

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
<b>DATE</b>	10 June 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Local Transport Strategy - Marketing and Engagement
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CR&E/25/138
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Will Hekelaar
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	8

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement from Members that consultation already underway for Community Planning and Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) will enable a broader cross-section of opinion to inform the next draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS); and that the existing marketing and communication strategy for ART provides an opportunity to promote the vision and aims of the LTS more widely, given that ART will be a key element of the next LTS and the main messages and objectives are common to both projects.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Agree that the findings of the *Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future* Community Planning engagement will provide additional useful information on the transport needs and aspirations of Aberdeen's citizens, including groups under-represented in previous consultations on the Local Transport Strategy (LTS);
- 2.2 Agree that planned engagement on Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) provides an opportunity to seek views on transport more widely, for the benefit of the ART project which will depend on the policies of the wider LTS for its success;
- 2.3 Subject to recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 being agreed, instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to use the outcomes of these exercises to inform a revised draft LTS which reflects the views of a broader and more diverse cross-section of the public and stakeholders, and to report this back to Committee in 2026, aligned with the progress of the next Local Development Plan; and
- 2.4 Agree that the marketing and communications strategy for ART provides an opportunity to promote the vision and aims of the LTS more widely, given that ART will be a key element of the next LTS and the main messages and objectives are common to both projects.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In [August 2023](#), the Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee approved a draft Local Transport Strategy (LTS) for public and stakeholder consultation. Consultation took place between November 2023 and January 2024, with the outcomes reported back to Committee in [September 2024](#). The report noted that the response to the consultation was largely negative, albeit it was clear that many respondents used the opportunity to comment on individual transport initiatives prevalent in the public discourse at the time, such as bus gates and the Low Emission Zone, rather than considering the city's future transport needs more widely. It also noted that the demographics of those responding to the consultation were not representative of the diversity of the people of Aberdeen as a whole.
- 3.2 In response to the report, the Committee instructed the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to:
- *report back to committee via a service update the measures in place to increase the response from underrepresented groups and to align more closely to the demographic profile of the city; and*
  - *develop a marketing and engagement strategy...with the objective of increasing understanding of the impact transport has on climate change and how transport solutions could contribute to making Aberdeen a great place, to live, work, study and visit.*
- 3.3 To address these points, Members of the Committee were invited to a workshop on 15 April 2025 to discuss how to achieve a broader cross-section of input into the next draft LTS and how to build support for the vision and aspirations of the LTS.
- 3.4 In terms of the first point, it was noted that the then current (March – May 2025) Community Planning engagement exercise, *Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future*, included a specific topic on sustainable transport, with transport also filtering through additional topics (Place, Infrastructure, and Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation). It was also noted that, as well as an online questionnaire, events were being held in each locality area to enable direct dialogue with communities, while officers were also engaging directly with a number of groups representing the traditionally 'hard to reach' and those with protected characteristics. As such, and recognising the risks of consultation fatigue, it was agreed by workshop attendees that this offered a good opportunity to capture feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders who would not traditionally respond to a consultation specifically on the LTS, but whose views would be important to capture to inform the next draft LTS. Consultation outcomes are expected to be available to officers later in 2025, and will be used to inform a number of different Council plans and strategies, including preparation of the next Local Development Plan (LDP).
- 3.5 Members were also updated on work taking place on marketing and communication of, and engagement on, Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART). Streets UK has been appointed to lead on ART marketing and engagement through Hub North Scotland, with a public information campaign, events, a stakeholder

forum and business engagement proposed over the coming months. Rather than developing a separate communication strategy for the LTS, Members at the workshop agreed that the engagement and communication on ART planned is intrinsically linked to communication of the aims of the LTS, in terms of the wider outcomes that ART is trying to achieve and the rationale for the project, and agreed that communications activity should be co-ordinated to ensure that activity around ART can support the development of the LTS and vice versa. To compliment this activity, Officers will also align the ART engagement work with the funding agreed by the Finance and Resources Committee in [September 2024](#) for city centre transport and mobility focus groups from the Bus Lane Enforcement surplus.

