



## REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 17 JUNE 2021

### STRATEGIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

#### 1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with updates on transportation projects across Aberdeenshire.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 **Acknowledge the progress made with projects, activities and developments taken forward by Nestrans, external agencies and stakeholders as outlined in the report; and**
- 2.2 **Agree to accept further updates on the progress of both the implementation and delivery of the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (LTS) as appropriate.**

#### 3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 Attached to this report as **Appendix 1** is the LTS Action Update. This shows progress made against identified categories, i.e. Travel Actively and Travel Effectively.
- 3.2 This report is brought to the Infrastructure Services Committee at every second meeting in order to provide timely updates on progress and allow appropriate decisions to be taken.

#### 4 Discussion

- 4.1 Since the last report to Infrastructure Services Committee on 11 March 2021 (Item 7), the Nestrans Board met virtually on 14 April. The approved minutes of the meeting and a video recording can be accessed at:

<https://www.nestrans.org.uk/about-nestrans/board-meetings-2/>

- 4.2 The Health and Transport Action Plan annual report has been produced and highlights the positive effect the partnership had on the response to the pandemic with partners in both the health and transports sector building on the existing framework to adapt to the many challenges presented by Covid. Further details are contained in **Appendix 1** with the full annual report and executive summary available via the links overleaf.

<https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>

[https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021-Executive-Summary .pdf](https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021-Executive-Summary.pdf)

- 4.3 Work to develop the trial of “Green Routes” has been progressed. The project will be known as “Rural Walking and Cycling Routes” following discussions with Transport Scotland, who have approved the use of non-prescribed signage for the 3 trial routes. Community engagement and promotion began in May and arrangements have been made to install the signage so the trial can begin. Further information is contained within **Appendix 1**.
- 4.4 Officers have responded to a number of requests from customers seeking to install private or public electric vehicle charging units on residential streets where there is no off-street parking available to accommodate private charging equipment. Officers have not approved any such requests as there are a number of issues to be considered when installing such equipment in on-street locations. This includes what other services are currently within the footpath, the value of installing units in residential areas for use by a limited number of customers compared to the value of installing in more accessible public locations and liability issues involved with installing private infrastructure on the public network.
- 4.4.1 Officers also do not consider that it is essential to have an at home charger installed in order to own and operate an electric vehicle, although it is much more convenient to have. Advancements in battery technology have seen much improved ranges and with the ever growing public electric charging network it is more than feasible to own an electric vehicle without an at home charging unit.
- 4.4.2 This approach is shared by many other local authorities and is evidenced through feedback obtained through the APSE network. Officers will continue to monitor this position and are currently considering the processes and timescales to develop a formal policy position on this matter. This is being done using existing networks and groups such as COSLA, APSE, SCOTS and the Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee.
- 4.5 At its meeting of 11 March 2021, (Item 9) Infrastructure Services Committee considered the Scottish Government’s Consultation on the Strategic Transport Projects Review and agreed to delegate the submission of an Aberdeenshire Council response to the Director of Infrastructure Services following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokesperson. The response was sent in April and can be found at **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3**.
- 4.5.1 The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) is the Scotland-wide review of the strategic transport network across all transport modes is ongoing. Council officers remain engaged with Transport Scotland as they work on Phase 2 of STPR2 which is looking at Transport beyond 2025. Further

information will be circulated to Members as it becomes available. It is anticipated that this work will be concluded by the autumn of this year.

## 5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 The report helps to deliver the Council Priority within the pillar “Our Economy” and the principles which underpins this priority of “responsible finances” and “tackling poverty and inequalities”
- 5.2 The report helps to deliver the Council Priority within the pillar “Our People” and the principle which underpins this priority of “right people, right place, right time” and “human rights and public protection”
- 5.3 The report helps to deliver the Council Priority within the pillar “Our Environment” and the principle which underpins this priority of “digital infrastructure” and “climate and sustainability”
- 5.4 This report shows how we are delivering on the commitments in the LTS.
- 5.5 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			X
Staffing			X
Equalities			X
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability			X
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X

- 5.6 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed for Equalities or Fairer Scotland Duty as the interventions, strategies, projects and policies referred to in this report will be separately assessed.
- 5.7 There are no staffing or financial implications.
- 5.8 As this report details events which have already occurred, there is no risk identified in terms of the Corporate or Directorate Risk Registers.

## 6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F.1.1f of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the monitoring of the activities of the Transportation Strategy Unit.

**Alan Wood**  
**Director of Infrastructure Services**

Report prepared by Joanna Stewart, Strategy Development Officer  
2 June 2021

**List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Transport Strategy Update  
Appendix 2 – STPR2 team response  
Appendix 3 – STPR2 team response

**Appendix 1 – Transport Strategy Update**

<b>Project Title</b>	Charge Place Scotland Grant 20/21	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E8, LEV Delivery Plan	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/21
<b>Budget</b>	Charge Place Scotland Grant	<b>Progress</b>	60%

Metering work on the EV charge points has resumed with Peterhead, Insch and Macduff completed.

A tender exercise started on 18 January 2021 for the 2020/21 programme of charge points, this finished on the 17 February 2021 with a new contractor selected on 23 April 2021. The supply, installation, commissioning and maintenance of 22KW electric vehicle charging units will be undertaken by Connected Kerb. The responses to the tender showed higher costs than anticipated, therefore a decision to install 3 units instead of 5 was made. The programme of works is now being finalised for the new units in Tarland, Portsoy and Kemnay. Laurencekirk and Balmedie locations will be on hold until further funding is available as these were the high cost sites that could not be funded at this stage

Charge point installation progress can be found in the table below.

Location	Year	Charger Type	Unit Installed	Metering	Commissioning
Ellon, Library	19/20	1x 22kw	Awaiting install due to SSEN delays	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Fraserburgh, Hanover Street	19/20	1x 22kw 1x 50kw	✓	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Alford, Community Campus	19/20	1x 22kw 1x 50kw	✓	Booking in process	Date to be confirmed
Insch, Martin Road	19/20	1x 22kw	✓	Completed 24/04/21	Date to be confirmed
Peterhead, Lido	19/20	1x 22kw 1x 50kw	✓	Completed 24/04/21	Date to be confirmed

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Location	Year	Charger Type	Unit Installed	Metering	Commissioning
Aboyne	19/20	1x 50kw	SSEN works 17/06/21. Install Date to be confirmed	Booking in process	Date to be confirmed
Hillside School	19/20	3x 22kw	✓	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Macduff, Aquarium	19/20	1x 22kw	✓	Completed 24/04/21	Date to be confirmed
Laurencekirk, Mearns Academy	On hold				
Portsoy, The Square	20/21	1x 22kw	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Kemnay, Aquithie Road	20/21	1x 22kw	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Tarland, Recreation Ground	20/21	1x 22kw	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
Balmedie	On hold				

**Appendix 1 – Transport Strategy Update**

<b>Project Title</b>	Recovery of Costs Public Charge Point Network	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E8, LEV Delivery Plan	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/21
<b>Budget</b>		<b>Progress</b>	10%

A tariff for EV charge point usage was introduced on 4 January 2020, to recover the costs associated with the operation of the public charge point network as approved by Infrastructure Services Committee on 28 November 2019 (Item 11). As illustrated in the table the number of charging events dropped significantly in the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the number of charging events and amount of electricity used is increasing. The first payment date from Charge Place Scotland was in April 2021, we will continue monitoring these figures.

	2020		2021	
	Number of charge events	kWh	Number of charge events	kWh
Feb	2587	28706	717	9710
Mar	2094	24430	1040	14126
Apr	734	9670	1230	16156
<b>Total</b>	<b>5415</b>	<b>62806</b>	<b>2987</b>	<b>39992</b>

<b>Project Title</b>	Virtual Event	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1	<b>Delivery</b>	2020/21/22
<b>Budget</b>	SCSP 20/21	<b>Progress</b>	20%

Following consultation with procurement colleagues it was agreed that a longer-term contract would be more cost effective. A tender for the development of a virtual event and promotional platform, will be completed in June 2021 with an aim to launch in Summer 2021. There is a 3 year content creation aspect to the tender to develop the platform further.

This will allow the Council to engage with a much wider audience and can be used as a standalone promotional and engagement tool or to supplement traditional face to face events. Events hosted on the platform will be able to include a wide range of digital content designed to promote and facilitate more active and smarter travel.

## Appendix 1 – Transport Strategy Update

<b>Project Title</b>	Rural Walking and Cycling Routes (Shared Routes)	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>		<b>Delivery</b>	2021/2022
<b>Budget</b>	Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets	<b>Progress</b>	60%
<p>Infrastructure Services Committee approved a trial project to promote walking and cycling on rural roads at its meeting on 21 January 2021 (Item 14). The trial will be based on Perth and Kinross' Green Routes initiative and will be promoted as Rural Walking and Cycling Routes in Aberdeenshire.</p> <p>Traffic surveys that were due to be carried out in February were delayed but were concluded in April to provide project baseline data.</p> <p>Proposed signage for the route has been developed and following constructive liaison with Transport Scotland, a non-prescribed sign format has been authorised.</p> <p>Work has begun on the wider communication of the project to ensure that stakeholders, including local community councils are engaged as well as promoting the routes to members of the public.</p> <p>Discussions are taking place with local roads teams to review capacity to facilitate the sign installation. However, if capacity is limited it is the intention to issue a simple contract to tender for the wider installation across the 3 locations.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	Formartine and Buchan Way E-Bike Project	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1 A17	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2019/20
<b>Budget</b>	LEADER	<b>Progress</b>	95%
<p>A combined bike locking, GPS tracking and booking system has been procured, however, there has been slight delays due to customs changes which has impacted delivery of some locks. Launch of the scheme has been delayed until there is clarity regarding Covid-19 restrictions and public bike hire schemes. Software testing and booking testing will take place in June.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	Integrated Travel Towns	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1 A17	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/21
<b>Budget</b>	Infrastructure, Transport Scotland	<b>Progress</b>	25%
<p><u>Portlethen</u></p> <p>The Low Carbon Travel and Transportation Hub funded projects for Portlethen have now completed a Stage 1 design and the schemes are being progressed to a detailed design stage.</p>			



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The schemes to be delivered are: Cookstone Road, Muirend Road and Badentoy Road Link. A virtual engagement event ran from 22 February 2021 for 4 weeks with public feedback being fed into the designs. Stage 1 drawings have been received from the consultant and are being reviewed by officers

### Inverurie

The design for the North South Link which would deliver a shared use path extending from the new Academy Campus via Kellands Park to Port Elphinstone and onto the A96 Inverurie to Kintore Strategic link is approaching completion as Stage 2 detailed design works commence. A virtual engagement event ran from 22 February 2021 for 4 weeks with public feedback being fed into the designs. Stage 1 drawings have been received from the consultant and are being reviewed by officers

Work to deliver a design for Corsemanhill to Davah Wood path is ongoing, however, external consultant support is likely to be required to complete the design works due to issues associated with ground water and slope stability.

