreed ART routes, be incorporated within the overall ART Business Case development process, rather than continue as standalone projects.
 - b) that those actions identified in the Multi-Modal Corridor Studies that do not align with the proposed ART network be progressed through separate workstreams as appropriate.
 - c) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to report back to this Committee on the ART Strategic Business Case by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, including further exploration of the costs and risks associated with both a Bus Services Improvement Partnership (BSIP) and Franchise approach, and prior to moving to Outline Business Case.
 - d) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to engage with bus operators, through the North East Bus Alliance, on the options for delivery of ART along these desired routes through a partnership approach.
 - e) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to undertake further engagement, as appropriate, with the public and stakeholders on the development of ART to inform the Strategic Business Case, encompassing

and superseding previously agreed actions for engagement on the individual corridors, and therefore enabling future engagement to be better aligned and set within the context of the wider ART vision and programme.

- 3.7 A preferred network of two cross city ART routes was agreed by Aberdeen City Council's Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee and Nestrans Board in June 2024.



Figure 1 Aberdeen Rapid Transit – Preferred Network

- 3.8 In relation to active travel provision, at its meeting on [3rd September 2024](#), the NZET Committee:
- a) Agreed that the Kingswells to City Centre via A944 was the most appropriate route for active travel provision from the west and agreed that the route should only extend to ARI at this point;
 - b) Noted that the Aberdeen Rapid Transit report, which used the A944 as its preferred route, was due to be reported back by the end of the financial year 24/25; and
 - c) Instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to incorporate the options for active travel provision into the Aberdeen Rapid Transit report to be reported back at the earliest opportunity.

Aberdeen Rapid Transit - Strategic Business Case (SBC) Overview (please see Appendix A for full details)

- 3.9 The report in Appendix A sets out the SBC for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) which starts from the position that the broad concept of ART has been established through previous workstreams as reported above, and the purpose

of the SBC is to develop this concept into a *preferred way forward* for the purposes of the subsequent Outline Business Case (OBC).

- 3.10 The SBC draws on and develops the previous works undertaken through the STAG Detailed Options Appraisal of the following Multi-Modal Corridor Studies (MMCS): Ellon to Garthdee, Inverurie to Aberdeen, Westhill to Aberdeen and Laurencekirk to Aberdeen, to provide a single narrative for ART, setting out:
- (i) the Case for Investment and the associated objectives of the project;
 - (ii) an appraisal of the different forms that a bus rapid transit (BRT) scheme such as ART could take;
 - (iii) the preferred way forward for the proposals into the OBC; and
 - (iv) an initial view of how the project can be delivered and managed, and the financial and risk landscape in which the project would sit.

The Case for Investment

- 3.11 One of the main components of the strategic business case is the *Case for Investment* which outlines the current situation presenting a clear rationale for transport intervention, offering a logical objectively supported and evidence-based process for determining how the ART vision, ambitions and intended outcomes could be achieved.
- 3.12 The Case for Investment draws on and updates the STAG-based Aberdeen Rapid Transit Case for Change (CfC) reported in March 2022, wherein a range of transport problems and opportunities were identified and subsequently the rationale for the development of a rapid transit scheme in line with regional and national transport policy.
- 3.13 The MMCSs stated in 3.10 above provided detailed consideration of the strategic corridors into Aberdeen and explored the transport problems and opportunities along each corridor. A range of engagement activities were undertaken across the MMCS to inform the identification of problems and opportunities including stakeholder and public engagement activities.
- 3.14 With stakeholders this included face-to-face meetings, telephone interviews and workshops as well as the issuing of briefing notes. For the public this included focus groups, online engagement and social listening. The outcomes of these activities have also been drawn on to evidence the transport problems as set out within the SBC.
- 3.15 The outcomes of the various engagement activities, their analysis and commentary with regards to the strategic corridors, enabled development of a concise list of 10 transport problems identified through the SBC process. These are:
- PR1: Poor public perceptions of the bus network and services as a low quality travel option.
 - PR2: Insufficient bus service frequencies.

- PR3: Limited cross-city bus connections leading to longer journey times making travel by bus unattractive and acting as a barrier to use for those with mobility issues.
 - PR4: Travel times by bus are not competitive with those by car and therefore those with access to a car are much more likely to travel by car.
 - PR5: Bus services are not meeting punctuality metrics and punctuality / journey time reliability and service cancellations are a key concern of the public.
 - PR6: The current Park & Ride 'offer' is almost wholly ineffective.
 - PR7: The quality of on-street and other supporting bus infrastructure is generally poor.
 - PR8: Bus fares are perceived to be high and offering poor value for money.
 - PR9: Conventional buses offer limited floorspace flexibility and capacity.
 - PR10: The level of integration between buses and other forms of travel is limited and inconsistent, including journey information and ticketing.
- 3.16 Successful city regions rely on high quality public transport provision which can support the delivery of wider social, environmental, planning, social inclusion, carbon, energy and economic aims. In the north east, buses form the backbone of our public transport system, with around 24 million passengers in 2023 compared to only around 820,000 rail passengers, travelling within Aberdeen / Aberdeenshire¹.
- 3.17 However bus use (passengers) and bus services (bus km) across the wider region have been in decline for the last 20 years and are falling at a time when the direction of national, regional and local policy requires sustained growth. Only 12% of commuting trips in Aberdeen and 3% in Aberdeenshire are by bus². The trend of increasing car use and declining public transport is reducing the ability of the city region to develop as a low carbon economy and place and limiting the realisation of the aims of the City Centre & Beach Masterplan, Local Development Plans and the wider Regional Economic Strategy.
- 3.18 The root causes of this long-term decline in bus use are linked to the problems listed above and are identified through the findings of the SBC.
- 3.19 A step change in provision of public transport in and around Aberdeen has the potential to address these problems and reverse the decline in bus patronage, supporting many wider national, regional and local aims and objectives and to help those across the wider region to access employment, education, health and leisure destinations across the city.
- 3.20 The corridors identified in the ART vision broadly reflect the location of population, jobs, retail and leisure facilities in and around Aberdeen and align well with the highest volume movements into and out of the city and key regional

¹ Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2024, Table 7.6c.

