

Section 1: Setting the scene

What is a Travel Plan?

A travel plan provides a dynamic way in which an organisation can provide more efficient and environmentally friendly travel choices for its staff and visitors. Travel Plans are recognised as having an important part to play because they can produce real benefits for:

- Individuals: through improved health, reduced stress and potential cost savings.
- Teams: through improved work efficiency and conditions, environmental and social benefits as well as cost savings.
- Aberdeen City Council: through healthier and more motivated staff, reduced congestion, reduced corporate carbon emissions and improved access to sites for employees, Councillors, visitors and business traffic.
- Local Communities: by the Council demonstrating its commitment to the Government's environmental priorities, bringing health improvements and by setting an example to others. Locally, this also helps realise the LOIP stretch outcome - 14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and wheeling, 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 and a 5% reduction in car miles by 2026.
- Local Environment: through improved air quality – with less noise, dirt and fumes, as well as by reducing the impact of other national and global environmental problems. There is also the need to reduce carbon emissions due to their impact on climate change and Local Authorities in particular have a duty to do this.

As planning authority for the City, Aberdeen City Council encourages developments to put travel plans in place and, as part of the Aberdeen Planning Guidance to the Local Development Plan, requires developments over a certain size to implement a travel plan through planning conditions. Therefore, given the size of its workforce, the duty of the Council to act in the best interests of the residents of the city and the need to lead by example, it is essential that the Council has a travel plan in place.

How is the Council Travel Plan different from the Council's Staff Travel Policy?

In addition to the Council Travel Plan, Aberdeen City Council has a Staff Travel Policy in place. The Staff Travel Policy is due to be refreshed during 2025 and 2026. There are key differences between the Plan and the Staff Travel Policy:

- The Council Travel Plan sets the context while the Staff Travel Policy contains the policies and procedures needed to achieve the Council Travel Plan vision.
- The Staff Travel Policy deals with staff travelling around for work and what forms of transport should be authorised for carrying out Council business. The Council Travel Plan is mainly concerned with how staff travel to and from work and how they can be encouraged to do this more sustainably by promoting and facilitating access to the available travel options. However, it will also look to influence and complement the staff travel policy by ensuring staff are encouraged to travel sustainably whilst working too.
- The Staff Travel Policy will outline how authorisers of staff travel should book and pay for their travel during work. The Council Travel Plan will look at how to incentivise all staff to travel more sustainably.
- The Staff Travel Policy looks at what is the most appropriate form of travel for staff to be using in different journey circumstances including whether the journey actually needs to be made at all. The Council Travel Plan will look at how to encourage staff to pick the most sustainable option and will also deal with the behaviour change/ awareness raising aspects of travel and how the Council can promote sustainable alternatives for travel to staff, rather than just the policy itself.
- The Council Travel Plan will look at how the Council can minimise the impact of travel from staff, foremost for the benefit of the transport system and the environment but will also stress the money-saving and health benefits of active and sustainable travel.

The Council Travel Plan will therefore influence the Staff Travel Policy by demonstrating why a sustainable transport-based approach should be taken in the Staff Travel Policy and will provide a resource that staff can consult in order to be aware of the benefits of sustainable transport and be able to find out more information about what options are available to them.

Who is this document for?

This document is aimed at all Council employees and Elected Members. However, it will also provide useful information for visitors meeting with Council staff.

Who has been involved in its development?

Aberdeen City Council's Travel Plan has been developed by a core team comprising of representatives from teams across the Council including Trade Unions. All those who were part of the core team are detailed below:

- Transport Strategy and Programmes Team
- Procurement Team
- Climate and Environment Policy Service
- Facilities Team
- Information Technology Team
- People and Organisational Development Team
- Equalities Team
- Internal Communications Team
- Passenger Transport Unit
- Road Safety and Traffic Management Team
- Data and Insights Team

The Council Travel Plan covers the period to 2030. It is intended that it will be regularly reviewed within that period to take into account changing circumstances.

About the Council

- Around 8500 employees work for Aberdeen City Council
- The Main office locations where staff are concentrated are Marischal College, Town House, Altens East, East Tullos, Kittybrewster and Spring Garden. There are also a series of smaller offices, community facilities and depots across the city.

- There are 60 Schools – 48 primary, 11 secondary and one special needs, which employ around 4100 staff.
- There are several public buildings, including 11 public libraries, museums, the art gallery, and the Beach Ballroom, across the city where staff work also.
- In November 2024, a staff travel survey was completed by 671 staff. This identified that around 54% of staff lived 5 miles or less from their place of work and around 17% of staff worked from home as their main working location.
- A car parking space is not guaranteed for all members of staff at Aberdeen City Council. While at locations such as schools or suburban offices, there is likely to be a greater provision of car parking, opportunities are very limited in city centre premises such as Marischal College, Town House and the Art Gallery. However, these sites are most accessible by the greatest number of other options, ensuring that they still remain easy to access for most staff.
- Aberdeen City Council designates some staff as essential car users for their job, supplying them with car parking permits which allow them to park in Aberdeen City Council car parks. Staff who use their car for work purposes are also able to claim back the cost of doing so at a set cost per mile.
- The Council provides staff with access to cars to use for work purposes through its corporate membership of the Aberdeen Car Club while pool bikes, based at Marischal College, can also be used by staff for travel during work.
- The 2024 staff travel survey identified that around 19% of respondents did not have access to a private car.

Changes to the transport context

Since the last Council Travel Plan was adopted in 2001, there have been considerable changes to the transport context in Aberdeen. These include a far greater awareness of the environmental impact of transport and a commitment from the Council to tackle this, along with the importance of keeping people mobile, for both their physical and mental health.

The transport network itself has evolved with the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, improvements to the railway line between Inverurie and Aberdeen and new stations at Kintore and Laurencekirk, while better facilities

for walking and cycling have been installed across the city and continue to be added to. The City's main bus station has been overhauled, more bus priority measures have been put in place across the city and the use of lower emission vehicles has grown with both electric and hydrogen buses on the streets and electric vehicle charge points and hydrogen refuelling stations available for members of the public to use. The city also has a car club, giving people access to a car without having to own one. In terms of information, the launch of Getabout has provided an online resource for people in the North East of Scotland to find out more about how to access sustainable transport.