Burn Lane crossing will be scheduled for delivery dependant on timings of other related works within the centre of Inverurie this summer. Local Members will be updated.

### Huntly

A design for the A96 to A97 link is approaching completion subject to road safety review. This link would facilitate an off road link from the town to the rural network and communities located along the A97.

The Steven Road North link scheme has been designed, however, discussions are ongoing with a local landowner to allow full access to a short section of the lane which is currently used informally by the public.

### Fraserburgh

Philorth Avenue, Fraserburgh - Initial discussions with consultants have taken place to move this project forward. Stage 1 Road Safety Audit is to be completed by June, allowing the consultants to begin on construction design. The time frame for construction to commence in December 2021.

The South Links Phase 1 scheme has been completed which has created a link between the community sports centre and swimming pool from Maconochie Road. The Phase 2 scheme was delayed due to Covid-19, however, it is hoped that contact can be re-established with the Feuars of Fraserburgh to finalise the design layout where the new path will continue north from Maconochie Road onto Seaforth Street.

### Ellon

Work is progressing well with the Carolines Well Woods project with a design now fixed and initial environmental survey undertaken. It has been recommended by the design team to carry out a ground investigation to better inform the design as the

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route will require some significant ground works where the path meets the former access road at the former Ellon Academy site. Ground investigation is anticipated to commence this summer and design finalised shortly thereafter. Positive discussions have been held with the Trustees of Ellon Castle Gardens with a view to extending the project to create a continuous link onto Castle Road via the gardens.

Details on the Integrated Travel Town masterplans can be found at the following link <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/transportation/integrated-travel-towns/>

<b>Project Title</b>	Strategic Routes	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1 A17	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	Infrastructure, SCSP	<b>Progress</b>	50%

Kintore to Blackburn - AECOM have begun work on progressing the detailed design phase of the project which looks at 2 route options selected by Area Committee.

Kemnay to A96 – the project feasibility report is approaching completion following Covid-19 related delays which had restricted site works and visits. This report will be shared with Area Committee members once it has been finalised.

Cluny to Sauchen - Local Roads team have started work on this route and are currently on site with a completion date of summer 2021. Promotional works are being development to involve the school community in using this route.

Ellon-Foveran-Newburgh – feasibility designs have been completed and consultants are currently developing online community engagement materials for launching this summer. Prior to this officers will be reaching out to local landowners to discuss the proposals and review land options available.

Portlethen to Wellington Road (Aberdeen south route) feasibility designs have been completed and consultants are currently developing online community engagement materials for launching this summer. Prior to this officers will be reaching out to local landowners to discuss the proposals and review land options available.

Meldrum Meg Way – officers continue to meet with the Meldrum Paths Group and more recently with Zero Carbon Daviot to review progress and discuss route options. There are several landowner issues where the scheme progresses beyond the relief road and officers are working closely with the aforementioned groups to offer support and advice. Constructive dialogue has taken place with a local developer currently constructing units at Uryside to allow early access onto the proposed rural path network. Officers are also engaged with the Uryside Park SCIO and are aiming to reach agreement on a cycle path link to the second bridge over the Ury associated with the Malcom Allan development in that area.

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<b>Project Title</b>	Sustainable Travel Champions	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	SCSP	<b>Progress</b>	20%
<p>There was an enthusiastic response to the press release associated with the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places funded project with 27 applications received to take part in the project. Officers reviewed all applicants and after careful consideration, 6 households have been selected to take part, with a mix of ages and localities. The majority of households will receive electric bikes to assist with behaviour change, with 1 participant due to receive a rail season pass. Participants will be required to undergo a current travel review to determine existing CO2 emissions from transport and a post project review to determine CO2 raised. Participants are required to retain a travel diary and post on social media their experiences. An ITQ has been published for procurement of the bikes and relevant accessories and will close in June.</p> <p>Commencement of the pilot very much depends on availability of bikes with global demand for e-bikes still high following the peak demand last summer.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	Active Travel Academies	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	SCSP	<b>Progress</b>	5%
<p>Active Travel Academies is a trial project funded through Smarter Choices, Smarter Places and will see 2 academies who have received funding to enable them to support more sustainable and active travel opportunities. The project is being supported with partners Sustrans and Cycling UK who have been able to commit staff resource to assist in project set up and operation.</p> <p>Both Ellon and Meldrum Academy have been granted funds for bikes and tools to allow them to build on a cycle programme for pupils. The ambition is to have bikes to develop led rides and cycle training as well as tools for bike maintenance workshops. Discussions with Live Life Aberdeenshire are ongoing on how best to deliver bike maintenance sessions to pupils and staff in secondary schools.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	Cycle Parking	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS 2.1 A17	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/201
<b>Budget</b>	Infrastructure Sustrans	<b>Progress</b>	100%
<p>Eleven schools received new cycling parking funded 50% through Aberdeenshire Councils Capital budget and 50% Sustrans School Cycle Parking budget. Schools funded must apply, stating their needs and requirements. A tender exercise was carried out a contract was awarded contract during February/March 2021.</p>			

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Schools who received storage this year were Auchterellon, Auchnagatt, Ellon, Hatton of Fintray, Meiklemill, Old Rayne, South Park, Strichen, Stuartfield, St Andrews, Fraserburgh and Udney Green.

Applications for funding for 2021/2022 have been issued to schools and are now currently being reviewed.

<b>Project Title</b>	I-Bike	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS A9	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/21
<b>Budget</b>	Smarter Choices Smarter Places/ Sustrans	<b>Progress</b>	80%

I-Bike is working closely with 2 school clusters this academic year. The schools participating are Auchterellon, Ellon, Meiklemill Primary Schools in the Ellon cluster and Mintlaw and Pitfour Primaries in the Mintlaw cluster. Mintlaw Academy have also been involved and the I-Bike officer has been available to direct interested staff to funding and training courses.

The I-Bike officer has also contacted schools within the Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Inverurie clusters. The I-Bike project works on a 3 year structure, the first year provides intensive work with schools to help support them to take forward cycling projects, year 2 the officer takes a step back to allow the school to take on some of the work, and year 3, a further step back from the officer is taken. Due to Covid-19, Ellon and Mintlaw are repeating year 1 as many of the projects were missed.

Although it has been difficult to take forward the same level of work as previous years due to restrictions on school access, home schooling and limited travel availability to schools, the I-Bike project has projects and plans set to take place in term 4 (April to June 2021) in the Ellon and Mintlaw Clusters. These projects include, bikeability, led rides, transition rides, Dr Bike sessions and scooter skills.

Good links have been created with Ellon Academy and a young leader project set up focusing on supporting 6th year pupils to take on the role of bike champions. The role of bike champion will involve promoting cycling in the school, help to promote to primary schools and train to assist with transition rides. The school has also been provided with a fleet of bikes to take forward led rides.

<b>Project Title</b>	Cycling UK Bike Bothy	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS A9	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2020/21
<b>Budget</b>	Smarter Choices Smarter Places/ Sustrans	<b>Progress</b>	20%

Approval has just been granted to take forward this project with Cycling UK. This is a project run in partnership with Cycling UK and is an enhancement or work they have been doing to date in our Integrated Travel Towns (Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie and Portlethen). The project focuses on enhancing and continuing to deliver a Cycling Bothy Project which is supported by 2 officers from Cycling UK. The project looks to overcome the main barriers people have to cycling in towns in

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Aberdeenshire, by using a branding and project title that will start to be familiar in these towns. The officers have already created a good network and promoted the project well to get recognition and confidence with communities.

The project will deliver:

- 50 x Led Rides
- 30 x Cycle Confidence Sessions/Better Biking
- 5 x Pop up bothy events/travel planning, and bike try outs
- 16 x Volunteers trained
- 10 x Basic maintenance sessions for beginners
- 10 x Dr Bike sessions
- 20 x Pop-up bothy events with journey planning and route advice
- 10 x Family cycling sessions
- Create and promote new health walks and link in with existing health walk providers to help share and support resource/opportunities and knowledge

This role will be working with:

- those that are inactive, have health conditions or live in transport poverty in five targeted area (Ellon, Inverurie, Huntly, Fraserburgh and Portlethen)
- people that are accessing health and wellbeing services
- reduce inequalities by specifically target older people, people with mental health issues, parents with young children and families living in areas of multiple deprivation
- girls and young women that are at risk of being inactive

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<b>Project Title</b>	Stonehaven Wayfinding	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively Travel Actively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E1, E5	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2019/20
<b>Budget</b>	Station Travel Plan Delivery Fund Other	<b>Progress</b>	50%

Nestrans application for ScotRail's Station Travel Plan Fund was unsuccessful. This project is now on hold until other funding opportunities are available.