² Source: Aberdeen Rapid Transit Strategic Business Case.

trip attractors. Many of the main land allocations in and around Aberdeen are spatially within the strategic corridors identified for ART with the opportunity for enhanced public transport provision to improve the viability and improve the sustainable access of these development sites.

- 3.21 For those travelling into Aberdeen from Aberdeenshire, significantly improving public transport provision on these strategic corridors will enhance connectivity to key destinations including the city centre, Foresterhill Health Campus, and Aberdeen University as well as connecting to communities in Aberdeenshire through integration with the wider bus network and park and ride facilities.
- 3.22 Delivering the bus priority to support ART will also bring benefits for the wider regional bus network with improved journey time reliability on many of the longer distance bus routes into Aberdeen City from Aberdeenshire. These services are often held up when they enter the more congested network of the city and improving priority for these services also, will have particular benefits, not just for those travelling into Aberdeen but also for the many businesses located in Aberdeenshire along these corridors, which would be better connected to potential employees and customers as a result.
- 3.23 The corridors identified also cover many of Aberdeen's most deprived communities, e.g. Woodside, Middlefield, Tillydrone, Seaton and Mastrick, with opportunities to improve connectivity for people living in these areas.
- 3.24 Aligning with Transport Scotland's second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) and reflecting the need for a step change in public transport in Aberdeen two objectives have been set for ART to: address the problems identified above; encourage public transport patronage and uptake; support national climate change targets and the ambitions in the Net Zero Aberdeen Route map; and realising social and economic benefits for the city and region.
 - **Transport Planning Objective 1:** Improve sustainable transport connectivity into and across Aberdeen, to support sustainable economic growth, widen opportunities, and improve inclusive equality of opportunity.
 - **Transport Planning Objective 2:** Increase public transport mode share in Aberdeen to support placemaking and the North East's Net Zero ambition.
- 3.25 In order for ART to achieve these objectives, the SBC has identified a series of design principles, based on a review of best practice and identified key success factors from bus rapid transit schemes elsewhere. They have been developed to ensure consistency across the ART network.

Design Principle	Overarching Guidance
<p>Bus Priority: Maximise bus priority along links and at junctions (with reallocation of road space from general traffic to public transport to facilitate this)</p>	<p>Dedicated bus lanes should be in place across the network where possible, with all bus lanes implemented through the reallocation of road space from general traffic lanes with no 'new tarmac'.</p> <p>Hours of operation would ideally be 24 hours or could be reduced to cover a shorter period where kerbside waiting and loading provisions are required however they should be operational over a sufficiently long period to provide the feeling of permanence and be less likely to be abused.</p> <p>An effective traffic management enforcement regime should be in place across the network and used to deter non-compliance and support reliability in public transport operations. This should include both parking or moving violations related to the mis-use of bus lanes or bus gates. This should be undertaken by the Council's parking enforcement with on-site patrols or at locations that require continuous monitoring, via CCTV cameras.</p> <p>Where possible, bus lanes should extend to junction stop lines. However, the inclusion / regulation of bus lanes should not be implemented at the detriment to the urban realm or pedestrian or cyclist safety i.e. through narrowing footways etc. and should take cognisance of business servicing needs.</p> <p>ART vehicles should receive priority at signals - using a signalling 'hurry call' and green extensions to reduce / remove the need for buses to stop at signals. The level of priority given at signals should be adaptive to ensure a strict adherence to timetable or service headway i.e. late buses would be given a priority call but those running to timetable would not.</p>
<p>Bus Stop Accessibility: Make bus stops fully accessible and provide safe and attractive waiting areas at bus stops</p>	<p>Distinctive ART 'platforms' (or significantly enhanced bus stops) to be provided - to ensure all stops are fully accessibility compliant. Stops would offer an improved and secure waiting environment with appropriate seating and shelters and CCTV surveillance.</p> <p>Level platforms would reduce boarding and alighting times and therefore bus journey times. In addition, all stops would provide secure cycle parking as well as real time and route planning information.</p> <p>The distance between halts for ART services may be greater than for conventional services to improve journey times – recognising that users would likely be prepared to walk further to access faster, more reliable and frequent running services. Stop spacing and location would be required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure no section of the community would be disproportionately impacted. More detailed discussion on distinctive ART platforms is presented in Error! Reference source not found. of the SBC.</p>
<p>Bus Stop Connectivity: Provide good connections to / from bus stops</p>	<p>Walking, wheeling and cycling trips at the start and end of bus journeys should be viewed as part of the overall journey. Ensuring safe, well lit, level, smoothly surfaced and well maintained connections to stops that have effective surface water drainage and include trees and seating to provide shelter and resting places across the ART network is important to enhance the overall bus user experience. Convenient and safe crossing facilities should be provided (controlled or uncontrolled) as appropriate to ensure paired bus stops are connected and also support safe and protected access to stops.</p> <p>Bus stops should be located along the corridor to reduce walking distances and thereby maximising catchment areas.</p> <p>New developments along the ART corridors should be designed with high quality walking, wheeling and cycle routes to the closest ART bus stops.</p>
<p>Terminus Points: Easily accessed route terminus points (P&R and mobility hubs)</p>	<p>It is essential that ART network terminus points are easily accessible such that they minimise the time required to serve the sites. This should ensure both the bus and general traffic access points are conveniently located off the main corridor but also that these movements have separate and dedicated routes to the bus interchange for ART services and car parking</p>