Furthermore, the way in which people work is changing with improvements in digital connectivity and computer technology meaning that people are now far more able to work from home successfully than they were previously and also more able to attend virtual meetings rather than travelling. The COVID-19 global pandemic, which occurred between 2020 and 2022, added to this, with people forced to work from home during the subsequent lockdowns and these changes continue to influence working patterns today. Digital technology has also enabled contactless and capped payment for buses and Smart Travel Apps.

The size of the Council workforce has also reduced and now stands at around 8500, while the relocation to Marischal College from St Nicholas House, the opening of the Altens East facility and the closure of key Council offices at Balgownie One, Exchequer House, Frederick Street, Crown House, Kirkgate House and Summerhill have all changed the way Council staff move around the city for employment.

Therefore, a new plan which reflects these changes is required.

Key policy, plan and strategy drivers

The following key policy, plan and strategy drivers also influence the need for a new travel plan.

Key external drivers

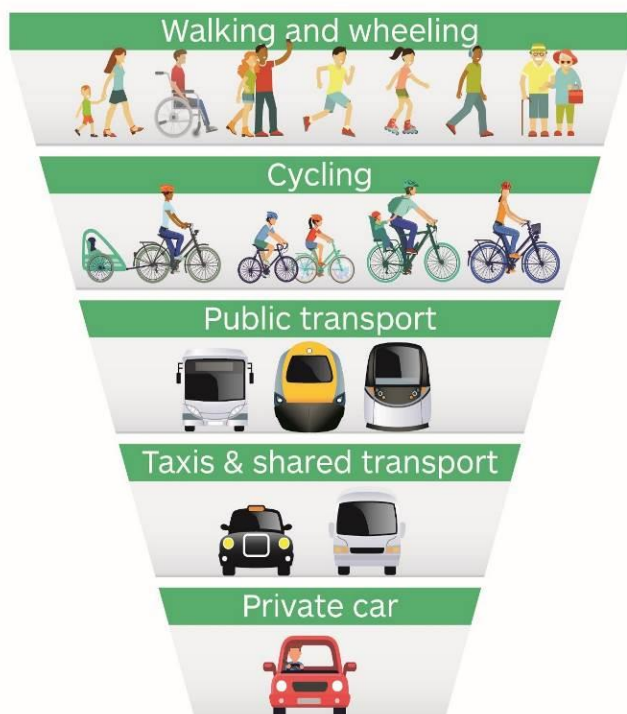
- Scottish Government (SG) Net Zero Emissions targets (Decarbonising of the transport sector, contributing to Net Zero by 2045, SG).

- Scottish Government target of reduction of car km (SG Climate Change Action plan).
- Target of 50:50 mode split between car and sustainable transport in North East of Scotland by 2040 with higher sustainable ratio in urban areas (NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)).
- Reduction in proportion of journeys by car drivers in Aberdeen to less than 50% by 2030 (Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap).
- Nature crisis - Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/ managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026 (Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)).
- Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate (Aberdeen LOIP).
- Target for North East Scotland of air cleaner than World Health Organisation standards by 2040 for transport emissions, (NESTRANS RTS).
- Improve the physical health and wellbeing of people in Aberdeen (Aberdeen LOIP).
- Need to make best use of the existing transport network in North East Scotland (NESTRANS RTS).
- Scottish Government target to phase out the need for petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030 (SG).
- Scottish Government aspiration to encourage "Local Living" (Scottish National Planning Framework- NPF4).
- 20% reduction in traffic needed in Aberdeen to facilitate city centre regeneration (Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan).
- 38% of people walking and wheeling, 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026 and 5% reduction in car miles by 2026 (Aberdeen LOIP).

Both the National and Regional Transport Strategies have been refreshed in 2020 and 2021 respectively. In particular, these both make strong reference to the importance of reducing the environmental impact of transport, the subsequent need to follow a hierarchical approach to transport planning with the most sustainable modes prioritised and the importance of making better use of the existing transport network ahead of creating new assets.

The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy is shown overleaf

Prioritising Sustainable Transport



The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (2016) contains the objective “To ensure that the transport impact of existing and new developments are minimised by requiring workplaces, schools and developers to prepare Travel Plans and, where appropriate, Travel Packs for all sites in the City”. This Travel Plan thereby supports the City’s Local Transport Strategy.

The Local Transport Strategy is currently being refreshed with a new strategy due for completion in 2026. It too will be influenced by the key external drivers, along with the new National and Regional Transport Strategies and travel planning will continue to feature as a key theme.

Below the Local Transport Strategy sit a range of daughter documents which elaborate further in some of the key transport areas. These include the Active Travel Action Plan and Electric Vehicle Framework, both of which contain more detailed actions around these areas. These can be found in the following location

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/roads-transport-and-parking/local-transport-strategy>

The Council Travel Plan will help to support these.

The Scottish Government’s *Public Sector Leadership in the Global Climate Emergency* Guidance (2021) states that Public Bodies should produce a Sustainable Travel Strategy that covers all aspects of travel across their organisation. It should outline steps to tackle behaviour change and promote the adoption of the National Transport Strategy’s Sustainable Travel Hierarchy.

Key Internal Drivers

The Council Climate Change Plan (2021-2025) sets a net zero carbon emission target for Aberdeen City Council’s own assets and operations by 2045 as well as interim targets of (at least) 48% reduction by 2025 and (at least) 75% reduction by 2030 against a 2015/16 baseline. Mobility is one of five key themed areas with 4 outcomes identified.

Outcomes for Mobility Theme
Zero emission fleet - Phase out the need for new fossil fuelled small vehicles by 2025 and for larger vehicles by 2029, switching to electric and hydrogen powered fleet vehicles
Low carbon fleet infrastructure - Plan, test and implement an expanded EV charging and hydrogen refuelling infrastructure for Council fleet.
Reduced emissions from staff travel - Increased staff uptake of active, sustainable and alternative travel choices, reducing the need for travel through use of technology
Resilient design and management – infrastructure – Ensure climate adaptation is considered at all stages of project development, management and maintenance of the transport infrastructure we maintain and manage

A travel plan will be a key component of realising this desire to reduce emissions from staff travel.