<b>Project Title</b>	Strategic Transport Appraisal – STAG1 Appraisal	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E24	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2019/20
<b>Budget</b>	City Region Deal	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

The City Region Deal agreement contains provision of £7 million to undertake a strategic transport appraisal, considering the future transport requirements of the region, taking account of the impacts arising from the investment associated with the Deal. Five million was sourced from the 2 governments, £2 million was sourced from the 2 local authorities.

In essence, the funding is directed towards the preparation of option appraisal and business cases to inform the longer-term development of the north east's transport network. Spend to date on this element has been £1.3 million, the majority of which has been sourced from the 2 governments.

Work on the Strategic Transport Appraisal has successfully informed the Strategic Development Plan, supported elements of the 2 Local Development Plans, provided the evidence for the Regional Transport Strategy, and has also supported Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review 2. It will feed into the region's input to National Planning Framework.

The programme of work is now at a key juncture, with a requirement to agree (across all City Region Deal partners and funders) the programme of project development for the next 5 years of the deal, including timeline, resourcing strategy, and benefits realisation.

Proposals for the next 5 years have been developed by mapping proposals coming out of the Regional Transport Strategy and Strategic Transport Appraisal, to the key opportunities where City Region Deal funding would facilitate clear progression and added value. The outcomes of this process have been refined and further developed following extensive discussions within the City Region Deal Transport Working Group and Programme Board.

At the end of March 2021, proposals were also discussed with representatives of Transport Scotland, Scottish Government, Department for Transport, and the UK

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Government. This discussion again provided useful and positive feedback on the developing proposals.

The programme is now moving to the second phase of work on the Strategic Transport Appraisal.

The Aberdeen City Region Deal Joint Committee has approved the proposals to support the development of Strategic Business Cases for the following elements:

1. Strategic Modelling Work.
2. Appraisal and Business Case Development for Aberdeen Rapid Transit Proposals.
3. Appraisal and Business Case Development for A90(N) Corridor.
4. Business Case Development for A956 Wellington Road Corridor. (southern route out of Aberdeen)
5. Smaller scale interventions modelled on “Live-Lab” proposals, with initial concepts addressing:
  - a. Mobility Hubs – City, Suburban and Rural Small Town.
  - b. Alternative Fuelling Hubs.
  - c. Rural Mobility as a Service applications/Demand Responsive Transport.
  - d. Innovation in monitoring and dissemination of data on Road/Transport Network.
  - e. Haulage efficiency.

Particularly within each of the 5 “Live-Lab” interventions above, there are opportunities for private sector collaboration, fit with parallel City Region Deal streams of work, and potential to contribute to net zero outcomes.

Each of the different proposals above are associated with individual delivery paths, dependencies, resource requirements and uncertainties. These include the substantive conclusion of Transport Scotland’s Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 process, due for the summer 2021 which impacts on appraisal and business case development for the A90(N). Outcomes of a bid for Bus Partnership Funding, due in June 2021 are also relevant, as is the completion of option work on Wellington Road, due during Summer 2021.

Five Strategic Business Cases will now be developed and brought back to the City Region Deal Joint Committee for approval, with scoping work on the “Live-Lab” proposals and Strategic Modelling being initiated initially, as these are not associated with other dependencies. Thereafter, Strategic Business Cases would be brought forward for Public Transport/Aberdeen Rapid Transit, A90(N), and Wellington Road as soon as key dependencies are resolved.

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<b>Project Title</b>	Strategic Transport Appraisal – Strategic Transport Model Update	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E24	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	City Region Deal	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing
<p>The update of the new Aberdeen Aberdeenshire Transport Model (ASAM19), which is used to model the impact of proposed transport interventions and land use development, is ongoing but has experienced further delays due to other work being undertaken on national transport policy modelling and scenario planning.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	External Links to South Aberdeen Harbour Study	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E24	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/25
<b>Budget</b>	City Region Deal	<b>Progress</b>	Complete
<p>The External Links study into options for improving the link between the South Harbour and the principal road network has concluded its work.</p> <p>The City Council's City Growth and Resources Committee considered the report on 3 February 2021 (Item 17 - <a href="https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s117498/ASH-Well%20Report.pdf">https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/documents/s117498/ASH-Well%20Report.pdf</a>) and agreed to proceed with the recommended option of upgrading the existing coast road with a new rail bridge and joining into the Hareness Road junction.</p> <p>The project is with Aberdeen City Council's Roads design team to work up a detailed design prior to draw down of funding for construction. Aberdeenshire officers will continue to engage with our colleagues at Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council on this project.</p>			

<b>Project Title</b>	Rail Projects – Aberdeen to Central Belt	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E26	<b>Delivery</b>	By 2026
<b>Budget</b>	Transport Scotland	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing
<p>The Scottish Government has committed £200 million to improve journey times and increase capacity on key rail links between Aberdeen and the Central Belt for passengers and freight.</p> <p>A bespoke Aberdeen to Central Belt Key Stakeholders Group meets quarterly to keep stakeholders informed of progress and is attended by an Aberdeen City Region Deal representative. The most recent meeting of the Group took place on 27 April 2021, where Network Rail updated the key stakeholders on project progress and Transport Scotland updated them on progress with the Outline Business Case</p>			



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The option selection process is progressing well. Indicative planning work has provided assurance that the scheme is deliverable for the December 2026 timetable change.

The selection of options relating to stations along the route is expected to be complete by July 2021. Network Rail is developing a programme for taking forward the single option development of the chosen options.

Network Rail is currently transitioning to a new project governance system – Projects Accelerated in a Controlled Environment - which is intended to replace Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) with more streamlined processes to enable current and future projects to deliver passenger benefits more quickly with greater value for taxpayers. From summer 2021 the Aberdeen to Central Belt project will be moving from the Strategic Development and Project Selection of Projects Accelerated in a Controlled Environment to the Project Development and Design stage.

Transport Scotland’s consultants, Atkins Global, continue to work on the Outline Business Case for the project. It is currently focussing on the socio-economic case. On 26 February, Atkins Global met with the key stakeholders to update them on progress on the strategic element of the Outline Business Case. The key stakeholders in turn provided useful feedback and input. A further session is planned in late May, which will concentrate on the socio-economic element.

The next Key Stakeholder Group meeting will be held in late July 2021.

<b>Project Title</b>	Rail Projects – Inch	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E26	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2019/20
<b>Budget</b>	Transport Scotland (LRDF fund), Nestrans	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

Nestrans project to appraise alternative options for providing step free access to the far platform at Inch Station, supported by Local Rail Development Fund.

Inch has been identified as one of the poorest in Scotland in accessibility terms, having no level access to platform 1, and no alternative station within 18 kilometres and nearest fully-accessible station 38 kilometres away at Dyce.

Public consultations and an online survey received a good level of response and identified significant issues regarding access to the railway.

Eight options were considered and compared and were considered against a number of identified Transport Planning Objectives.

Detailed Appraisal of 4 options was then undertaken:

- Footpath (from road on opposite side of Level Crossing from the car park to the rear of Platform 1 (Inverness side))

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- Footbridge with Ramps
- Footbridge with Lifts
- New car park and footpath (to rear of Platform 1 – Inverness side)

All options were found to be technically feasible, but all had challenges that need to be overcome. The assessment concluded that Option 4 (Footbridge with Lifts) should be taken forward as the preferred option at an estimated cost of approximately £2.3 million.

The final options appraisal has been submitted to Transport Scotland and we now await Transport Scotland's response to the report.

Funding will require to be sought from external sources and will be dependent on the support of Network Rail and Scotrail. Periodically there are funding rounds for station accessibility at both Scottish and UK levels and the issue is identified in the National Transport Strategy as a priority. The First Minister was recently in Inch as part of the Scottish Parliamentary Elections campaign.

The Full report is available to download at:

[https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021\\_03\\_31\\_Accessibility-at-Inch\\_Detailed-Appraisal\\_Final\\_Public.pdf](https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021_03_31_Accessibility-at-Inch_Detailed-Appraisal_Final_Public.pdf)

<b>Project Title</b>	Aberdeen City/Nestrans Cross Boundary Studies	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E24	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2019/20
<b>Budget</b>	Aberdeen City Council, Nestrans, Infrastructure	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

### **Low Emission Zone**

Work by the City Council is ongoing to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment to introduce Low Emission Zone's (LEZs) into Scotland's 4 largest cities.

The project has progressed to the point of firm proposals which will be taken to the Council's City Growth and Resources Committee in June with a recommendation on the boundaries for the Low Emission Zone and details of implementation such as the grace period for non-compliant vehicles. Public consultation will follow thereafter including consultation with key stakeholders such as the bus companies and haulage industry.

### **Aberdeen to Laurencekirk Multi-modal Study**

The Study is ongoing. This was initially a study to examine the case for new rail stations to the south of Aberdeen including the aspiration for a new station in north

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Kincardineshire. Transport Scotland insisted that this should be widened to include all modes of transport and the corridor studied should stretch as far as Laurencekirk.

AECOM has been commissioned to undertake the study with the first part of the project, the ‘case for change’ report submitted to Transport Scotland in December 2020. A meeting was held in January with Transport Scotland to resolve queries and go through feedback from Transport Scotland on the report.

Officers are considering the response to Transport Scotland’s comments.

<b>Project Title</b>	<u>Laurencekirk Grade Separated Junction</u> Trunk Road Projects	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E4	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021-2025
<b>Budget</b>	Transport Scotland	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

Aberdeenshire Council is continuing to work closely with Transport Scotland and consultants Amey to address the issues arising from the closure of Oatyhill Bridge. The outcome of the structural assessment of Oatyhill Bridge, and specifically the necessary decision to close the bridge as of July 2020 has an impact on the delivery of the Laurencekirk scheme as currently proposed.

Transport Scotland and their consultants, AMEY, continue to assess the available options for providing future access to affected properties at Oatyhill. Most recently further work has been required to ensure compliance with Network Rail standards for any new structure over the railway.

Work is continuing and regular meetings are held with the Partnership Group which includes Nestrans and Angus Council.

