

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
<b>DATE</b>	18 November 2025
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CR&E/25/260
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Gale Beattie
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	David Dunne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Will Hekelaar
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	7,8

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the outcomes of the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study, and to seek endorsement of the Nestrans Board decision to progress a local rail station Strategic Business Case.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the outcomes of the Nestrans Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study Detailed Options Appraisal, and the progress already underway by Aberdeen City Council to further develop the relevant active travel and bus-based recommendations for the City;
- 2.2 Note the decisions of the Nestrans Board at their meeting of 25 June 2025 in relation to this item;
- 2.3 Endorse the approval of the Nestrans Board to progress the local rail station elements of the Detailed Appraisal Report to a Strategic Business Case; and
- 2.4 Agree that relevant Aberdeen City Council teams will work with Nestrans to support the preparation of the Strategic Business Case (as relevant to Aberdeen City), and that the outcomes of the Strategic Business Case will be communicated back to this Committee before the end of 2026.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 As was reported to this Committee in [March 2024](#), Nestrans, with support from officers of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, has been undertaking a study to identify options for improving strategic transport connectivity and accessibility along the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk corridor. At their meeting on [25 June 2025](#), members of the Nestrans Board were presented with the outcomes of the [Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study Detailed Options Appraisal](#).

- 3.2 Five option packages were subject to detailed appraisal based on their potential to address the corridor's strategic transport issues, with the following elements performing positively across the appraisal criteria:
- Improved walking and cycling connections between Wellington Road and Marywell;
  - Provision of a Mobility Hub to the north of Portlethen to potentially act as the southern terminus for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART);
  - Bus priority measures, including dedicated bus lanes, signal priority and improved bus stop infrastructure, to enhance the reliability and attractiveness of bus services, linking with the ART project;
  - A new railway station at Newtonhill; and
  - A new railway station at Cove.
- 3.3 Improved active travel connections between Wellington Road and Marywell are currently being progressed by Aberdeen City Council alongside the Wellington Road Junction Improvement Project, with detailed design work underway.
- 3.4 Development of the bus priority measures and the mobility hub concept are being taken forward as part of the ART Outline Business Case (OBC). This reflects the decision of this Committee in [June 2024](#) to agree a preferred ART network, and that bus priority infrastructure options identified within the programme of multimodal corridor studies that align with the agreed ART network be incorporated within the ART Business Case process. The ART OBC is currently in development and due for completion by the end of 2026/27.
- 3.5 In terms of the railway station proposals, and following engagement with Transport Scotland, Nestrans officers propose undertaking further scheme development in the form of a local rail station Strategic Business Case. This will enable more detailed consideration of the strategic benefits of new stations, including interaction with ART, and of feasibility issues, including access arrangements, etc.
- 3.6 The Nestrans Board [agreed](#) to: *approve formal consultation with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council on the findings of the work through their relevant committees; and approve continued development of the local rail station elements of the Detailed Appraisal Report to a Strategic Business Case in order to address comments made by Transport Scotland.*

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

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Wellington Road to Marywell active travel design works are currently funded via Nestrans and Developer Obligations. The ART Outline Business Case is being funded via the Aberdeen City Region Deal. Nestrans has funded the Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Detailed Options Appraisal and has funding in place to support a local rail stations Strategic Business Case.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. There may be legal implications associated with implementing a new station at Cove, but these would be explored as part of the Business Case process, and will depend on the outcomes of that process.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Increasing opportunities for people to travel by walking, cycling and public transport (bus and rail) would have positive environmental impacts should this result in fewer private car trips, namely fewer carbon emissions and improved air quality.
- 6.2 There may be environmental implications associated with the construction of a new station but these will be further explored as part of the Business Case process, and will depend on the outcomes of that process.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Failing to develop strategic transport interventions when the benefits of these have been demonstrated could put at risk the Council's ability to achieve key strategic priorities associated with transport, health, the economy and the environment.	Support Nestrans undertaking a local rail study Strategic Business Case to better understand the opportunities and risks associated with increased rail provision.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	No risks identified at this stage.			
<b>Operational</b>	No risks identified at this stage.			
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified at this stage.			
<b>Reputational</b>	There are risks that expectations are raised that cannot be fulfilled in terms of a new station at Cove.	Ensure clear and careful messaging to members of the public and stakeholders.	L	Yes

<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Not progressing with sustainable transport interventions could put at risk the Council's ability to achieve net zero and air quality obligations.	Support Nestrans undertaking a local rail study Strategic Business Case	L	<b>Yes</b>
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspect of the policy statement:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Supporting the development of local train services running between Inverurie and Montrose, by working towards delivering new railway stations in the city.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<p>The proposals support the Regional Transport Strategy theme of 'Developing the rail network', and the Regional Economic Strategy action to: <i>Lobby Transport Scotland to prioritise the implementation of key strategic upgrades on the rail and trunk road network.</i></p> <p>They also support the Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy objective: <i>To work with partners to increase opportunities for rail travel to, from and within Aberdeen</i>, and the objectives of the Local Transport Strategy and Net Zero Mobility Strategy to reduce the proportion of journeys undertaken by car in Aberdeen, increase the number undertaken by public transport, and reduce transport emissions.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Claire McArthur, Acting Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning on 8 October 2025.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Nestrans Board Agenda Pack](#), 25 June 2025 (Item 5.2).
- 10.2 [Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study Detailed Appraisal Report](#)
- 10.3 [Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multimodal Corridor Study Executive Summary](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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