Following adoption of this Council Travel Plan, the Council will refresh its Staff Travel Policy. This outlines how officers and Elected Members should travel during work and how they can pay for and reclaim any expenses involved with this travel. The Council Travel Plan refresh can complement and even help to influence this. The differences between

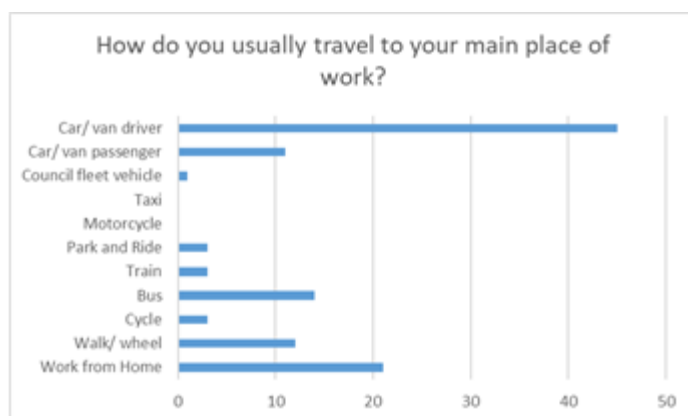
the Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan have been covered on page 1 above.

Employee Feedback

In order to understand staff movements, a survey has been undertaken every 2 years since 2008 (with the exception of 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions). A survey was made available to all members of staff and Councillors in November 2024 to ask about their travel patterns to and from work and determine travel needs during the working day. The results of this will form the baseline for this travel plan. Some highlights are presented below with the full results in Appendix 1.

How do staff travel?

- The following shows the percentages of people who responded to the Travel Survey by their choice of travel to work mode.



- Some 45% of staff normally drive to work – this has reduced from over 60% twenty years ago. For many the decision to drive to work relates to a car being essential to their job as well as convenience and public transport not being reliable, quick or frequent enough. For others, such as those within Social Work, a car may be needed for daily visits.
- Bus is the next most popular mode with 14% of staff using it as their main form of transport. However, this is a 6% drop since 2018.
- Walking is the third most common mode with 12% of staff reporting it as their main form of transport to work. This is a 6% drop since 2018.
- The above figures are likely at least partly explained by the huge rise in those working from home since the pandemic – 21% compared to less than 1% in 2018.
- Of those not yet travelling by sustainable modes, many said that better and cheaper public transport – especially buses – would make them change their mode of travel. Other measures which would make them consider changing included better infrastructure for cyclists and more electric vehicle charging points.
- A full analysis of Staff Travel Survey results can be viewed as an appendix to the Council Travel Plan (Appendix 1).



Section 2: The Plan

Having presented the context to inform this travel plan, and the need for it, the plan sets out to achieve the following:

Vision – A Council where staff are able to do their jobs successfully without being reliant on a private car to travel to, from and during work and are equipped with a mix of sustainable transport choices and supporting information to make this possible, benefitting them, the Council and the City.

Aims –

- Reduce the emissions from staff travel to, from and during work.
- Reduce the need for staff to travel to, from and during work.
- Increase the number of sustainable transport options and the attractiveness of them to staff.
- Increase the provision of information to make staff aware of the benefits of sustainable travel and the options available to them.

To achieve these aims, a series of topic areas have been identified, all of which have actions attached to them.

Topic 1: Reducing the need to travel / travel more flexibly

Is there a need to travel to a meeting at all? The global COVID-19 pandemic has shown that meetings can be conducted virtually via platforms such as Microsoft Teams, adopted by the Council in 2019, whilst still allowing participants to be seen and documents shared/discussed.

These can either be fully virtual, where all participants join the meeting online, or hybrid, where some meet in a room together and others are able to take part by joining virtually. The latter option can bring particular benefit in cutting down on longer distance trips for those who would have to otherwise travel.

The results of the 2024 staff travel survey showed that around 17% of staff now work from home at least some of the time, compared with less than 1% in 2018, while, in a survey undertaken across the North East of Scotland in January 2022, NESTRANS found that even after the COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted

around working from home, 84% of respondents expected that virtual meetings would replace some or all face-to-face meetings. This shows that many people still see benefit in working from home and virtual meetings even when they have the option to return to the office.

In terms of benefits, working from home;

- removes an often time consuming and stressful commute for many people, giving them more time to do other things and often enabling a better work life balance.
- removes the cost associated with commuting.
- allows many people to be more productive by removing the distractions of an office.
- still allows people to stay in touch and, with cameras, to see the people they are talking to.

It is accepted that, while working from home can benefit a lot of people, it isn't an option for everybody – some jobs require staff to be physically present in a workplace, while some staff do not enjoy it as it can lead to them feeling isolated from colleagues and proper physical interaction. It is important to ensure that the ability to have physical meetings is not removed entirely and that people are encouraged to be honest if they feel isolated.

For those who are already working from home or considering it, the Council has published a series of hints and tips on its intranet to help staff get the most out of it

<https://aberdeencitycouncil0365.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Isla%27s-top-tips-on-working-from-home.aspx>

For those who do need to travel to and from a workplace, do you need to do this during peak times? Many Council roles already provide the opportunity to work more flexible hours which may help in this regard.

Reducing the need to travel / travel more flexibly - Actions

Support the further use and promotion of Microsoft Teams to further increase the attractiveness and feasibility of home and virtual working for staff and visitors.

Where staff have to travel out with their main place of work, support virtual meetings becoming the encouraged default for Council staff unless good reason prevents it.

Ensure that the above is not undertaken at the

expense of the mental and physical health of staff and acknowledge that not all staff have the ability to work from home.
Where staff do have to travel for work, continue to support further ways of enabling staff to work more flexibly, allowing them to travel out with peak times.

Topic 2: Walking and wheeling

Active Travel is defined as “travel in which the sustained physical exertion of the traveller directly contributes to their motion” (Cook et al, 2022) or, as walking Charity Paths for All puts it, “making journeys in physically active ways”. Walking, wheeling and cycling are the main active travel modes, with running and scooting forming part of the package too.