	<p>for car drivers. This will reduce the interchange time penalty, making the ART services more attractive to use.</p> <p>The development of new mobility hubs would follow recognised guidance, such as Mobility Hubs Guidance³ and ensure that the hubs are recognisable places with an offer not just connected ART services but other transport modes supplemented with enhanced facilities and information features to both attract and benefit the traveller.</p> <p>P&R and mobility hubs should be well sign-posted from the wider road network and sites should more visible from the road network to encourage use, with potential variable messaging signs to support their use (e.g. as used in Cambridgeshire⁴). The sites should offer safe and secure parking (bike and car) at all times and the interchange building provide a safe and comfortable waiting environment with good levels of visibility from the waiting area. The building should include a help-point, toilets and separate driver welfare facilities while the site should provide electric vehicle charging points for private cars and ART services (if required), cycle parking and lockers, and with suitable walking, cycling and wheeling links connecting to the site.</p>
ART Routeing: ART services operating across the network would be direct and would not divert off the corridors	<p>Services operating across the ART network, especially for those joining the services at Park & Ride sites / Mobility hubs, are likely to be far more attractive if they provide a direct service across the network. Service design needs to therefore incorporate integration of other services enabling the required connectivity and interchange to the ART network.</p>
Cycle Routes: Incorporate cycle route infrastructure where an alternative parallel route is not provided	<p>As noted above, walking, wheeling and cycling trips at the start and end of bus journeys should be viewed as part of the overall journey experience, with consideration of these modes incorporated into the ART network where possible. The ART corridors should incorporate a higher level of service for cycling as defined in Cycle by Design⁵ where possible. Where this not possible, an attractive alternative parallel route should be provided. Ensuring consistent, direct, and continuous active travel provision is essential and simply providing cycle provision across the ART network where space allows will not facilitate this. A corridor length approach to provision, with a further holistic view of the city wide active travel network is required to ensure connectivity by cycle across the city.</p>
Road Safety and Public Health: Adopt Vision Zero ⁶ (safety) and Healthy Streets ⁷ principles	<p>Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. Healthy Streets is a human-centre framework for embedding public health in transport, public realm and planning.</p> <p>Adopting the Vision Zero and Healthy Streets principles when developing the ART network design should be at the heart of the design process. This applies not only to active travel infrastructure design but to the whole network design to ensure an attractive and safe environment for all road users.</p>
Highways Maintenance: Take cognisance of highway maintenance costs when considering new infrastructure	<p>An overarching design feature of ART is to enable a high level of segregation for ART services. A key feature of this is providing services with priority at junctions, as this is often where most time is lost. Enabling such priority through signal control is more easily achieved through providing a bus lane up to the junction stop line. However, this requires a reconfiguration of junction layouts and new and increased levels of traffic signal infrastructure. The increased junction size and the complexity of the traffic signal control will need an increase to the Council's highway maintenance budget to ensure these junctions operate safely and reliably at all times. For example, there are locations on the ART network where</p>

³ [Document > Mobility hubs guidance](#)

⁴ [Cambridge to upgrade VMS system | Traffic Technology Today](#)

⁵ [Cycling by Design | Transport Scotland](#)

⁶ [What is Vision Zero? | Vision Zero Network](#)

⁷ [Healthy Streets | Making streets healthy places for everyone](#)

	<p>existing (uncontrolled) roundabouts require conversion to signalised junctions which would increase highways maintenance cost.</p> <p>Furthermore, the designs for ART incorporate cycle routes providing a high level of service for cycling, as defined in Cycling by Design, along or parallel to the ART corridors. Incorporating both bus priority and cycling route infrastructure at junctions further increases the complexity of the traffic signal infrastructure and highway maintenance liabilities.</p> <p>While there are options to reduce highway maintenance liabilities across the ART network associated with bus infrastructure this is less achievable for the infrastructure required to deliver the cycle routes. Using the more conventional approach of setting bus lanes back from junctions, while not providing buses full access to the stop line, does avoid the need for significant road widening and additional traffic signal infrastructure to accommodate and hold left turning traffic next to the bus lane. Cycling by Design does not allow a similar reduction to the level of services for the cycle route because of the road safety implications related to segregated cycle route provision ending and cyclists having to mix with high speed / high flow traffic on the road or pedestrians in shared-use areas.</p> <p>Given the current and likely future constraints on Council highway maintenance budgets the liability impacts associated with the proposed ART infrastructure will be balanced against level of service to ensure the network is affordable to maintain in the future.</p>
Urban Realm: Facilitate a high-quality public realm in urban areas	<p>Of particular importance is the need to balance the level of bus priority with the impact on the urban realm and placemaking, with the principle that ART infrastructure implemented to maximise bus priority should not be at the expense of a safe and attractive urban realm. This recognises that the quality of the urban realm is part of the public transport user environment, and active travel connections to bus stops, and the waiting environment are all part of ART and important in encouraging use of the network. When considering the design of infrastructure across the network, it is therefore important not to consider the 'in vehicle' user experience alone.</p>

Table 1 – Key Design Principles for ART (Table 3:1 in SBC)

- 3.26 In terms of service delivery, the SBC considers five broad options which deliver all, or elements of the ART Vision alongside six core distinguishing elements of the options which influence connectivity. These are set out in Table 3.5 of the SBC.