Separately, negotiations continue to resolve the 3 statutory objections received from landowners directly affected by the Compulsory Purchase Order. The substance of these objections was primarily in relation to loss of land and access arrangements.

Transport Scotland continue to negotiate with these parties with a view to progressing the scheme without the need for a Public Local Inquiry. As with all trunk road projects this is the appropriate forum for considering objections received and not withdrawn.

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<b>Project Title</b>	A96 Dualling Trunk Road Projects	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>	LTS E4	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021-2030
<b>Budget</b>	Transport Scotland	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

Transport Scotland published their preferred route option on 21 December 2020.

Aberdeenshire Council submitted a response in February 2021 and Transport Scotland are considering the comments received. A briefing was given to members of the Garioch Area Committee in early May and further regular meetings with Transport Scotland and Transportation officers are being arranged. The project consultants are picking up the pace on developing the necessary detailed plans for the preferred route and a series of specific meetings on distinct aspects of the scheme are being organised with relevant officers.

Further public engagement events are planned as the project progresses. There is currently no change to published timetable (completion by 2030) albeit the First Minister indicated that the Covid-19 response had introduced delays and this will have an impact on the delivery phase.

<b>Project Title</b>	HTAP	<b>Action Area</b>	Travel Effectively
<b>Action</b>		<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	HTAP	<b>Progress</b>	Ongoing

**Health & Transport Action Plan (HTAP) Annual Report 2021**

The HTAP Annual Report was approved by the Steering Group on 22 April and can be found at:

<https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021.pdf>

[https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021-Executive-Summary .pdf](https://www.nestrans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTAP-Annual-Report-2021-Executive-Summary.pdf)

Partners have been encouraged to circulate the report within their networks. The report records the ways in which the programme has promoted co-operation during the past year. It was produced through a process of partner and stakeholder consultation. The report will be circulated to the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

**The Programme for 2021**

Dates for 6 meetings of the HTAP Steering Group are confirmed for 2021.

An officer from Nestrans will continue as Acting Chair of the Access to Health and Social Care Sub-Group. The setting of meetings is in progress.

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An officer from NHS Grampian's Public Health Directorate remains Chair of the Transport and Public Health Sub-Group.

Both Sub-Groups are required to co-produce short term actions and report to the HTAP Steering Group on the 25 of June.

### *Theme 1: Transport & Public Health*

The Sub-Group will develop specific collaborative steps which will add strategic value to ongoing work of individual partners on issues where transport related activity may contribute to poor health outcomes or health inequality. The Sub-Group will also have an interest in monitoring changing travel patterns and attitudes and how such changes develop going forward. The Sub-Group will also seek to ensure ongoing Public Health input to the North East Scotland Road Safety group and the Low Emission Zone group.

### *Theme 2: Access to Health & Social Care*

The Sub-Group will maintain the network of health and social care providers meeting with transport operators to monitor capacity issues in parallel to social distancing guidance and how these impact across the system, both for organisations and those accessing services. The Sub-Group are also keen to take forward actions which might support community transport and build wider understanding of transport poverty.

## **THInC – Integrated Transport for Health & Social Care**

THInC continues to be funded by NHS Grampian, Nestrans, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council. The travel advice line is included in Vaccination appointment letters. Feedback from members of the public and professionals continues to be positive about the service.

NHSG have formed an internal group looking at hospital discharge transport.

THInC in the City has had funding confirmed by Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership.

Funding from Nestrans is being used to develop a website for THInC. Work has yet to begin on this, but it is hoped to have appropriate staff working on this soon.

## **NHS Sustrans Engagement Officer Funding**

A successful bid to Sustrans has been awarded funding for a 3 year post to promote active and sustainable travel within NHSG. Fully funded by Sustrans in year 1 and then funding split between Sustrans, NHSG and Nestrans in years 2 and 3. A recruitment process is underway. This development will significantly help progress

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the delivery of actions in support of the NHSG Travel Plan and is a positive outcome of the HTAP programme.

### Spaces for People (SfP) and NHS Grampian

The HTAP Programme Manager supported NHS Grampian in making a bid to the Spaces for People funding. A successful bid was made and £849,000 awarded. NHSG have seconded a Project Manager to manage delivery of SfP initiatives across their estate.

### NHSG Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Group

The HTAP Programme Manager attends a newly formed NHSG EV Infrastructure group and links have been established with the relevant colleagues in local authorities on operational matters.

### National Health Drones Innovation Group

The HTAP Programme Manager is a member of twice monthly meeting of NHS Innovation Leads discussing the potential use of drone technology to reduce time consuming transportation by road in health settings. For example, robot controlled drones delivering lifesaving defibrillators to remote locations. The national group is developing real world trials in each health board area.

<b>Project Title</b>	HyTrEc2 project – Hydrogen Vehicles	<b>Action Area</b>	Effective Car use
<b>Action</b>	Support new low carbon vehicle initiatives and implement associated infrastructure where appropriate and feasible.	<b>Delivery</b>	FY2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	ERDF Interreg 50% support	<b>Progress</b>	ongoing

In this match funded EU funded project HyTrEc2, Aberdeenshire Council concentrates its efforts on exploring the use of hydrogen fuel as an option for a future Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) fleet. The project is currently scheduled to run until October 2022. An extension of time and funding has been applied for along with the funding for retrofitting hydrogen to a trial heavier vehicle.

Aberdeenshire Council currently has 4 hydrogen powered vehicles in use deployed with Transportation and Waste Services. These vehicles are leased through Scottish Government Switched on Fleet grant which along with HyTrEc2 project funding results in near zero overall acquisition cost to the Council. The “Powered by Hydrogen” branding has attracted a great deal of public interest.

The vehicles are monitored by the project partners to inform the debate about future fleet options for such issues as fuel consumption and reliability. The high level review

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of potential for the operation of battery electric and for hydrogen vehicles within shorter term planning horizons has been completed and a proposal developed for further work to inform ZEV policy decisions.

<b>Project Title</b>	G-Patra Project demand responsive transport	<b>Action Area</b>	Passenger Transport
<b>Action</b>	Undertake a comprehensive review of how to deliver an integrated passenger transport system.	<b>Delivery</b>	FY 2021/22
<b>Budget</b>	ERDF Interreg 50% support / PTU	<b>Progress</b>	ongoing

The EU match funded project “G-Patra” Aberdeenshire Council is now running to December 2021 and has supported 2 ‘in-house’ operated A2B dial-a-bus services in the Turriff area (Turriff Town and Turriff Rural) since November 2018. These 2 ‘in-house’ minibuses also operate school transport services to Auchterless Primary and Turriff Academy. An application has been made to extend the project with the application drafted to support, in part, the App aspects of the Enhanced DRT pilot project currently being progressed in the Inverurie Area.

## Appendix A

**STPR2 Comments Forms****Privacy Statement:****Privacy and Your Personal Information**

This activity is being carried out by the STPR2 Consultant Team (Jacobs and AECOM) on behalf of Transport Scotland. The activity is being carried out under the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines and your data will be aggregated so you will not be identified in the reporting of the feedback findings. We will combine the information you provide with that of other respondents to understand views on the transport related problems and opportunities across different regions and the country as a whole as well as the transport planning objectives. The information gathered will be used to inform the work of STPR2 and data may also be shared with Regional Transport Partnerships and local authorities to assist with regional and local work in their area.

To find out why Transport Scotland collect personal information and how it is used, please see Transport Scotland's privacy policy and AECOM's privacy policy data processors. Aggregated data will be shared with Jacobs. Any personal information you provide will be securely stored by AECOM to build an understanding of key issues for consideration in STPR2. Once the project is complete this data will then be deleted.



**STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report:**

This Comments Form seeks to understand your views on the **eight Phase 1 themes and associated Phase 1 interventions** within the **STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report**. We recommend that you review the material within the report prior to you providing comments. The form should take 10 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.

The closing date for comments is midnight on 31 March 2021.

Demographic Questions		
1		<p>Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Organisation</b></li> </ul>
2		<p>If responding as an organisation, what is the name of your organisation? <b>Aberdeenshire Council</b></p>
3		<p>Please indicate which category best describes your organisation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Local Authority</b></li> </ul>
4	<p>Only for those responding as an individual</p>	<p>Which of these age groups are you in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <del>16-17</del></li> <li>▪ <del>18-24</del></li> <li>▪ <del>25-34</del></li> <li>▪ <del>35-44</del></li> <li>▪ <del>45-54</del></li> <li>▪ <del>55+</del></li> <li>▪ <del>Prefer not to say</del></li> </ul>

**Comments Form STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report**

5

Do you feel the eight themes within the STPR2 Phase 1 capture what needs to be done in the short term, in relation to the transport investment priorities?

- **Neither agree nor disagree**

The introduction section is well written and is very clear on the objectives of the Strategic Transport Projects (Review). The 20 year planning horizon is appropriate and chimes with the inter-government – session approach adopted by the Housing 2020-2040. Long term thinking is always welcomed. We note that the focus is on key strategic transport assets and one could assume that the logic and resulting policy arising from the review, will be expected to influence sub-regional transport planning (i.e. locations NOT on the trunk road network or rail network). This could be made clearer. Beyond unspecified trunk road improvements and Aberdeen city mass transit there is little in terms of specific projects for Aberdeenshire and the North East. There has to be questions asked whether the recommendations truly meet the objectives of being capable of being significantly progressed in the short term.

The Policy Context section is refreshing and understandable and it is a very useful analysis of the objectives of the different policies and strategies as they relate to transport. This is real and tangible evidence of a commitment to a joined up policy approach and helps us gain a greater understanding on the new direction that the Scottish Government is accelerating to. Things like energy efficiency, reducing the need to travel, zero carbon, access to open space, promotion of place, 20 minute neighbourhoods, promotion of active travel, infrastructure first etc are now common to almost everything coming from the Scottish Government.