“Wheeling” refers to people who wheel to get around by means of a wheelchair or a wheeled mobility aid.

The staff travel survey results from 2024 showed that around 12% of staff commute to and from work by walking and wheeling which, although similar to 2022, is lower than previous years in the survey. However, this could be partly explained by the, now higher, work from home figure which reassuringly has risen more than walking has dropped. The survey also reveals that around 22% of staff live within 2 miles of their place of work. This is a distance which could lend itself well to walking and wheeling.

Walking and wheeling have many benefits. Often, short trips will be accomplished as quickly, if not quicker, via these modes especially when the time taken to collect your car, sit in traffic and find a parking space are considered. The benefits to your personal health alone may encourage you. Indeed, experts recommend that adults be active for a total of 30 minutes a day, on five or more days of the week to benefit health. The good news is that this can be made up of shorter bouts of 10 to 15 minutes, making walking an ideal way to hit the target. Nationally, NHS Scotland figures from 2023 show that physical inactivity adds to nearly 3,200 deaths in Scotland each year and the cost to the economy of physical inactivity is around £94 million per year.

Walking and wheeling are also shown to be good at combatting stress. Therefore, even if

working from home, getting out for a walk before work, in the evening or at lunchtime can be beneficial for you.

They can be fun too. The official walking trails across the city, and those created for charity, have demonstrated that people enjoy getting out and discovering things on foot, both as individuals and in groups while the latter can be a great way in ensuring people do not feel socially isolated. See the link for trail details <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/search/content?keys=walking+trails>

It is appreciated that employees may feel more vulnerable walking/wheeling in certain areas or at certain times of the day/evening and that some employees may live too far away, carry heavy equipment or have personal circumstances which make it difficult to consider walking as their main mode to commute. Furthermore, some areas and buildings may also not be as accessible as others. In these circumstances, staff could explore if even part of the journey could be done on foot, as this could still be beneficial to them or whether they could, for example, walk into work but take another mode home. However, it is accepted that this mode is not going to work for everyone all of the time so it is important that staff have a whole range of choices to suit them, their changing daily circumstances and are aware of these.

More information about the benefits of walking, and how to get around Aberdeen on foot can be found on the Getabout website <https://www.getabout.org.uk/getabout-aberdeen-city-and-shire-by/getabout-by-foot/>

Both the NHS and Wanderlust Travel websites also offer top walking tips <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/running-and-aerobic-exercises/walking-for-health/>

<https://www.wanderlust.co.uk/content/top-tips-for-walking/>

You can map your best routes using www.walkit.com too.

Walking and wheeling - Actions
Promote and facilitate walking and wheeling challenges and competitions to incentivise staff to walk more.
Support the principle of walking and wheeling meetings for staff as an alternative to virtual meetings and those taking place in a room for

physical and mental benefit.
Support led walks and health walks taking place before and after work and during lunchtime.
Continue to promote walking and wheeling to staff as a means of staying active, saving money and reducing the environmental impact of travel.

Topic 3: Cycling

As with walking and wheeling, there are considerable health benefits associated with cycling. In addition, cycling reduces the risk of serious conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and the most common form of diabetes. Regular cyclists enjoy a fitness level equal to that of a person ten years younger.

The growing popularity of eBikes, which enable a battery assist to pedalling is shown by the fact that the global e-bike market is projected to grow in the coming years, with sales estimated to reach over 49 million units worldwide by 2029. (Statista). These provide a more attractive means of cycling to many people, especially when it comes to hills. More information can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/electric-bikes/>

In 2024, a staff survey showed that over 54% of staff travel less than five miles to get to work, which is a distance that lends itself well to cycling. However, whilst only 3% of staff actually cycled to work regularly, a larger percentage said they would like to while several respondents answered that they would consider cycling with improvements to infrastructure such as cycle lanes, more secure cycle parking and improved changing facilities being the main thing that would incentivise them. The Council continues to improve and add to the citywide cycling network on an annual basis and plans to continue to improve provision of facilities at Council workplaces too. Marischal College is already well served – boasting a pool of bicycles and undercover secure bike parking with showers, changing and maintenance facilities in the basement. The Council has improved this in recent years to create more cycle parking spaces, most of which are available for staff to use on a flexible and ad hoc basis with no booking required. Secure cycle lockers are also available to staff at Kittybrewster and showers, changing facilities

and secure cycle parking facilities are available at Altens East too. Many of the schools also offer cycle parking. Furthermore, the Council offers secure cycle lockers for hire at the city's park and ride sites as well as at Dyce railway station.

For staff who use their own bike for work purposes, the Council operates a cycle mileage allowance of 20p a mile for work-related travel on short distances across the city. The Council offers a cycle to work scheme, a government initiative introduced to encourage more people to commute to and from work by bike, enabling people to make healthier choices and reducing the UK's carbon footprint. The initiative allows employees to make tax and National Insurance savings on the cost of a new bike and safety accessories. These savings are achieved via salary sacrifice which is managed by the Council and lets you spread the cost. More information is available at the following link <https://accmybenefits.vivup.co.uk/>

There are currently twelve bikes – including an electric and folding example – which can be picked up from Marischal College. All are equipped with locks. Simply get in touch with counciltravel@aberdeencity.gov.uk if you wish to avail yourself of this resource.

Users are asked to provide their own safety equipment – high viz, helmet etc. A maintenance station including a pump and basic tools is provided alongside the bikes in the storage area. Additionally, cycle maintenance stations are located across the city.

To help with access to bikes, the Council, as of 2025, will be inviting bids to run a Cycle Hire Scheme in the City. This would provide staff with another means of accessing a bike.