	Bus priority infrastructure	Increased frequency	New direct Connections	Reduced stop dwell time	Fewer stops	Changes to underlying bus network
Business as Usual						
Option 1 (Do Min): Existing commercial services using enhanced infrastructure	✓					
Option 2: Enhanced existing commercial services using enhanced infrastructure	✓	✓				
Option 3: Enhanced existing commercial services and revised / integrated existing services using enhanced infrastructure	✓	✓				✓
Option 3A: As per Option 3 but with vehicle branding and new ART 'halts' with approximately 800m spacing	✓	✓			✓	✓

	Bus priority infrastructure	Increased frequency	New direct Connections	Reduced stop dwell time	Fewer stops	Changes to underlying bus network
Option 4: New ART services and vehicles in addition to existing services, sharing enhanced infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Option 5: New ART services and vehicles with revised / integrated existing services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Option 5A: as per Option 5 but with existing vehicles branded and used to operate the new cross-city ART services	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Table 2 Options Appraised through the Strategic Business Case (Table 3.5 in the SBC)

3.27 Option 5 is identified in the SBC as the option that most aligns with the ART Vision and is recommended as the preferred way forward with benefits anticipated at this stage including:

- A 12% increase in public transport trips compared to the future year business as usual (translating to approximately 8,900 people changing mode);
- Improved public transport accessibility to key regional health facilities at Foresterhill, Cornhill and Frederick Street with a predicted increase of 14% in the number of people across the region with access to ARI within 60 minutes by public transport (up to 28,000 additional people). With nearly 225,000 total outpatient attendances at ARI during 2023/24⁸ it is a key regional health facility, yet public transport travel times increase sharply only a short distance beyond Aberdeen (for example from Westhill, travel by bus to the health campus can be up to 60 minutes longer than by car).
- Public transport journey time savings of around 32 minutes on a journey between the Airport and a proposed new mobility hub at Portlethen, through the introduction of a direct cross-city service, bus priority and a more limited stopping pattern.
- Journey time and reliability benefits for non-ART buses also operating along ART corridors through provision of bus priority.
- A reduction of over 50,000 daily vehicle kilometres compared to the reference case across the region.
- Improved access to services, employment and education for the people living in the most deprived areas. Just over 65% of Aberdeen's 29 data zones that fall within the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland are within 500m (planar distance) of the proposed ART route. Improved access to services, employment and education can reduce inequalities of outcome in these areas – (a recent study by KPMG on behalf of the Confederation of Passenger Transport evidenced that a 10% improvement in local bus service connectivity is associated with a 3.6% reduction in deprivation⁹).

⁸ [Public Health Scotland](#)

⁹ [The economic impact of local bus services, KPMG, September 2024](#)

- Enabling wider development and investment along these corridors - significant development is proposed to the north of Aberdeen at Cloverhill and Blackdog, to the north-west around Craibstone and the Airport, at Maidencraig, Prime Four business park and Westhill to the West and Loirston, Portlethen and Chapelton to the south. In addition, local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods: planning guidance and NPF4 are emphasising the use of brownfield sites for the next 2028 LDPs, and many of these types of sites are on or near the proposed ART corridors.

3.28 For this preferred way forward, the SBC goes on to explore the potential commercial viability of the proposed services across the ART network, the potential delivery pathways, the procurement and contract management of what would be a significant capital investment infrastructure project, and the ongoing management and maintenance of new scheme infrastructure.

3.29 It is recommended that options 5 and 5A be progressed for further development and consideration in the Outline Business Case.

Delivery models

3.30 Bus services in Aberdeen and on the mainline routes in Aberdeenshire are currently delivered almost entirely on a commercial basis with a minimal role for the public sector in the planning and operation of services.

3.31 There are two main mechanisms considered through the SBC for the delivery of ART which would provide an increased degree of certainty over the network and service provision for any investment made in bus infrastructure.

- **Bus Services Improvement Partnership (BSIP) Agreement** – a legal agreement between the Council(s) and local bus operators that sets out the responsibilities and commitments of all parties involved – drawing on experience from delivery of Enhanced Partnerships and BSIPs in England, the BSIP is conventionally used for the delivery of options that are unlikely to cause significant changes to revenue on existing services or significantly impact on existing operators' commercial businesses. As ART does imply both of these things, there is uncertainty as to the extent to which the BSIP model could deliver the full vision for ART as well as the changes required to the wider bus network. It is however a mechanism that is readily available for delivery in the short term with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Councils currently developing a BSIP 'Plan' (a requirement of the previous Bus Partnership Fund award) which will provide an over-arching framework for an ART specific 'Scheme'. A BSIP agreement provides a lower level of risk for the councils in terms of on-going revenue risk and would comprise investment from both the public and private sector to deliver. In progressing ART through a BSIP approach, the Councils would however need to consider the extent to which investing under this framework would deliver the intended outcomes under the ART vision with enough certainty. The BSIP concept is consistent with the various transport partnership approaches promoted by the Scottish Government with the SBC identifying that it is unlikely to face resistance or legal challenge from bus operators. Key decisions relating to their commercial businesses remain largely in the

control of the operators. Appendix K of the SBC provides examples from the West Midlands (Birmingham Sprint), Bristol (Bristol Metrobus) and Portsmouth as examples of successful partnership working to deliver ambitious bus improvements.