There remains a great deal of uncertainty on the short, medium and long term impacts of Covid 19 and the response, so it is perhaps too early to state categorically whether the themes outlined will address the post-Covid 19 world although it is a reasonable assumption that many of the issues pre-Covid 19 will remain as they are deep-seated. The most immediate challenge we see as a Council is the future viability of bus services as a mass public transport provision closely followed by the impact on roads and bridge maintenance of the extended lockdown periods and fiscal retrenchment.

6		<p>Do you feel the themes appropriately address challenges and opportunities described within the report?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Yes</b></li> </ul>
6b		<p>Please use the space below to provide any further comments on the challenges and opportunities described within the report:</p> <p>We have provided general comments on the content and approach of STPR2 in the attached letter and detailed further comments on the specific actions in the appendices to this comments form.</p> <p>Arguably, the greatest challenge to local authorities in respect of transport concern issues which are specifically excluded from the STPR2 process - namely the future resilience and reconstruction of the local road and bridge network and the revenue subsidy support for bus services.</p> <p>These issues have been exacerbated directly by the impact of Covid 19 with future uncertainty in light of the fiscal constraint on local authorities.</p> <p>The pandemic has, however, enabled a once in a lifetime opportunity to experiment with different ways of working and how this might impact on transport demands, encouraging people to travel less, more actively and stay local. With the Spaces for People programme we have seen what a 20:20 vision might look like – 20mph limits in our town centres and people engaging in 20 minute walkable neighbourhoods for leisure, retail and work.</p> <p>However, there will be required to be a much greater change in both how we plan and construct housing developments and how we manage our roads and streets if such change is to be a long-term feature. How NTS2, STPR2 and NPF4 interact will be crucial in this respect.</p> <p>The present and future condition and maintenance of our roads and bridges is particularly impacted by climate change; and the quality of surfaces and the connections between places has a material impact on the uptake of active travel options. This is an area almost wholly unaddressed by STPR2 except for passing references to the Trunk Road Network. Our communities make little distinction between strategic and local transport issues.</p> <p>One of the key elements to this strategy will be around people’s attitudes to change and how this could become more polarised over time, with rural/urban and income levels being key factors. However, the alignment with other</p>

		strategies would seem to suggest a joined-up approach that could address this in a holistic way.
7		<p>Do you feel that the Phase 1 interventions associated with the eight themes support the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Agree</li> </ul>
8		<p>Please use the space below to provide any further comments that you wish to make on the eight themes. We welcome the broad thrust of the eight themes and feel they broadly represent the key issues that need to be tackled by STPR2. In respect of the Transport Planning Objectives we particularly welcome the addition of network resilience as a key issue for Phase2 – however we would expect this to reflect the challenges in rail operational resilience and the local road and bridge network as well as trunk roads. Revenue funding may be out of scope but capitalised maintenance – long term investment in reconstruction and resilience should be scoped in.</p> <p>This would reflect and respond to the recommendations made to the Cabinet Secretary by the Scottish Parliament’s Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee in its Pre-Budget Scrutiny Report on Road Maintenance in November 2019 which stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A step change is required in the planning, funding and delivery of roads maintenance services</li> <li>• 37 per cent of the local roads network and 13 per cent of trunk roads require repair.</li> <li>• £1.8 billion needs to be spent to bring the local roads network up to a satisfactory standard</li> <li>• Calls for the development of a National Transport Improvement Project, supported by substantial additional investment in roads maintenance by the Scottish Government</li> <li>• Scottish Government should give maintenance of Scotland’s trunk and local roads networks a significantly enhanced profile as part of the development of the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2).</li> <li>• <b>In particular, the proposed National Transport Improvement Project focusing on roads maintenance should be included in the revised Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, with the overarching objective of delivering a package of action which will significantly reduce the maintenance backlog on both trunk and local roads across Scotland over a defined period.</b></li> <li>• The Committee also calls for the proposed National Transport Improvement Project on road maintenance to include proposals for better integration of cycle and footpath maintenance with wider road maintenance work to support policies designed to encourage active travel.</li> </ul>

9		<p>How well do the Phase 1 interventions respond to the uncertainty in travel demand and behaviour that we face in the short term due to COVID-19?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't know / No opinion</li> </ul>
10		<p>How well do the Phase 1 interventions support Scotland's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the short-term?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't know / No opinion</li> </ul>
11		<p>Please use the space below to highlight the Phase 1 themes and interventions, that you particularly support:</p> <p>It is difficult to know whether the proposed interventions in Phase 1 will effectively support recovery from the pandemic in the short term or address the uncertainty. Given the challenge of encouraging people back onto public transport when Government has explicitly told people not to use public transport is going to be a significant challenge when bus patronage was already declining.</p>
12		<p>Please use the space below to highlight where you disagree with any the Phase 1 themes or interventions.</p> <p>We have highlighted in some detail in the covering letter and under the specific headings below where we differ from Transport Scotland in our conclusions.</p>
13		<p>Please use the space below to provide any other comments you wish to make on the STPR2: Update and Phase 1 Recommendations report.</p> <p>Please refer to the cover letter above and the specific detailed comments below.</p>

**STPR2 Transport Options Questions:**

This Comments Form is aimed at capturing your views on the **STPR2 Transport Options outlined within the Case for Change document**. It also seeks views on the challenges and opportunities related to COVID-19 as well as the STPR2 engagement process to date. We recommend that you review the material within the report prior to you providing comments. The form should take 10 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.

The closing date for comments is midnight 31 March 2021.

Demographic Questions		
1		Are you responding as an individual or an organisation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organisation</li> </ul>
2	(for those responding as an organisation)	If responding as an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?  <b>Aberdeenshire Council</b>
3	(for those responding as an organisation)	Please indicate which category best describes your organisation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Local Authority</b></li> </ul>
4	Only for those responding as an individual	Which of these age groups are you in? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <del>16-17</del></li> <li>▪ <del>18-24</del></li> <li>▪ <del>25-34</del></li> <li>▪ <del>35-44</del></li> <li>▪ <del>45-54</del></li> <li>▪ <del>55+</del></li> <li>▪ <del>Prefer not to say</del></li> </ul>

Comments Form STPR2 Case for Change and Transport Options		
		<p>Which of the Case for Change reports have you read prior to providing comments? Tick as many that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Argyll &amp; Bute Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Ayrshire &amp; Arran Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Edinburgh &amp; the South East Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Forth Valley Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Glasgow City Region Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Highlands &amp; Islands Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>National Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Shetland Islands Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <del>Tay Cities Case for Change</del></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>North East Scotland Strategic Transport Appraisal (case for change)</b></li> </ul>
5		<p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The recommended transport options for STPR2 are strategic covering a range of modes and geographies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree</li> </ul>
6		<p>How well do you feel the transport options recommended for further consideration address the problems, opportunities and objectives for strategic transport connections in Scotland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/No opinion</li> </ul>

7		<p>Do you have any other comments on the transport options identified?</p> <p>In “Establishing Transport Planning Objectives” we are pleased to see that predict and provide road building is no longer being promoted. In terms of land use planning, the STPR2 sub objectives (table 1) illustrate the many cases where there is a clear cross-over. Many of these will require coordinated action in NPF4 and the development plan.</p> <p>As outlined above, we welcome the addition of resilience and climate change adaptation as a TPO however this is a much wider issue than just the Trunk Road network.</p> <p>In the “National Case for Change” a number of self-evident truths are stated. Within these statements are some key challenges for achieving change, such as the fact that changes to modal shift, while to be welcomed, “will require significant changes to the complex behaviours of users” and that “transport is a derived demand” requiring change in other sectors and may not be within the scope of STPR2. It was unexpected to see the caveats for the review to be articulated so early, and this reflects itself in some of the Phase 1 recommendations. It is made clear what we have to do to achieve the national outcomes, but it may be that the interventions proposed are either insufficient to achieve them or are dependent on a elements out with our control to achieve them. It is debatable that we can see the monumental changes to people’s transport decisions as a result of Covid 19 to be illustrative of the step change in behaviour that is looked for and note with interest the contents of Figure 8 which immediately poses the question of whether the “little more” working from home and home schooling will offset the 40-50% increase in those favouring the private car over public transport. Walking and cycling increases will probably persist, but significant action would have to be taken (and is proposed) to offset the potential increases in car travel beyond the 20 minute neighbourhood (and realistically the concept of work, play, live all within 4km of homes would seem to be a good idea, but not the whole answer). We agree with the last paragraph of 3.35 that the timescale for the scenarios are medium and long term and it would be wrong to consider the details of the current Covid 19 pandemic. The self-evident truths existed before Covid and have been the focus of policy attention for many years and yet private car growth continues to be forecast to rise.</p>
8		<p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: It is clear what the next steps are when considering the transport options.</p>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neither agree nor disagree</li> </ul>
9		<p>Do you believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will bring about challenges and/or opportunities relevant to planning future transport investment through STPR2? Please select all that apply below (NOTE: this will only be possible for the top two in the list)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes, challenges</li> <li>▪ Yes, opportunities</li> </ul>
10		<p>What do you believe could be the key medium to longer-term challenges relevant to STPR2 arising from the COVID-19 pandemic on travel demand and patterns in your region / nationally?</p> <p>The collapse in public transport use and the attendant rise in private car use.</p>
11		<p>What do you believe could be the key medium to longer-term opportunities relevant to STPR2 arising from the COVID-19 pandemic on travel demand and patterns in your region / nationally?</p> <p>People have seen how things can be done differently especially working from home, being active and shopping locally which has been like an experiment in behaviour change.</p>
12		<p>How well do you feel the Case for Change element of STPR2 has engaged with stakeholders and the public?</p> <p>It is always difficult to know how engaged and well-informed people feel with high level policy initiatives.</p>
13		<p>Have you or your organisation participated in events or previous online surveys in relation to STPR2? Tick all that apply:</p> <p>Workshops</p>

14		<p>What worked well and what could have been improved in the Case for Change stakeholder and public engagement?</p> <p>STPR2 felt like a collaborative and partnership process at the start but towards the end the focus has been on updates and there has been feeling that the conclusions had been made and comments were not going to have an impact on the final report.</p>
15		<p>Overall, has the Case for Change element of STPR2 met your or your organisation's expectations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It has met some of my or my organisation's expectations</li> </ul>
16	<p>Answer only for if you responded to Q15 – It has met some / No, it has not my or my organisations expectations</p>	<p>Please explain why the Case for Change element of STPR2 <b>has not</b> met all your organisation's expectations?</p> <p>As noted above STPR2 has not felt, in the end, like as collaborative a process as was promised at the outset.</p> <p>There is a further dialogue to be had on how the 20 identified actions can be delivered and how they fit with our City Region Deal agenda and attendant funding.</p>
17		<p>Please provide any other comments on the Case for Change element of STPR2?</p> <p>Please see Appendices, below, with detailed comments on priorities, issues and interventions.</p>

## **Appendix B: Aberdeenshire Council's Comments on STPR2 Phase 1 Proposals**

### **Intervention 1 – Development and Delivery of Active Freeways**

Broadly welcome.