For those who want to try cycling, grow their confidence cycling and/ or feel safer doing so as part of a group, the local Cycling UK group offer "Try Cycling" sessions in the city. More information can be found here <https://ctcgrampian.org.uk/try-cycling-runs/>

For further information about cycling locally from those who are passionate about it and can share top advice see also the Grampian Cycle Partnership and Aberdeen Cycle Forum <https://aberdeencycleforum.org.uk/>

For more information about cycling in Aberdeen, including access to the Aberdeen Cycle Map, go to <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/roads-transport-and-parking/cycling-aberdeen>

For further top tips and information, see <https://www.getabout.org.uk/getabout-aberdeen-city-and-shire-by/getabout-by-foot/>

Plan your route at www.cyclestreets.net

Cycling - Actions
Continue to offer a cycle salary sacrifice scheme for staff.
Explore ways for Aberdeen City Council to become a corporate member of the City's Bike Hire Scheme, should one be established, so that staff have access to hire bikes for work.
Continue to maintain and offer a fleet of pool bikes to staff and explore options to make these available in locations other than Marischal College.
Undertake an audit of cycle parking at Council premises and look to improve provision in order to give staff more incentive to cycle.
Investigate ways to increase the provision of supporting facilities, such as showering, changing and maintenance facilities.
Continue to facilitate mileage claims for staff using their own bikes for work purposes.
Investigate setting up and participating in challenges and competitions which encourage people to cycle more often and support and enable internal groups which make cycling more attractive to more staff.
Continue to promote the benefits of cycling to staff.
Continue to signpost staff towards opportunities where staff can learn to cycle and gain more confidence cycling.

Topic 4: Bus

Bus travel is a key component in the sustainable transport mix. It is the most widely used form of public transport and a useful mode for people who don't have access to a car and those who cannot walk and cycle. The 2024 staff travel survey showed that bus is the second most popular mode of transport used by staff to travel to work with around 14% of staff choosing it.

For City journeys you can be as quick, if not quicker, catching the bus than driving. As a car

driver you must collect your vehicle, drive it through the urban area and find a place to park. It can also remove the stress of urban driving, allowing you to relax, read, or listen to music and podcasts whilst you are driven to work. If a bus does not go close to your home there is also the option to drive to one of the city's park and ride sites, leave your car on the periphery, and take the bus the rest of the way. For more information on the city's park and ride sites, please visit <https://www.getabout.org.uk/getabout-aberdeen-city-and-shire-by/aberdeen-park-and-ride/>

Both First Bus and Stagecoach – the city's two main operators – have recently invested in new double deck vehicles and the Council has been working with operators in the city to support the roll out of these zero emission buses. Whilst Stagecoach has gone purely down the electric route, First – in partnership with the Council – has both hydrogen and electric powered buses on its fleet.

With the assistance of technology, bus services and facilities are greatly improved. Real Time Information tells you when the next bus is due; the new fleet is comfortable and offers amenities such as Wi-Fi and USB charging for your personal electronic devices. The Council also provides real time bus information at several city bus stops and at park and ride sites. Bus timetables and routes are now available via mobile apps that provide live real time bus times, vehicle capacity information and you can even purchase tickets! Information is also widely available on the Internet via the operators' own websites as well as at www.traveline.org.uk where you can plan your journey. Information can also be obtained in person at the bus station Kiosk within Union Square.

Did you know staff can get discounted bus travel? Offers are available through First Bus and Stagecoach. Follow this link <https://accmybenefits.vivup.co.uk/> and select Discounted Bus Tickets to find out how you receive the savings directly through the providers. Through the Council's involvement with the North East Scotland Bus Alliance, a workstream to produce a guide on 'how to use the bus' is in development. These will support staff in using bus services and making the most out of technology available when using buses.

The provision of the Grasshopper smartcard allows for multi operator bus travel, allowing

customers to take the first bus that comes along too.

In recognising changes in travel patterns and hybrid working practices, bus operators in the region have introduced a range of flexible tickets to ensure passengers can find the right ticket to meet their travel patterns and further advancements in the use of 'tap and cap' are being developed to ensure passengers pay the lowest fare available for their use of bus services.

More information about travelling by bus in the North East of Scotland can be found at <https://www.getabout.org.uk/getabout-aberdeen-city-and-shire-by/getabout-by-bus/>

Bus - Actions

Continue to offer a bus salary sacrifice scheme for staff.

Engage with bus companies to run awareness events in staff premises where staff can come along and find out more about bus travel.

Investigate ways to give staff access to bus travel for work purposes such as attending meetings and carrying out site visits.

Continue to liaise with the bus companies through the Council's membership of the North East Scotland Bus Alliance to investigate further ways to make bus travel better value and more attractive.

Topic 5: Train

With two stations within the Aberdeen City area at Aberdeen and Dyce and railway stations at commuter settlements such as Huntly, Insch, Inverurie, Kintore, Portlethen, Stonehaven and Laurencekirk in Aberdeenshire, rail is another useful public transport option for staff commuting to and from Aberdeen. This has been made even easier thanks to improvements to the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie in 2019, allowing quicker, more frequent services to run.

The 2024 staff travel survey showed that around 3% of respondents commute to work by train. With the recent opening of Kintore station there may be the opportunity to increase this.

There are many benefits. Compared with bus and even car in many cases, the commute by train is much quicker - Dyce to Aberdeen takes less than ten minutes - while there is no need to

search for a parking space in Aberdeen when you get to the city.

Where travel out with the city for work is required, the train can also be a great option. A new fleet of refurbished Scotrail intercity trains now serve the Aberdeen route, providing tables and laptop/ mobile charging facilities and Wi-Fi. This allows you to remain productive and catch up with some work on the journey, or even enjoy some restful time, rather than sitting in traffic.

For more information around train travel in the North East of Scotland go to <https://www.getabout.org.uk/getabout-aberdeen-city-and-shire-by/getabout-by-rail/>

Train - Actions

Continue to promote the train to staff both as an efficient means of commuting but also for travel for work.

Further investigate whether a rail salary sacrifice scheme could be added for Council employees.

Topic 6: Taxi

Taxis provide an alternative means of travel, during working hours, allowing a similar journey to the car to be made without needing to bring your car into work. They are often useful as an ongoing mode of transport following your train journey out with the city.

As more and more taxi drivers are switching to electric, hybrid and even exploring hydrogen taxis, this mode is becoming even cleaner with time too.

For members of staff who don't drive but need direct access to a destination quickly, this can be a very useful means of travel.