- **Through a Bus Franchising Framework** - under which the local authority would have the power to determine and control all bus services in and around Aberdeen. This fundamental change in the planning and delivery of bus services would be a complex, time-consuming and likely costly process which will require to consider the bus network as a whole across the city and potentially the wider region (timescales for delivery of up to 7 years with establishment costs in the range of £4m-£20m). No franchising scheme has been implemented to date in Scotland, although schemes are in place and being developed in England. The management, expertise and administrative effort required by the Council(s) to comply with the provisions of the 2019 Act, the potential operator opposition, and the likely need for the Council(s) to take on the financial (revenue) risk of all services operating within the franchise area (and potentially beyond if there are knock on implications for the commercial viability of services outwith a franchised area) mean that franchising, while feasible, is still a major and largely unproven undertaking within the Scottish context. The franchising model introduces new costs and financial risks for a local authority, including those incurred in set-up and ongoing management. The case for franchising would need to be made separately to the ART Business Case and on the benefits that it could bring to the bus network as a whole. It does however provide a delivery mechanism that provides certainty and control for the Council(s) over all aspects of delivery, albeit with potentially significant revenue cost implications and liabilities. Appendix K of the SBC provides further background on franchising schemes being implemented in Liverpool and West Yorkshire.

- 3.32 The North East Bus Alliance (which is an independently chaired partnership of Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, First Bus and Stagecoach) are supportive of the BSIP approach and have submitted a letter outlining the partners commitment to work together to further explore what can be achieved through a BSIP delivery mechanism. This letter is provided at Appendix B to this report.

Infrastructure costs and phasing

- 3.33 During the STAG Appraisal work, an estimate of construction cost was made for ART as defined at that time. This estimated the cost at approximately £215m in 2021 prices. The SBC has reviewed and updated this construction cost estimate with updated costs derived from the designs for bus and active travel provision generated through the four MMCS which looked for transformational options for the four radial corridors on which ART is proposed.
- 3.34 This work has identified a range of costs, depending on the specification of the scheme, varying from £167m to deliver bus priority infrastructure alone, to £323m to deliver bus priority and fully segregated cycle provision along the full length of the ART network. The higher end of this range reflecting the need for

road widening and significant junction alterations to be able to accommodate both bus priority and segregated cycle provision along the full length of the ART routes.

- 3.35 There are a number of factors that have also influenced this revised cost range including:
- More detail emerging from the option development undertaken through the multi-modal corridor studies and addition of options for those parts of the ART network that were not covered by one of the corridor studies;
 - Construction cost inflation of around 25% between previous cost estimates in 2021 and revised costs in 2024; and
 - Inclusion of cost estimates for construction of mobility hubs.
- 3.36 In moving to OBC it will be important to further define how improvements to active travel provision can be integrated into the design of ART in a way that contributes to delivery of the ambitions of the Regional Active Travel Network. In order to do this, the SBC has considered three different approaches and recommends that approach 3 is taken forward to OBC to provide a scheme that integrates active travel into the designs, maximises opportunities for gaining external funding through a variety of channels, whilst also providing a scheme which is value for money and meets the objectives of ART.
- 3.37 It is expected therefore that the cost for approach 3 would lie within the cost range identified above with designs further developed along these principles through the OBC. Further design work would determine where bus priority and cycle provision should be implemented together because it is best value, or designs are developed far enough to future proof for improvements to active travel at a later stage.

Approach	Consequences
Approach 1- Continue with current corridor designs: expand the OBC to include quantified cycling benefits, reflecting the aims of the MMCS, aim to provide segregated cycle along much of the ART routes in addition to bus priority; to include the costs and benefits of ART and the full ambition for active travel proposals	Delivery will likely require road widening in places, significant junction modifications and compromises in terms of the pedestrian environment, in order to accommodate the infrastructure for both active travel and ART. In some places bus journeytimes / reliability may be compromised in order to deliver segregated cycle provision. Scheme costs will be higher and even with active travel benefits taken into consideration, a low Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) is likely
Approach 2 - Separate ART and Cycling OBCs: Continue with current corridor designs – but split out and set aside the cost increment associated with the cycling provision as currently configured; continue with ART OBC on the basis of the costs associated with the bus priority only; will require a more detailed analysis of a 'hypothetical cost' of a bus priority only scenario	ART attributable scheme costs significantly reduced leading to improved BCR for ART; would require separate business case and funding for the integral active travel proposals; this may be impractical as both elements would require to be constructed at the same time; overall scheme costs will be high
Approach 3 - Progress corridor designs to maximise benefits for active travel while prioritising ART: Further develop corridor designs in line with the updated ART TPOs and the transport supply side measures that have been identified as required to meet these objectives. Under this approach, public transport movements would be prioritised over other modes, segregated cycle provision would be accommodated where current roads space allows but cyclists may have to	Increased certainty for ART as bus journey times and reliability prioritised on ART corridors. Active travel provision continues to be integrated into ART designs and incorporated into the business case but a lower level of intervention and therefore cost, leading to improved BCR and deliverability for the project as a whole.

Approach	Consequences
mix with motor traffic where space is constrained. This approach is in line with the Regional Active Travel Network (RATN) principles for Primary Mixed Traffic Streets and Secondary Streets. Alternative provision for cyclists on parallel corridors and integration of ART corridors into the wider active travel network, will be considered through the development of the RATN.	