- 3.6 It is therefore considered that this 'three-pronged' approach (combining existing LTS consultation outcomes with the Community Planning consultation and ART engagement outcomes) will provide a more detailed and diverse body of evidence to inform development of a revised draft LTS, without the need for additional consultation prior to development of a revised draft document. Furthermore, there are opportunities to align with already planned marketing and engagement on ART to broaden this out to consider the LTS more widely, including raising awareness of the negative impacts of transport, how transport solutions can help us achieve strategic objectives, and the promotion of key messages to dispel myths around transport and make the LTS and what it seeks to achieve more personal and meaningful to the travelling public.
- 3.7 In terms of timelines, it is expected that public and stakeholder views on the options being progressed to the ART Programme Level Outline Business Case (OBC) will begin in Autumn 2025, following the meeting of the City Region Deal Joint Committee on 12 September 2025. Work would then begin on the Programme Level OBC for ART, with the intention being to have a robust case developed by the end of 2026. It will be important to have a revised draft Local Transport Strategy in the public domain by this time to ensure that the case for future investment in ART is well demonstrated in relevant Council plans and strategies.
- 3.8 By progressing in this way, the opportunity also exists to better align the revised draft of the LTS with the development of the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP), and specifically the Cumulative Transport Appraisal that the next LDP will be informed by. Aligning the two documents will be beneficial to ensure a more strategic, joined up, approach to development opportunities and the role of the transport system to move people around, but also to allow the continuation of the conversation around 'place' following from the *Your Place, Your Plans, Your Future* conversations earlier this year.
- 3.9 In terms of next steps, Officers will report in Summer 2025 asking for Council's approval to submit the Evidence Report for the Local Development Plan to Scottish Ministers for the Gate Check process. The timelines for Gate Check are determined by the capacity of the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA). The DPEA have already intimated to Officers that, due to a number of other local authorities programmed to submit for Gate Check at the same time (due to the requirement for all local authorities across Scotland to complete a new Local Development Plan by 2028), it is

possible that the 3-month Gate Check target set by Ministers may be breached. Timelines for progressing the revised draft LTS may be impacted as a result, however aligning the revised draft LTS to the LDP programme remains Officers' preference in order to ensure a more strategic, joined up approach to place capacity building and delivery. Should any delays look to impact on the progress of the ART Programme Level Outline Business Case then this may need to be reviewed however.

- 3.10 Meantime, Officers will also keep under review the commitment made in the Scottish Government's Programme For Government 2025 to publish jointly with COSLA *"a renewed policy statement on reducing car use in Scotland, which will set a successor target for car use reduction aligned with the development of the draft Climate Change Plan"* (Programme for Government, page 26) alongside the commitment for the Government to work with COSLA and regional transport partnerships, such as Nestrans, to develop delivery plans for car use reduction, reflective of different communities and places.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 City Region Deal funding is currently in place to support development of the ART Business Case, including marketing, communication and engagement activities to support business case development.
- 4.2 While communication and engagement on the LTS is beyond the scope of the City Region Deal, Members of the Finance and Resources Committee have previously approved £20,000 from Bus Lane Enforcement surplus for a *"professionally facilitated bi-annual focus group to collect data on opinions and personal experiences on...the need for continued understanding of perceptions, insights, attitudes and experiences on City Centre Masterplan objectives, particularly around mobility and accessibility"*. As noted above, officers will align the ART engagement work with this funding previously agreed by Members to provide added value to the LTS.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

#### **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>	There are risks around developing a LTS that does not reflect the diversity of people and experience in Aberdeen, in that it may not ultimately meet the needs and aspirations of each group.	Use the outcomes of additional relevant ongoing and planned engagement exercises to inform the next draft LTS.	M	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Compliance</b>	LTS marketing and engagement is not within the agreed scope of City Region Deal funding.	Reallocate Bus Lane Enforcement funding to cover these tasks.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Operational</b>	No risks identified at this stage.			<b>Yes</b>
<b>Financial</b>	LTS marketing and engagement is not within the agreed scope of City Region Deal funding.	Reallocate Bus Lane Enforcement funding to cover these tasks.	L	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Reputational</b>	<p>A LTS that does not reflect the diversity of views and experiences in Aberdeen may not be well-received by members of the public and could open the Council up to accusations of favouring the needs of one group over another.</p> <p>The Council may be accused of cynically trying to 'sell' the LTS to members of the public, who may not believe the key</p>	<p>Use the outcomes of additional relevant ongoing and planned engagement exercises to inform the next draft LTS.</p> <p>Ensure any key messages are supported by data and that the actions recommended in the LTS can be linked back to an identified quantifiable problem that transport has a role in addressing.</p>	M	<b>No</b>

	messages being promoted.			
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No risks identified at this stage.			<b>Yes</b>

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b><u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u>	The proposals within this report support the commitments in the policy statement to deliver a revised Local Transport Strategy, and to consult with citizens, community councils and other partners on the work of the City Council.
<b><u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026</u></b>	
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026 – in that it looks to ensure the Local Transport Strategy is informed by a wide cross-section of members of the public, representative groups and businesses.

## 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>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Draft Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (2023-2030) - COM/23/235 ([Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, August 2023](#)) (Item 7)
- 10.2 Draft Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy Consultation - CR&E/24/258 ([Net Zero, Environment and Transport Committee, September 2024](#)) (Item 14)

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None.

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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