Taxi - Actions

Continue to encourage taxi companies to use low and zero emission vehicles for Council contracts.

Continue to promote taxi as a viable alternative for staff to using their own vehicle.

Topic 7: Motorcycle

A motorcycle can provide an efficient and cost-effective means of getting about the City. They take up little road and parking space – helping to

reduce congestion – and, depending on the engine size, can be more environmentally-friendly in terms of fuel consumption and use of resources than cars with a single occupant – particularly mopeds, motor scooters and small motorbikes.

With more and more electric powered motorcycles coming to market now too, there are even more opportunities for powered two wheelers to become even more sustainable.

The Council can provide reimbursement to staff using a motorcycle (in the same way as car and push bike use) at 24p per mile.

Further information on motorcycling and tips for keeping you and your motorcycle safe can be found at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/road-safety/motorcyclists/>

Motorcycle - Actions
Continue to promote the benefits of motorcycles to staff.
Improve motorcycle parking provision at Council premises.

Topic 8: Car Club

A car club provides pay as you go, on-street car rental to members who pay by the hour and the mile for what they use. It provides people with access to a car without having to own one.

Aberdeen City Council has a contract in place with Enterprise car club in the city and also uses the car club as a corporate customer. This allows staff to join to use the car club for work purposes with the Council booking several cars, all of which are zero emission at the tailpipe, for the exclusive use of staff. In addition, staff can also book any other publicly available Enterprise car club cars, around 40 in Aberdeen and also any in other cities of the UK should they have to travel further afield for work. This means that staff are able to commute to work without being dependent on a car and still have access to a car to use for work purposes when they get there. The 2024 staff survey revealed that 15% of respondents had joined and, of those, 69% had used it for work. This is encouraging but it is likely that the service could reach more staff. You could also share a lift in one of the car club vehicles with others attending the same meeting. In addition to using the car club for work, staff can also enjoy free personal membership (worth £60 per year) of

the car club as an Aberdeen City Council corporate user to use it in their free time.

For more information about the Enterprise car club, as well as how to join as a member of staff, go to

<https://aberdeencitycouncil0365.sharepoint.com/sites/GreenWorkplace/SitePages/Join-the-Car-Club.aspx>

Car Clubs - Actions
Continue to provide zero emission exclusive use cars for staff to give them access to a car for work.
Undertake research to ensure that these are located in the right place.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to claim mileage for using their own cars.
Continue to promote the car club to staff as a means of getting access to a car without needing to own one, and to grow the membership.

Topic 9: Private Car

The 2024 staff travel survey identified that, of the 45% of people that said they travelled by car to work, only 21% said a car was essential to perform their job. This means that there is an opportunity, through the Council promoting and enabling feasible alternatives, for staff to consider changing to other modes.

However, while it is important to provide staff with a range of alternatives to the private car, it is acknowledged that there will still be times when a private car will be the most appropriate form of transport for staff to use, especially if their job requires carrying specialist equipment or needs them to have access to a car at very short notice. There are also employees and Councillors who, for mobility reasons, for safety and security reasons (for example when working late in the office), or personal reasons (for example if they need to collect children from nursery/ school) require access to their car regularly. If you do need to use your car, there are a number of things to consider which could contribute towards the Travel Plan's objectives.

- Time of travel – Try to avoid travelling in the rush hour.
- Combine your trips if you need to make more than one in a day. Plan your routes.

- Ensure your car is well maintained so as to avoid unnecessary fuel consumption and emissions.
- Where possible, use alternative fuelled vehicles – electric and hydrogen.
- Look at whether you can car share.
- Practice eco driving.

These final three points will be covered in more detail in the following sections.

Car Use - Actions

Support the review of essential car user and mileage claim processes as part of the Staff Travel Policy refresh and explore opportunities to make staff less dependent on private cars.

Continue to ensure that those who need to use private cars for their jobs remain able to do so.

Continue to promote a range of methods to staff which encourage car use to be undertaken in the most sustainable way.

Topic 10: Car sharing

Car sharing makes huge financial sense. The more people that travel in a car, the more people you can divide the cost of the journey by, so it can be a great way to save money through commuting. Even if you are unable to find someone to share the entire length of your journey with, there might be central meeting places, such as park and ride sites where you can meet up, park a vehicle and continue the onward journey in the other.

Car sharing is also a great way of combatting feelings of social isolation by bringing people together for the journey.

To help facilitate this, NESTRANS, the regional Transport Partnership for the North East of Scotland, have joined the national Liftshare scheme and have set up a North East of Scotland specific account. This gives people the option to find others who are looking to car share and gives you the option to be matched. This match can take place either at National level or just with others within the North East of Scotland.

The 2024 staff travel survey suggested that 7% of staff might be willing to car share, with 26% not sure. Therefore, it is up to the Council to try and further promote the benefits to staff.

To find out more about car sharing go to <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/getabout>

Car sharing - Actions

Continue to support NESTRANS in their membership and facilitation of the North East Scotland Liftshare scheme.

Promote the money saving benefits of car sharing to staff.

Promote the benefits of destinations where staff can meet up to car share for part of the journey.

Topic 11: Low carbon vehicle

With the Scottish Government committing to “Phase out the need for brand new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030”, the numbers of hybrid, battery electric and fuel cell electric (hydrogen) vehicles continue to grow in Aberdeen. Although it can be argued that hybrid, battery electric and fuel cell electric vehicles don’t reduce congestion, they have much lower emissions at the tailpipe – zero in the case of the latter two – meaning they produce less carbon emissions and are less likely to cause air pollution than pure petrol and diesel vehicles. Cleaner air helps to make active travel more attractive too. These vehicles are also cheaper to refuel and, with less moving parts than a petrol or diesel car, often much cheaper to service too. Aberdeen City Council is leading by example with a fleet modernisation programme which will see the Council, as part of their replacement programme, using zero emission vehicles where volume ready examples exist to replace petrol and diesel. In addition to several electric vans, this has seen hydrogen road sweepers and waste collection vehicles join the fleet. The Council continues to expand the network of electric vehicle charge points across the city while other companies, such as supermarkets, shopping centres, gyms and petrol filling stations are all starting to roll out charging infrastructure. To see what is available across Aberdeen, and further afield, go to www.zip-map.com and www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/electricvehicles