Table 3 Approaches to OBC

- 3.38 Consultation with Transport Scotland was undertaken on the draft SBC and their recommendation in relation to the consideration of active travel is that “*a programme-level business case that considers ART alongside active travel measures is strongly recommended to reduce the risk of funding not being made available for an ‘ART-only’ project that does not have a sufficiently high strategic fit*”. Further consultation will be undertaken with Transport Scotland, relevant stakeholders and the public on how to best integrate active travel provision into ART as designs progress.
- 3.39 The proposed ART infrastructure (road space reallocation, junction and signalling changes, new Mobility Hubs, road widening, technology implementation to enable bus detection to provide priority at signals etc.) across the full network is a significant infrastructure project, and its implementation will need to be iterative and coordinated to realise scheme benefits as the whole network is established.
- 3.40 Recognising this, the infrastructure proposals across the network have been considered in terms of their benefits, risks and costs, and through discussion with local bus operators, the various elements of the proposed infrastructure (at a broad level) have been allocated into foundational, early implementation, and full implementation measures. These are discussed below. This is an initial consideration of the infrastructure and how its implementation could be phased. Note that the measures listed below could be implemented on a corridor by corridor (or ART line by line) basis, to minimise construction disruption and target priority locations first. These are summarised below and discussed further at section 6.4.38 (Project Phasing) of the SBC report- Appendix A.
- **Foundational measures (0-2 years):** are ‘quick win’ measures which provide benefit and set the scene across the network for the longer term ART intentions.
 - **Early implementation measures (2-5 years):** provide further works to enable bus priority across the full ART network with associated junction reconfigurations.
 - **Full implementation (5-10 years):** full scheme implementation - including new ART services operating from established Mobility Hubs, with branded, and (potentially depending on the option chosen) new vehicles operating out of new depots and serving new platforms with rationalised stops across the network.

Vehicles

- 3.41 The preferred way forward includes new tram-style vehicles with an approximate cost at this stage of £30.2 million (2024 prices) for 36 new 18m electric articulated vehicles (recognising that the most appropriate vehicle and fuelling type will require further consideration at OBC stage). The financing of new vehicles, and by whom, also needs further consideration as the ART scheme and the delivery mechanism become clearer. The appraisal shows clear benefits to the reliability and journey times of services through the use of multi-door vehicles and discussions with Translink in Belfast highlight the importance of the vehicle as a part of the brand and image of the service as separate to the wider bus network. Recognising however, the costs and risks associated with such new vehicles (including the requirement to upgrade depot facilities and revenue protection considerations), option 5A is also recommended to be progressed to OBC which would see ART operate with more conventional high quality, branded vehicles.

Commercial viability

- 3.42 A key issue for ART is (i) whether ART services could operate on a commercial basis or whether they would require subsidy, and (ii) whether the rest of the of the city's services and impacted Aberdeenshire services could operate on a commercial basis or whether they would require subsidy. The scale of any subsidy requirement will clearly be a key issue for the public sector and the potential delivery pathways for ART, and the commercial position with respect to ART and the supporting network will likely influence operators' willingness to engage through the two delivery models.
- 3.43 Under the preferred way forward, the SBC recognises that alterations would need to be made to the wider bus network but that a re-considered city-wide bus network, incorporating ART, could be introduced with a net-operating surplus i.e. without revenue support. This conclusion is based on analysis of the initial modelling, and detailed analysis of the revenue impacts will need to be undertaken at the OBC stage to provide confidence in the likely revenue impacts for services across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

Implications for wider workstreams

- 3.44 ART cannot be considered in isolation, in order to maximise its potential benefit, it needs to be integrated with and supported by the wider policies of the Local Transport Strategy in the following key areas:
- **Development of the active travel network** - to ensure that active travel provision on ART corridors is integrated with the development of the wider active travel network and where it is not possible to provide suitable segregated cycle provision on ART corridors, that this be considered on appropriate parallel routes through the implementation of the Regional Active Travel Network.
 - **Supporting traffic demand management measures** - Consultation with the Birmingham Sprint scheme and Bristol Metrobus network teams

as set out in **Error! Reference source not found.**of the SBC noted that supporting measures adopted alongside the schemes were significant in increasing bus patronage. A sensitivity test was included in the appraisal to test the potential impact of such measures with the analysis identifying enhancements to the benefits of ART in terms of mode shift and carbon reduction as a result. Whilst specific mitigation measures to address any adverse impacts on the road network as a result of ART will need to be designed into the scheme, wider supporting measures such as changes to parking policy or wider traffic demand management should be considered in the wider economic context of the city region and considered as part of the development of the Local Transport Strategy.