“Active Freeways” are an interesting model to facilitate intra-urban active travel, but question if it would be a viable alternative to motorised traffic for the significant distances between rural communities, where the “derived demand” will probably default to the convenience and accessibility of the private car rather than a bike ride on a 60mph primary route as is the case for many communities. As part of the toolkit to promote active travel within our towns, however, it makes a lot of sense.

Active freeways should also look beyond cycling to active movement in walking and wheeling more generally. Our experience of the Peterhead Cycling Demonstration Town project was that the investment in wider shared use paths did not lead to as great an increase in cycling as anticipated. However it caught the zeitgeist of the rise of JogScotland and precipitated a significant increase in the number of people walking and running on an obvious network of paths which connected most of the town in inter-locking circuits.

The opportunities to invest in expanding existing footway and footpath provision as well as reallocating road space are evident here.

### **Intervention 2 – Expansion of 20mph zones**

Agreed.

“Expansion of the 20mph speed limit” is one area where regulation could make a significant change to modal choice and behaviour. If cars travel at the same speed as bicycles then the “convenience” element of the equation is removed. The proposed implementation is, perhaps too limited to make a real and significant difference. The lessons from Edinburgh should be embraced, and the focus of the proposals should be shifted from mere support for “appropriate” and “ambitious” Local Authority programmes for traffic speed reduction to specific action to reduce the speed limit universally within all streets other than strategic routes (an inter settlement roads). An intervention to conduct a “review to establish appropriate speed limits across the urban and rural roads network, including different vehicle types” would seem to be avoiding this clear obvious and evidenced action.

The experience of Spaces for People has demonstrated a number of areas in town centres where we feel there would be value in making 20mph zones permanent. The wider adoption of 20mph limits is welcomed, this should be coupled and promoted with 20 minute neighbourhoods as the 20:20 vision – slower cars, safer walking. There is a concern that, having abandoned the legislation around a national speed limit policy of 20mph as the default in on restricted speed roads in urban areas, the cost of implementing wider 20mph limits, in terms of traffic orders and signage will fall upon local authorities. A review of the Traffic Order process for 20mph limits to make it easier to implement would be welcome.

### **Intervention 3 – Influencing Travel Choices**

Broadly support.

Under “Influencing travel choices”, we are particularly pleased to see mention of the need to reduce the need to travel as an example of action that could be taken to encourage people to travel sustainably or not travel at all. However this principle would seem to be at odds with other Government priorities, particularly the Government priority of repopulating rural areas. It should be cautioned against actions which promote to secure the future of remote rural areas being transmogrified into encouraging development anywhere in rural areas. There is a balance between the number of people who might wish to reside in such areas and their impact, but we seem to be getting a mixed message from Government policy makers about exactly what the objective of their policy is and whether promoting widespread rural development in popular areas meets the objectives of “reducing the need to travel”. When you live in a rural area off the strategic routes between towns the first presumption will be to jump in the car, not book a Demand responsive bus, or cycle to the bus route. Consistency in the Governments policy messages is required.

The pandemic has demonstrated people will change if the circumstances are right but, as what has been demonstrated over the second lock-down, people will tend to return to established patterns of behaviour unless there is a compelling reason not to, such as the opportunity to work at home. The return to schools has seen a concomitant return to using the car for the school run despite the rise of leisure walking.

### **Intervention 4 – Transport’s Contribution Towards Place Making Principles**

This is crucial but in a sense is the wrong way round. It is place-making or rather housing development and a lack of thoughtful place design which contributes to transport and transport issues. Thus, poorly designed developments with a lack of facilities and a distinct lack of walkable neighbourhood design necessitate and encourage car use especially for short trips. The planning system is key here and there remains a degree of frustration among planners and Councillors that we still cannot deliver the kinds of developments that public policy has held up as its aim for the past 30 years; that is mixed use developments with services and amenities at their heart and clear walkable links to existing settlements.

Ultimately this is a local authority challenge but requires policy and a planning culture to support it. We welcome the review of Designing Streets which has, where it has been able to be enforced, contributed to better developments across the country.

In relation to the “Creating smart and sustainable towns and villages” we should be supporting the concepts of active travel, to the extent of taking road space for walking and cycling as part of the suite of measures that discriminates in favour of non-motorised modes. It is unclear how in the context of strategic investments Transport Scotland would achieve these aims. The specific example they give

(demonstrator project where there is community severance by a trunk road) has relevance, but within Aberdeenshire there are only a couple of places where that is a specific issue (and dozens of towns who would benefit from other place-based active travel investments). Caution must be expressed that even when Transport Scotland “support” transport interventions proposed by the Authority it is sometimes very difficult to implement solutions, and perhaps a stronger steer is required from Government on this front. Aspiration alone will not deliver reallocation of road space, or park and ride facilities.

### **Intervention 5 – Guidance and Framework for Delivering Mobility Hubs**

Agree.

However further work is needed to define the idea. Park and Ride provision has effectively been exhausted in most areas and is often underutilised in our experience. Much is dependent on supply meeting a clear need or creating an opportunity – e.g. Ferrytoll and Edinburgh Airport.

### **Intervention 6 – DRT and MaaS**

Agree.

However there is a wider need than that envisaged in the report. For instance a key issue is access to healthcare – evidenced by the 2020-21 Flu and Covid-19 vaccination programmes which have been more widely distributed among local centres than previous programmes. There is a need for greater involvement of health – something we have pioneered with partner organisations through the HTAP (Health and Transport action Plan) initiative. There may be scope to expand DRT to counter the potential contraction of scheduled bus services post-pandemic if the fall in patronage forces an industry contraction.

### **Intervention 7 – Roadspace Reallocation**

Experience with Spaces for People has been mixed although it has been a valuable experiment in being able to deploy changes in a short period of time and observe a real-time impact. There is scope for making certain changes permanent where these have proven effective and have community support. In the longer term the Traffic Order process should be reviewed to explore if the approach could be streamlined.

In “Transforming cities” it is clear to us that the palimpsest of existing uses and owners in urban areas makes providing new active travel route exceedingly difficult, and we would support the concept (as noted above) of reallocating road space for active travel as both the carrot and the stick to encourage active travel.

Likewise under the theme “Enhancing public transport”, reallocation of road space for busses would seem to be an appropriate action (if not particularly relevant to the scale of settlement we have in Aberdeenshire).

### **Intervention 8 – Facilities at Major Rail Stations**

Reference is made to Aberdeen Joint Station in respect of ongoing schemes, however the investment – welcome though it is – amounts to a facelift rather than wholesale investment in capacity and passenger comfort. The opportunities which expansion of the capacity of the station to the north would open up for a metro rail system are significant and should form part of STPR2 Phase 2.

### **Intervention 9 – Glasgow and Edinburgh Mass Transit Strategies**

Noted.

The North East's Regional Transport Strategy delivered through Nestrans, promotes proposals for an Aberdeen Bus Rapid Transit project and noted that this features as a potential project for phase 2.

### **Intervention 10 – Roadspace Reallocation for Buses**

The Bus Partnership Fund programme is an important delivery mechanism for this however it relies on local support to steer through the necessary traffic orders. It is notable that few major bus priority measures have been introduced in Scottish cities in the last twenty years since the Greenways project in Edinburgh.

### **Intervention 11 – Supporting Integrated Journeys at Ferry Terminals**

The linkage between the Northlink terminal within Aberdeen Harbour, and Aberdeen's main transport links are important, as are any softer supporting measures (signs and other information). This intervention should also ensure that information and supporting measures are considered for those taking vehicles to the ferry terminal (cars and freight).

### **Intervention 12 – Infrastructure to Provide Access for All at Rail Stations**

In North East, we are promoting through the LRDF physical access improvements at Inch. This station serves a very large rural catchment, and the distance to the next nearest station with accessible platforms is considerable, creating a real barrier to the rail network for this population. We would urge Transport Scotland to support this as an early deliverable in Phase 1.

### **Intervention 13 – Investment in Low Carbon and Alternative Fuel Systems**

Under "Supporting the transition to low carbon transport", we are pleased to see that the strategic development of hydrogen infrastructure is cited. EV's generate a whole host of currently unresolved issues relating to the material cost of providing the scale of batteries that might be needed and the unrecoverable use of rare earth materials when they are disposed of after a relatively short life span. Electricity generation and transmission networks are not in place to meet the Governments objectives and some of the estimates of the cost of repurposing electricity grids for 100% EV take up are extremely high. EV's have their place in a future transport scenarios, but

other fuel sources which better embrace the principals of the circular economy should also be promoted.

#### **Intervention 14 – Rail Decarbonisation**

Electrification of the East Coast Mainline to Aberdeen would have many benefits both in terms of carbon reduction in the rail network and in the speed and reliability of services which could encourage more people to use rail services for travel to central Scotland. Through Nestrans we are engaging with Scottish Government and Transport Scotland on the potential for a hydrogen rail pilot in North East of Scotland.