To find out more about the benefits of electric vehicles and some of the grants available to support electric vehicle drivers go to <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/electric-vehicles/>

There are also two publicly available hydrogen refuelling stations in the city. Find out more at <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/environment/h2-aberdeen>

As part of its contract with Enterprise car club, Aberdeen City Council staff can join and have access to lots of low and zero emission vehicles. Go to <https://aberdeencitycouncil0365.sharepoint.com/sites/GreenWorkplace/SitePages/Enterprise-Car-Club-provider-for-Aberdeen-is-changing.aspx> for more information

Low carbon vehicles - Actions
Continue to provide zero emission exclusive use cars to staff, as part of the car club contract, to give them access to a car for work.
Investigate further charging opportunities at Council premises to provide staff with the opportunity to charge at work.
Continue to support the fleet replacement programme and subsequent growth of zero emission vehicles, so that the Council can continue to lead by example.
Continue to promote both hydrogen and EVs equally as both form part of the solution to decarbonising transport.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to claim mileage for using their own cars.
Continue to promote low carbon vehicles and their benefits to staff and provide them with opportunities to try them in the real world via the car club contract.

Topic 12: Eco-driving

When using your car, there are many eco-driving techniques you can use. These will not only reduce the environmental impact of driving but can save you money in fuel bills and maintenance costs. The Energy Saving Trust (Scotland) identifies 7 key areas which can make a difference.

- Drive smoothly.
- Shift up early to a higher gear.
- Avoid excessive speeds.
- Switch off.
- Tyre pressures
- Roof racks, boxes and bars
- Windows vs air conditioning

You can find more details here <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/efficient-driving/>

Better driving techniques can also reduce accidents and lower insurance premiums.

Eco-driving - Actions

Continue to promote the benefits of eco driving to staff and stress the money saving benefits as well as environmental ones.

Investigate working with the Energy Saving Trust to run eco driving courses for staff.

Topic 13: Parking

Whether it is for bikes or cars, provision of parking is a key component which affects people's use of the transport network.

For bikes, although cycle parking provision exists at Marischal College, Town House, Altens East and many of the schools, there are a lot of Council workplaces which would benefit from improved secure cycle parking.

As identified earlier, a vehicle parking space is not guaranteed for all members of staff at Aberdeen City Council. While at locations such as schools or suburban offices, there is likely to be a greater provision of car parking, opportunities are very limited in city centre premises such as Marischal College, Town House and the Art Gallery. However, these sites are most accessible by the greatest number of other options, ensuring that they still remain easy to access for most staff.

Therefore, parking provision should be prioritised for

- sustainable modes such as cycling, car club
- other motorised modes with a small footprint such as motorcycles
- employees whose private car is essential to undertaking their job
- members of staff with disabilities who rely on their car to get around
- servicing requirements.
- visitors to Council buildings

Did you know? 10 bikes can park in the same space as one car.

Parking - Actions

Undertake an audit of cycle parking at Council premises and look to improve provision in order to give staff more incentive to cycle.

Support a review of essential car user and parking permit provisions for staff as part of the

Staff Travel Policy refresh.
Continue to ensure that those who need to use private cars for their jobs remain able to do so.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to use and park their own cars at Council premises.
Encourage staff to park out with the city centre, using facilities such as park and ride sites, and continue their onward journey by a more sustainable means.
Continue to promote the alternatives to driving for staff to further reduce the demand for parking.

Topic 14: Travel Information and Awareness

The Council has a key role to play in reducing the emissions from staff travel. It has commitments around net zero, the need to support a healthy workforce, both mentally and physically, and the need to ensure that staff are able to access their work without undue cost. Therefore, it is not just important to give staff access to sustainable transport but also to let them know what is available.

The Council Travel Plan itself is designed to form a key component of this by making the case for sustainable transport and signposting staff to many useful links where they can find out more.

As part of its commitment to working with others to encourage sustainable transport in the area, the Council, along with Aberdeenshire Council, NESTRANS, NHS Grampian, Robert Gordon University, the University of Aberdeen, North East Scotland College and the Energy Saving Trust, is part of the Getabout partnership. Formed in 2009, this enables partners to share best practice, work together on developing sustainable transport initiatives, and allows all sustainable transport to be grouped and branded under Getabout. The Getabout website therefore is a very important tool for signposting staff towards sustainable transport options.
www.getabout.org.uk

Internally, the Green Workplace pages will continue to be developed as the main place to find out about how to travel for work sustainably
<https://aberdeencitycouncil0365.sharepoint.com/sites/GreenWorkplace>

The Council Benefits pages also provide staff with information about how they can save

money through the bus and bike salary sacrifice schemes <https://accmybenefits.vivup.co.uk/>

It is acknowledged that not everyone is able to easily access online resources so the Council will look to organise drop-in sessions for staff at main office buildings to further promote travel choices to staff.

Travel Information and Awareness - Actions
Continue to signpost staff to the Getabout website for information on sustainable travel in the North East and to promote sustainable travel citywide through the Council's own membership of the Getabout partnership.
Develop the Green Workplace area of the Intranet as a resource for staff travel information.
Work with Communications colleagues to investigate further ways in which travel updates can be relayed to staff.
Support the ability to offer staff travel incentives through the bike and bus salary sacrifice schemes and investigate if similar schemes could be developed for other modes.
Look to hold physical events to promote sustainable travel options to staff in major Council office buildings.

Topic 15: Monitoring

The Council Travel Plan will cover a period from 2025 until 2030. In order to establish the success of the Council travel plan and its actions, it is proposed that monitoring will take place at least every 2 years. This will take place against the actions below.

In addition, it is proposed to undertake a staff travel survey every 2 years to see how the trends are changing against the 2024 baseline. The full baseline figures for the 2024 survey are available in Appendix 1.

We acknowledge that the transport context is constantly changing. Should any major new developments, initiatives or changes occur during the life of this Plan, we will look to adapt the document in response to opportunities offered by these.