Progression to and scope of the Outline Business Case

- 3.45 On conclusion of the SBC, it is recommended that Options 5 and 5A, which represent the full ART vision, are further considered through the Outline Business Case.
- 3.46 Further work at OBC stage is required to determine greater detail around the phasing, the benefits that could be realised with each phase and the appropriate delivery mechanism for each phase. Given the extent of the design work required (over approximately 50km of carriageway, covering works at over 70 junctions, and with three new Mobility Hubs), place making, modelling, advisory work, communications, legal inputs and, potentially, site investigation works, developing the OBC could have a significant cost.
- 3.47 The SBC highlights that there may be benefits in adopting a programme-level approach to the development of the OBC, i.e., a Programme Level OBC. By doing this, ART would be treated as an overarching programme that would be the umbrella under which individual projects develop. At programme level, the OBC would seek to further develop the review of the network and determine the preferred delivery pathway for ART, including any potential phasing.
- 3.48 Treating the OBC stage as a programme would also present a benefit with regards to the costs of the next stage. This is because workstreams like site investigations and detailed designs would only be required once individual projects progress and not as part of a Programme Level OBC. Given the funding envelope currently available through the Aberdeen City Region Deal until the end of the 2026/27 financial year, it is recommended that this approach be adopted for the OBC.
- 3.49 Following this Committee, the SBC will also be reported to Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee and Nestrans Board in June 2025 for noting and endorsement. A report will then be submitted to the City Region Deal Joint Committee in September 2025 for approval of the SBC and recommendations on the scope of the proposed OBC, taking into consideration the decisions of the two Councils and Nestrans. The OBC will be reported back to the City Region Deal Joint Committee for noting before the end of financial year 2026/27, along with recommendations on the pathway for delivery beyond the end of the Deal period. It is expected therefore that a report on the OBC will also be reported back to Aberdeen City Council's Finance and Resources Committee within this timeframe.

Engagement & Communications

- 3.50 As identified in 3.6 (e) above, in June 2024, this Committee agreed to further engagement, as appropriate, with the public and stakeholders on the development of ART to inform the Strategic Business Case. StreetsUK have now been appointed to support this work and to develop and implement a more detailed and intensive communication and engagement plan to support the project going forward.
- 3.51 Engagement with key stakeholders is ongoing with a number of key stakeholders expressing their support for the project. An elected member event was also held on 26th May 2025 providing an opportunity for elected members across both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to hear more about the ART project and to hear from the Head of Strategic Network Design & Business Change at Translink, on the benefits that the Glider is bringing to Belfast. The presentations and responses to the questions raised in discussion will be shared with all elected members following the event.
- 3.52 As noted above, the SBC will be reported to the Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee in September 2025, and following this a period of more formal public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken. This will focus on ongoing awareness raising of the project and pro-actively seeking public and stakeholder views on the outcomes of the SBC including:
- a) the options being progressed to OBC, including the proposed network and preferred routeing;
 - b) the identified critical success factors;
 - c) potential impacts to the underlying bus network; and
 - d) priorities to inform phasing.

Bus Services Improvement Partnership (BSIP) and Bus Infrastructure Fund Update

- 3.53 As reported to this Committee in [March 2025](#), the North East Bus Alliance has commenced development of a region wide Bus Services Improvement Partnership Plan, in line with the requirements of the previous Bus Partnership Fund, which will set out the priorities of all partners, for improvements to the bus network across the region. In order to be adopted a BSIP Plan must be accompanied by a specific Scheme and the March 2025 report also discussed and agreed five potential initial schemes, which are felt to be deliverable within the short term and would enable the wider BSIP Plan to be adopted:
- Scheme A – Expanding the programme of investment in live vehicle tracking and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), enhancing provision of both at-stop and on-vehicle digital and audio information, ensuring consistency and accessibility of information across all bus operators.

- Scheme B – To coordinate the dates on which service timetables change.
- Scheme C – Vehicle standards on local bus services, such as engine emission standards, provision of CCTV, the fitting of automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology.
- Scheme D – A Customer Charter setting out what people can expect in terms of services and how to raise concerns if they feel partners have failed to meet their expectations.
- Scheme E – A joint operator/Local Transport Authority Network Review to identify opportunities for enhancing service provision for passengers and identify how ART could be delivered in partnership as part of a revised bus network.

3.54 The Bus Alliance continues to work to develop a draft Plan and Schemes based on the above and is seeking further guidance from Transport Scotland's Bus Regulation Team on a number of issues, prior to formal guidance being published.

3.55 Funding through Transport Scotland's Bus Infrastructure Fund for 2025/26 has been sought to support the implementation of Scheme A along with three other bids designed to enable ART and enhance accessibility of the bus network. The table below provides a summary of the bids that were submitted on Tuesday 22nd April, on behalf of the North East Bus Alliance.

	Bus Infrastructure Fund Bid	Cost
1	Urban Traffic Management Control system upgrade for bus priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>to enable bus priority through traffic signals</i> 	£500,000
2	St Machar Drive / King Street junction upgrade to signals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Funding for 2025/26 to review and update the designs to include priority for buses through the junction as well as active travel and safety improvements.</i> 	£500,000
3	Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upgraded RTPI displays for stops on Union Street;</i> • <i>Upgrade of Aberdeen Bus Station RTPI infrastructure including smart summary screens and e-paper timetables at all 12 stances</i> • <i>Bridge of Don P&R new RTPI totem and e-paper timetable and displays at stops on the main carriageway.</i> • <i>Aberdeen Airport RTPI e-paper displays</i> • <i>New RTPI displays at stops on the Buchan corridor and at some remote village locations across Aberdeenshire.</i> 	£780,000
4	Aberdeen Bus Station Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To trial NaviLens, a solution that leverages a user's personal device to provide transport information, journey planning and wayfinding assistance to any user (particularly visually impaired users) of</i> 	£260,000

	<i>Aberdeen Bus Station, and surrounding interchange points at Aberdeen Train Station and the key interchange bus stops on Guild Street.</i>	
Total Bid		£2,040,000