#### **Intervention 15 – Welfare Facilities for Hauliers**

In relation to supporting a viable freight industry, there are calls for additional lorry parks in Aberdeenshire that we cannot justify at the present time, and we would welcome clarity on the conflicting views we have received in relation to the need, capacity and probable use (as we are at the end of a supply chain network, not in the middle of it) of additional rest spaces for hauliers.

#### **Intervention 16 – Rail Freight**

Agreed.

However the challenges to making rail freight more viable are not inconsiderable. It is ironic that the phasing out of coal power generation has undermined the financial viability of rail freight as a whole.

#### **Intervention 17 – Investment in the Strategic Road Network Asset**

Generally supportive but there is an inequity when the local road network which includes regionally strategic roads – what would be referred to as the Major Road Network in England - is specifically excluded.

The underpinning logic for action under this intervention extends to the same interventions for local roads and the regional major road network – including former Trunk Roads.

Further, references to network resilience in terms of climate change adaptation even more apply to the local road and especially bridge network where local authorities face acute challenges in maintaining transportation links in rural communities.

The road network has, in many places, reached the end of its natural life and is in need of structural capitalised investment – reconstruction not resurfacing – to deal with climate change and the demands of heavier traffic load from HGVs, LGVs and light goods vehicles (courier vans).

We would urge that proposals for the A90 Toll of Birness interchange (ToBi) project come forward early in the STPR2 plan period as we see this as an essential investment and one which is relatively straightforward to progress.

### **Intervention 18 – Access to Argyll and Bute**

While recognising the particular issues associated with the notorious Rest and Be Thankful (RBT) the inclusion of this specific issue as a standalone intervention seems out of balance to the broad thrust of the remainder of STPR2 and is a project more associated with the approach in STPR1.

### **Intervention 19 – Investment in Ferries and Ports**

Any investment in Aberdeen Harbour for the Northern Isles Ferry Services would be welcomed.

### **Intervention 20 – Speed Management Plan**

Agreed.

As a Council we have recently reviewed and agreed a new speed limit policy and will be interested to see what comes forward from this proposal for a review of speed limits and speed management.

We support opportunities to review the HGV speed limit on specific routes. We would be request that the A90(N) is considered and would like to explore sections of the A947 also in this respect.



**Appendix C: Comments on STPR2 Phase 2 Long List**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Grouping Name</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Active Travel	Access to Bikes	Agree. We are observing a grass roots movement around micro-hire schemes.
	Active Travel Hubs	No comments.
	NCN – more settlements connected	Agree. However we have seen sections of NCN Route 1 removed from the route due to unsuitability. Segregated routes between towns would increase usage however land acquisition is a long process.
	Cycle / Public transport integration	No comment.
	NCN – Upgrade of existing routes	Agree. Aberdeenshire is pursuing some schemes already but delivery is slow due to resource constraints and the difficulties acquiring land.
	Information and signage for active travel	No comment.
	Major trip attractor accessibility by active travel.	No comment.
	Liveable neighbourhoods	Agree. Again, this is supported by the 20:20 vision of 20mph streets with 20-minute walkable neighbourhoods. This aspiration seems to overlap with STPR2 Phase 1 actions and largely reflects the current policy position which local authorities find challenging to enforce through the planning system.
	Strategic Road Severance	Agree. However, issue is wider than trunk roads – and can apply to now de-trunked roads too – for example Bucksburn in Aberdeen.
	Public bike hire schemes	Agree. Currently being progressed in Aberdeen. Not clear how this is different to Access to Bikes.
Quiet Roads	A trial being progressed in Aberdeenshire area; support for non-prescribed signage and other aspects would be appreciated.	

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
	School Active Travel	There is a long history of work in this area and Aberdeenshire has a dedicated team, supported by Sustrans, working on this. The question now is what are the outstanding barriers to a step change? Likely to overlap with other aspects such as 20:20, separated active travel routes and wider culture change such as flexible working enabling parents to walk, wheel or cycle to school and not have to onward commute.
	Strategic Expansion of NCN	Noted. However not clear how this is different from other NCN aspirations and again dependent on delivery of more separated cycle routes. We have noticed that where communities are empowered to negotiate and deliver their own active pathways between villages with support of local landowners then this is a more effective delivery mechanism. It requires a flexibility on standards by both Councils and funding bodies but leads to actual delivery of projects on a much reduced timescale compare to local authorities pursuing the same projects.
	Footway enhancements on Strategic Roads	Agree. However this is an issue much beyond Trunk Roads. It is an established policy intervention by local authorities and others. Needs to take into account revenue maintenance implications.
	Active Freeways	Agreed but unclear where this is different from Phase 2 scheme unless all Phase 1 schemes are automatically built into Phase 2 long term?
	Thriving Centres	Agreed. However needs to dovetail with actions around liveable, walkable neighbourhoods, and place making principles – 20:20. Dependent on both Councils and the private sector and as much an economic development issue as transport. Previous transport interventions such as mass pedestrianisation is now felt by some to have been counterproductive to thriving town centres and there is a movement to open up street to traffic in

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
		some towns so it is not clear this is a one-way street.
	Transport Node Connectivity	Noted – similar to other actions such as active travel mobility hubs and trip generators.
	Village – town active travel connections.	Agreed. Previous comments on community-led pathways, relaxation of standards from funders and challenges for local authority delivery.
	Former rail route re-use for active travel	Agreed. Successfully delivered in Aberdeenshire as Deeside Way and Formartine and Buchan Way. However revenue maintenance is a long-term and increasing issue.
	Urban placemaking	Agreed but should form part of wider package around placemaking, thriving centres, 20:20 vision etc. Significant duplication with previously identified measures. Significant involvement of local authorities.
Behaviour Change	School Streets	Noted. Is this a re-introduction of the Play Streets of the 1960s and 1970s? An interesting proposal but challenges locally to implement and restricting access to streets with schools on can cause displacement which causes issues for other residents. Again, a relaxation of Traffic Order process might enable some of these schemes to be progressed at greater pace.
	National behaviour change programme	Noted but needs to review and reflect what works and why previous initiative shave failed to bring about step change sought.
	Regional Travel Change programme	See above.
	Expansion of car clubs	No comment.
	Improved information on sustainable travel modes.	As with behaviour change, need to identify what is missing/gaps.
	Sustainable travel towns/cities	Should form part of other proposals around place-making and active places.

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
	Road Safety Campaigns	Agreed. Again a question of what is needed now to take road safety to next level. Perhaps need to target specific issues such as elderly drivers.
	Travel Demand Management	Noted. Key to reducing overall vehicle Kilometres. Linked to thriving towns and settlements, designs of developments and flexible working practices by public and private sector. Planning policy should encourage live-work spaces in new developments – garden offices-workshops and such like.
	Low Emissions Zone	Already being pursued by four cities through Transport Act. Arguably a declining intervention as number of low emissions vehicles increase as market changes.
Bus	Bus Priority Measures	Noted.
	Decarbonisation of the bus network	Agreed. Will require much greater support for private companies but an important new measure.
	DRT / Community Transport (excluding revenue funding)	<p>We support this as we have an established approach involving community transport, Council run services and the private sector. However, revenue funding is the key to this sector as by its nature the services are not commercially viable and without significant subsidy and support will not be sustained.</p> <p>Perhaps opportunities to look again at the Post Bus model – possibly utilising private delivery firms.</p> <p>Looking to the future of public transport provision in rural areas, we are at the point of requiring entirely new models of funding and provision. Therefore, to exclude revenue provision from a strategic review process is counter-productive. Capital investment is welcome to enable appropriate vehicles to be procured however it is the ongoing costs and revenue from these services that affect their long-term viability.</p>

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
Rail	Central / North East Scotland Rail Improvements	Welcome the inclusion of this aspiration in the STPR2. The Councils, Nestrans and City Region Deal are looking to see meaningful journey time reductions from Aberdeen to the central belt and beyond; improvement in local rail connectivity north and south of Aberdeen; and improved route performance. It is not clear, given the stated scope exclusions at the start of the document, how STPR2 fits with rail projects prioritisation, the GRIP process and the pipeline approach? One issue is the need to apply both STAG and GRIP to every strategic rail intervention which is a duplication of work.
	Glasgow, West Coast, South West Scotland rail improvements	No comment.
	Edinburgh, East Coast and Borders Rail improvements	No comment.
	Highland and Far North Rail improvements	No comment.
	Decarbonisation of the Rail Network	The early electrification to Aberdeen is welcomed with a medium-term extension to Inverurie. Electrification could support deliver the ambitions of the Aberdeen Central Belt project as well as decarbonisation. We would also like to see Hydrogen being raised up the agenda and believe Aberdeen has great potential to service and support Hydrogen train services.
	High Speed Rail	Noted. However there is concern that this investment will be at the expense of investment elsewhere across Scotland which could deliver wider benefits with greater impact.
	New Rail Lines, re-opening of rail lines	There is an established local aspiration to see rail services reintroduced on the Aberdeen to Ellon line (Peterhead and Fraserburgh). Previous studies undertaken by Nestrans indicated that such a project was potentially viable in

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
		cost-revenue terms. However, based on current guidance and the need to fund improvements at Aberdeen Joint Station there is limited prospect of this project meeting the economic investment threshold to unlock the necessary funding.
	New Rail Stations	Ongoing and previous work undertaken covering Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire has developed the case for considering new stations north and south of Aberdeen Station and enhancing the track and signalling and platform arrangements at the north end of Aberdeen Joint Station to enable this.
	New Sleeper routes	No comment.  We support the continued operation of the Caledonian Sleeper from Aberdeen.
	Rolling Stock Quality	Noted.
Public Transport	Public Transport coverage, frequency and service integration	The exclusion of revenue funding from the review needs to be rethought as there is no other way to explore this area in its entirety and to make realistic recommendations without the issue of revenue being explored and taken into account.
	Mobility Hubs and multi-modal interchanges	Agreed but need to exist as part of wider considerations around design and operation of towns and cities.
	Regional passenger facilities/station enhancements	Agreed. Facilities at Montrose Station a key issue for travel from south Aberdeenshire to central belt.
	Integrated public transport ticketing	Noted. An ongoing aspiration as indicated by the new Transport Act.
Ferries / Island Connectivity	Ferry service improvements on CHFS and NIFS network	No comment.
	New Ferry Routes (internal to Scotland)	No comment.