Monitoring - Actions
Undertake monitoring every 2 years against the actions.
Undertake monitoring of the strategic context to see if anything significant needs to be incorporated to the plan both internal and

external to the Council.
Undertake a staff travel survey every 2 years.

Full Action List

The full list of actions can be found below

Reducing the need to travel / travel more flexibly - Actions
Support the further use and promotion of Microsoft Teams to further increase the attractiveness and feasibility of home and virtual working for staff and visitors.
Where staff have to travel out with their main place of work, support virtual meetings becoming the encouraged default for Council staff unless good reason prevents it.
Ensure that the above is not undertaken at the expense of the mental and physical health of staff and acknowledge that not all staff have the ability to work from home.
Where staff do have to travel for work, continue to support further ways of enabling staff to work more flexibly, allowing them to travel out with peak times.
Walking and wheeling - Actions
Promote and facilitate walking and wheeling challenges and competitions to incentivise staff to walk more.
Support the principle of walking and wheeling meetings for staff as an alternative to virtual meetings and those taking place in a room for physical and mental benefit.
Support led walks and health walks taking place before and after work and during lunchtime.
Continue to promote walking and wheeling to staff as a means of staying active, saving money and reducing the environmental impact of travel.
Cycling - Actions
Continue to offer a cycle salary sacrifice scheme for staff.
Explore ways for Aberdeen City Council to become a corporate member of the City's Bike Hire Scheme, should one be established, so that staff have access to hire bikes for work.
Continue to maintain and offer a fleet of pool bikes to staff and explore options to make these available in locations other than Marischal College.
Undertake an audit of cycle parking at Council premises and look to improve provision in order to give staff more incentive to cycle.
Investigate ways to increase the provision of supporting facilities, such as showering, changing and maintenance facilities.

Continue to facilitate mileage claims for staff using their own bikes for work purposes.
Investigate setting up and participating in challenges and competitions which encourage people to cycle more often and support and enable internal groups which make cycling more attractive to more staff.
Continue to promote the benefits of cycling to staff.
Continue to signpost staff towards opportunities where staff can learn to cycle and gain more confidence cycling.
Bus - Actions
Continue to offer a bus salary sacrifice scheme for staff.
Engage with bus companies to run awareness events in staff premises where staff can come along and find out more about bus travel.
Investigate ways to give staff access to bus travel for work purposes such as attending meetings and carrying out site visits.
Continue to liaise with the bus companies through the Council's membership of the North East Scotland Bus Alliance to investigate further ways to make bus travel better value and more attractive.
Train - Actions
Continue to promote the train to staff both as an efficient means of commuting but also for travel for work.
Further investigate whether a rail salary sacrifice scheme could be added for Council employees.
Taxi - Actions
Continue to encourage taxi companies to use low and zero emission vehicles for Council contracts.
Continue to promote taxi as a viable alternative for staff to using their own vehicle.
Motorcycle - Actions
Continue to promote the benefits of motorcycles to staff.
Improve motorcycle parking provision at Council premises.
Car Clubs - Actions
Continue to provide zero emission exclusive use cars for staff to give them access to a car for work.
Undertake research to ensure that these are located in the right place.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to claim mileage for using their own cars.
Continue to promote the car club to staff as a means of getting access to a car without

needing to own one, and to grow the membership.
Car Use - Actions
Support the review of essential car user and mileage claim processes as part of the Staff Travel Policy refresh and explore opportunities to make staff less dependent on private cars.
Continue to ensure that those who need to use private cars for their jobs remain able to do so.
Continue to promote a range of methods to staff which encourage car use to be undertaken in the most sustainable way.
Car sharing - Actions
Continue to support NESTRANS in their membership and facilitation of the North East Scotland Liftshare scheme.
Promote the money saving benefits of car sharing to staff.
Promote the benefits of destinations where staff can meet up to car share for part of the journey.
Low carbon vehicles - Actions
Continue to provide zero emission exclusive use cars to staff, as part of the car club contract, to give them access to a car for work.
Investigate further charging opportunities at Council premises to provide staff with the opportunity to charge at work.
Continue to support the fleet replacement programme and subsequent growth of zero emission vehicles, so that the Council can continue to lead by example.
Continue to promote both hydrogen and EVs equally as both form part of the solution to decarbonising transport.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to claim mileage for using their own cars.
Continue to promote low carbon vehicles and their benefits to staff and provide them with opportunities to try them in the real world via the car club contract.
Eco-driving - Actions
Continue to promote the benefits of eco driving to staff and stress the money saving benefits as well as environmental ones.
Investigate working with the Energy Saving Trust to run eco driving courses for staff.
Car Parking - Actions
Undertake an Audit of cycle parking at Council premises and look to improve provision in order to give staff more incentive to cycle.
Support a review of essential car user and parking permit provisions for staff as part of the Staff Travel Policy refresh.
Continue to ensure that those who need to use

private cars for their jobs remain able to do so.
Support the growth of the exclusive use fleet of car club cars for Aberdeen City Council staff to further reduce the need for staff to use and park their own cars at Council premises.
Encourage staff to park out with the city centre, using facilities such as park and ride sites, and continue their onward journey by a more sustainable means.
Continue to promote the alternatives to driving for staff to further reduce the demand for parking.
Travel Information and Awareness - Actions
Continue to signpost staff to the Getabout website for information on sustainable travel in the North East and to promote sustainable travel citywide through the Council's own membership of the Getabout partnership.
Develop the Green Workplace area of the Intranet as a resource for staff travel information.
Work with Communications colleagues to investigate further ways in which travel updates can be relayed to staff.
Support the ability to offer staff travel incentives through the bike and bus salary sacrifice schemes and investigate if similar schemes could be developed for other modes.
Look to hold physical events to promote sustainable travel options to staff in major Council office buildings.
Monitoring - Actions
Undertake monitoring every 2 years against the actions.
Undertake monitoring of the strategic context to see if anything significant needs to be incorporated to the plan both internal and external to the Council.
Undertake a staff travel survey every 2 years.

Appendix 1

The baseline information from the staff travel survey (December 2024)