- 3.56 The outcome of this bid will be reported to this Committee once a decision from Transport Scotland is received.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Between 2021 and the end of March 2024, the Aberdeen Rapid Transit project, including the appraisal of routeing options was funded through Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). As reported to this Committee in March 2024, the BPF has been suspended however funding has been [secured through the City Region Deal](#) for financial years 2024/25 to 2026/27 to continue to progress the business case development for ART under the Strategic Transport Appraisal workstream. The report recommends progressing to a Programme Level OBC, recognising the funding envelope available through the ACRD allocation to 2026/27.
- 4.2 The SBC sets out the high level costs of delivering ART (section 5.2 of Appendix A) as well as potential future funding streams for delivery (section 5.7 of Appendix A). The costs and potential funding sources will be further refined and explored in the OBC.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The SBC states that the two main mechanisms provided by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, as amended by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, which could be used to deliver ART are BSIPs and bus franchising.
- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications for the Council arising from the recommendations of this report which recommends that these issues be explored further through the OBC. Detailed legal input about the potential mechanisms (i.e. BSIP and bus franchising) to deliver ART will be sought as the OBC is progressed.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Proposals for ART aim to encourage mode shift away from private car to public transport thus reducing harmful emissions and contributing to Net Zero carbon emissions.
- 6.2 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report. Delivery of ART may have environmental implications, and these will be captured in future assessments as designs develop and reported to Committee as the project moves forward through the business case stages.

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	Pausing or delaying the wider ART programme risks undermining the Council's ability to achieve a range of transport, health, environmental and economic objectives associated with delivery of a step change improvement in public transport provision.	Funding secured through the City Region Deal to enable progression of the Business Case and bus priority infrastructure options. Development of the Business Case considers costs and risks for delivery of the proposals.	Low	Yes
Compliance	Risk of non-compliance with external funding grant conditions.	Ensure officers are aware of conditions and deliver projects in accordance with these. Regular reporting to the City Region Deal Transport Working Group on progress.	Low	Yes
Operational	Risk of bus operator partners unwilling to work in partnership to deliver the ART vision.	Engagement with bus operators on aspirations and the outcomes of the work to date and continue to explore what can be delivered through partnership working. Letter of support from the Bus Alliance appended to this report.	Medium	Yes
Financial	Risk that delays to the programme impact on the Councils	Funding secured from the CRD until the end of the 2026/27 financial year.	Medium	Yes

	ability to maximise funding secured through the City Region Deal.			
Reputational	Work undertaken to date has introduced the vision for ART and raised expectations – if the Council does not continue with this work, it could be seen to be abandoning aspirations or principles or seen to have wasted public money on work that is not being taken forward to fruition.	Continue developing ART and the required bus priority measures along the recommended routes as well as a programme of communication and engagement to support the development of the project.	Low	Yes
Environment / Climate	Pausing or delaying the ART programme risks undermining the Council's ability to achieve air quality and net zero targets, given that a modal shift to public transport and active travel is a key means of reducing emissions.	Continue developing ART and the required bus priority measures along the recommended routes.	Low	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement: -</p> <p><i>Working with the Scottish Government and NESTRANS to improve the city's bus network, including considering options for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network, with the support of the Scottish Bus Fund, and consider options for council-run services in the city.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the following Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 02 – 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026 by improving connectivity and public transport access to employment destinations.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026 and • 13 – Addressing Climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting the impacts of our changing climate. <p><i>ART aims to encourage mode shift from private car to active travel and public transport increasing the number of people travelling actively and reducing emissions from transport.</i></p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of a Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 – Addressing Climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting the impacts of our changing climate. • 14 – Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking; 5% of people cycling and

	<p><i>wheeling as the main mode of travel and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.</i></p> <p><i>ART aims to encourage mode shift from private car to active travel and public transport increasing the number of people travelling by sustainable modes, and reducing car trips and car miles travelled.</i></p>
Regional and City Strategies	<p>The proposals in this report support delivery of the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy, particularly the following elements: Increasing the number of people travelling actively for health and the environment; Delivering Aberdeen Rapid Transit; Improving the region's bus network; and Reducing emissions from transport.</p> <p>They contribute towards achieving the outcomes of the current Local Transport Strategy, particularly: Increased modal share for public transport and active travel; Reduced the need to travel and reduced dependence on the private car; and Improved air quality and the environment.</p> <p>They also contribute towards achieving the following outcomes of the Net Zero Mobility Strategy: Increased number of people taking public transport; Increased number of people walking and wheeling; and Reduced emissions from transport.</p> <p>The proposals support the City Centre Masterplan by developing high quality, faster and reliable public transport options to improve access to the city centre, reducing emissions and improving air quality. The proposals contribute to the Regional Economic Strategy, in particular objectives to regenerate our city centre and towns to become vibrant and attractive places to live work and invest; to develop infrastructure for commuter, visitor and freight transportation – nationally and internationally; to improve deployment of low carbon transport in the city and urban areas, through active travel networks; and To improve access to / around Aberdeen International Airport.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to Aberdeen Rapid Transit has been reviewed and updated
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Links to previous reports and documentation on the ART project are provided here:

- [Nestrans Project Documents - Aberdeen Rapid Transit](#)
- [NZET Committee - Tuesday, 9th May, 2023 \[Item 13 - Aberdeen Rapid Transit Options Appraisal\]](#)
- [NZET Committee - Tuesday, 11th June, 2024 \[Item 11 – Aberdeen Rapid Transit-Recommended Network Routeing\]](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A - Aberdeen Rapid Transit - Strategic Business Case Report.

11.2 Appendix B – Letter from the Chair of the North East Bus Alliance

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