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
	New International Ferry Routes	No comment.
	Decarbonisation of Ferry Network	No comment.
	Fixed Links	No comment.
Road	NW Trunk Road improvements	No comment.
	NE Trunk Road improvements	<p>Highly welcome the inclusion of this. The key priority for Aberdeenshire arising from Nestrans' work and local campaigning is the A90(N) Ellon to Peterhead and Fraserburgh. An early deliverable would be clear support for the Toll of Birness interchange (ToBi) project to upgrade this key junction.</p> <p>We would also highlight the longer-term needs related to A90(S) of Aberdeen with regards to route standard as with the A96 Kintore to Aberdeen section as part of the A96 dualling programme.</p>
	SW Trunk Road improvements	No comment.
	SE Trunk Road improvements	No comment.
	Low Emission/ULEV/ Electric vehicle action plan.	Agreed. Need to build in future replacement of EV Chargers and the dilapidation costs.
	Road Safety (Vision Zero) Measures	Agreed. North East Road Safety Partnership has shown the way in working together towards this goal.
	Trunk Road Space Reallocation	Noted but again feel that this goes beyond the Trunk Road network.
	Review of national speed limits	Welcome opportunity to review HGV speed limits on certain A class roads as sated above – sections of the A90 and A947 early candidates.

Category	Grouping Name	Comment
Freight	Decarbonisation of Freight Deliveries	Agreed.
	Freight consolidation centres	Interesting concept, but would probably have a commercial delivery pathway, or require additional revenue support. This was considered in North East as part of Civitas project, but not progressed as not supported by key partners.
	Freight Rest Stops	This would be supported where there is a need, but delivery pathway important. Local and regional input important, may also have planning implications.
	Freight Reliability and Efficiency	Agreed.
	Last-mile logistics	Noted. Recent work by Nestrans has delivered some success in Aberdeen City Centre for businesses through the Lockdown with Cargo Bikes.
	Sustainable mode shift of freight	Agreed.
	Rail freight enhancements	Noted. Work already ongoing in this area.
Technology	Connected Autonomous Vehicles	No comment.
	Co-operative intelligent transport systems	No comment.
	Transport Scotland Operational communications	No comment.
	Nationwide Open Data, Passenger information and communications	Welcomed but again should not be limited to Trunk Roads.
	Adaptive traffic control on trunk road	Needs to also consider an interface with the local road network in order to maximise the benefits.



Category	Grouping Name	Comment
	Incident management system upgrade	Noted, but needs to explore linkages to local authority systems and police alerts especially in winter.
	ITS Roadside infrastructure on Motorways and Trunk Road	As above.
Multimodal	Improve Routes to Major Ports and Airports	Agree. Would press to ensure Peterhead and Fraserburgh are recognised as major ports due to their key role in fish landings and fish processing for Scottish economy.
	Improved resilience of the trunk road and rail networks	Strongly agree. However, work needs to be extended to all grades of roads and bridges. The inclusion of this section, while welcome and supported, would appear to contradict the exclusion of maintenance and revenue funding from the original scope?
	MaaS digital platform	Supported, but needs close integration with range of activities across Scotland in community and local authority transport as well as commercial operators.
Mass Transit	Glasgow Metro	No comment.
	Edinburgh Mass Transit Options	No comment.
	Aberdeen Mass Transit Options	Welcome the inclusion of this in Phase 2 - Proposals for Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) are key element of the Nestrans RTS.

Our ref AW/ED  
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Dear STPR2 Project Team,

On behalf of Aberdeenshire Council, I am pleased to provide feedback following the publication of the STPR2 Update and Phase 1 Recommendations.

The Council's Infrastructure Services Committee had the opportunity to consider the STPR2 Phase 1 report at its Committee on 11 March. We broadly welcome the conclusions and proposed actions in Phase 1. We are pleased that almost all the interventions set out in our City Region Deal Strategic Transport Assessment align with the conclusions of the STPR2.

We valued the early engagement as part of the STPR2 Regional Working Group and the presence and support of Transport Scotland officers and their consultants. We are, however, somewhat disappointed that a process which set out to be collaborative and co-productive, in the vein of NTS2, has in the end been largely concluded within Transport Scotland and their consultants with little opportunity to influence the final conclusions.

We hope that there may be more opportunity to have meaningful dialogue in pursuit of Phase 2. The invitation to 'comment' on STPR2 Phase 1 makes it clear that the actions and priorities are not likely to change, however there is a need to discuss the delivery approach as much of the identified action relies on local authority delivery or agreement.

Detailed comments are included in the attached submission, but I would like to take the opportunity to make some high-level observations on the STPR2 process and priorities.

### **Scope of Work and Relationship to other Transport Policy Initiatives**

The documents are well presented, prepared in a robust manner, making clear links between the themes and addressing the challenges and opportunities identified and clearly demonstrating the need for all agencies to work together to achieve the objectives of the National Transport Strategy. There is, however, an intellectual incoherence in parts of the STPR2 process. In particular, having excluded from the scope of STPR2 the majority of the road network and the issue of revenue funding for

roads and public transport, many of the actions and initiatives necessitate the use or repurposing of the local road network or have longer-term revenue funding implications.

An obvious example of this is the passing reference to the revenue challenges in cyclical maintenance of the Trunk Road Network leading to its vulnerability to climate change impacts. While this is a welcome observation, as is the addition of resilience and safety of the transport network to the Transport Planning Objectives, it jars with the exclusion of the rest of the network. This is a time when local authorities are facing some of their biggest challenges around the future resilience of the road and bridge network. A challenge which was eloquently expressed by the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee pre-budget scrutiny report on Roads Maintenance in November 2019; who identified a £1.8bn investment backlog in local roads and specifically recommended that a 'National Transport Improvement Project' be included in the revised STPR2.

The issue which needs to be acknowledged nationally is that in many areas our local roads and bridges, as well as parts of the trunk road system, have reached the end of their natural life. The necessary investment goes beyond the arguments around revenue funding, local authority budgetary decisions and cyclical maintenance; it is about the urgent need for very significant capital investment in our entire transport system. For many of our roads it is no longer a question of resurfacing but a need for wholesale reconstruction. It seems a missed opportunity that this very strategic issue has been deemed outwith the scope of STPR2 especially in light of the Scottish Parliament Committee's specific recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary.

It appears at times that STPR2 is suffering from a crisis of purpose. In attempting to shift from being Transport Scotland's major capital projects plan and to become part of the delivery mechanism for the sustainable hierarchies of investment in NTS2, it necessarily strays into very local decision making and delivery and yet excludes some of the key issues influencing this from its own scope.

### **Climate Change Adaptation**

In respect of climate change adaptation and resilience of the transport network, we welcome the addition of this as a specific Transport Planning Objective although, again, the curious limiting of action to the strategic road network leads to obvious omissions in the need to respond to the impact of emissions.

Furthermore, the absence of any mention of the wider rail network seems interesting in this respect. This silence is particularly sensitive to us given the tragic incident at Carmont, in the Kincardine and Mearns area, and the prolonged emergency closures the East Coast Mainline has experienced arising from the Carmont tragedy and the Tewel Bridge parapet collapse.

We would like to see future reference made to the need for Carbon accounting of transport projects and urge Transport Scotland to set a Carbon Budget for all major transport schemes especially road building schemes.

### **Scotland's Major Road Network**

Routes of regional significance, what would be referred to south of the border as the Major Road Network (strategic routes not designated Trunk Roads), are notably absent

from any consideration within STPR2. This has particular resonance for the North East of Scotland where we rely on strategic corridors such as the A947 Aberdeen to Banff route, the A93 and A98 as much as the A90 or A96.

It is notable that within STPR2 the only major capital project referenced for proregression under Phase 1 is the A82 and, while we would recognise the particular issues that Transport Scotland have with the 'notorious', Rest and Be Thankful (RBT), it appears out of place when other routes and areas have been scoped out.

In respect of route alignment and upgrade we had expected to see some recognition of the importance of these sub-trunk strategic routes and are disappointed that they appear to fall between the Trunk Road interventions and active travel and other interventions at the very local level. It is routes such as the A947 which enable the economy of Scotland to thrive by linking industry and small towns to national and international markets and there is a need to invest in them in order to retain and attract industry and people to our coastal and rural communities. There had been an expectation that STPR2 would open the opportunities to deliver much needed investment and upgrading of these 'sub-strategic' routes, in particular the A947, following the completion of the Trunk Road investment projects in STPR1. It has been a source of disappointment to find out that is not the case and, with the current pressure on local authority's capital borrowing, leaves many of these projects at risk of not progressing.

Looking towards Phase 2, we would urge that Transport Scotland consider bringing forward proposals to deliver the Toll of Birness interchange as this is a key piece of infrastructure investment, which could be delivered early in the plan period, and which would signal the Scottish Government's continued commitment to the North East's transport network.

## **Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the views expressed here, where we differ from the conclusions reached by STPR2, we are keen to work constructively with Transport Scotland in delivering the outcomes of STPR2 especially where these align with our own strategic priorities. In that respect I look forward to further dialogue with you in the coming months on the most effective means of delivery the Phase 1 actions and the longer-term Phase 2 outcomes.

Yours sincerely

**Alan Wood**  
**Director of Infrastructure Services**