

Berryden Corridor Improvement Project

Planning Statement

Aberdeen City Council

March 2020

Contents

1	Project Description	2
2	Purpose	3
3	Public Consultation	5
4	Policy Context	5
5	Consents	7

Planning Statement for Berryden Corridor Improvement Project

1. Project Description

- 1.1 The Berryden Corridor Improvement Project “the Project” extends from the junction of the B986 Skene Square, U309C Rosemount Place and U300C Maberly Street and follows the route of the B986. The road heads generally in a north west direction and gradually rises to a point near to the junction with Rosemount Terrace from where it falls towards its junction with the A944 Westburn Road/ Hutcheon Street. This section of the Project involves widening the B986 at Skene Square and Caroline Place with associated alignment and junction improvements. In this area there is a primary school, a church and a mix of residential and commercial properties.
- 1.2 The Project continues from the A944/ B986 junction following the B986 Berryden Road in a generally north west direction following the existing road downhill to its junction with Bob Cooney Court. From this point the Project travels in a predominantly northerly direction and begins to rise to meet with the B986 Belmont Road. Thereafter Berryden Road continues as the C156C for a short distance until it meets with the C156C Ashgrove Road/ Back Hilton Road. This section of the Project involves widening the B986/ C156C Berryden Road with associated alignment and junction improvements. The area contains a mix of residential and retail properties along with a vehicular access to the NHS Royal Cornhill Hospital.
- 1.3 From the junction of the C156C Berryden Road/Ashgrove Road/Back Hilton Road, a new section of road is to be constructed, travelling generally in a northerly direction and falling gradually downhill until it intersects with a new link road between the new road and the C156C Back Hilton Road at its existing junction with the U308C Cattofield Terrace. The road continues downhill until it intersects with the A96 Powis Terrace and the B986 Clifton Road, where a new junction will be formed. The new road runs between the developments at Picktillum Place and Kittybrewster Square in land which was set aside for the road corridor prior to the construction of these residential properties.
- 1.4 From its junction with the A96 Powis Terrace/ B986 Clifton Road, the new road continues to head in a northerly direction rising gradually uphill until it meets the A96 Kittybrewster Roundabout, where the Project ends. The new road will pass to the rear of residential and retail properties (numbers 54 to 104 Great Northern Road). In this area there are residential properties, a hotel, primary school and retail premises along

the A96 Great Northern Road, lying to the west of the new road. To the east of the new road there is a council depot as well as a police custodial centre, the latter will take direct access onto the new section of road.

1.5 The Project can be described in two main sections, these being:

- Road Widening - From the junction of Skene Square with Rosemount Place following the route of the B986 then C156C Berryden Road generally in a north west direction until it meets the junction of the C156C Ashgrove Road/Back Hilton Road; and
- New Road Construction – From the junction of the C156C Berryden Road/ Ashgrove Road/ Back Hilton Road generally in a northerly direction running between the residential developments of Picktillum Place and Kittybrewster Square and to the rear of properties lying to the east of the A96 Great Northern Road until it meets with the A96 Kittybrewster Roundabout. Included is an additional link road from the proposed new road, to tie in with the C156C Back Hilton Road at its junction with the U308C Cattofield Terrace.

1.6 The road widening is considered permitted development for the Roads Authority under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. Various consents will be required as detailed in section 5. Planning permission is required for the new road construction.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Council, as the Roads Authority, has a duty under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to keep under review the local road network in the Aberdeen City area and to manage and maintain the system of routes, including where appropriate, ensuring the provision of a safe and efficient network of roads.

2.2 The existing Berryden corridor facilitates journeys between the city centre, the north of Aberdeen and beyond. The corridor represents a pinch point in the city road network. It is identified as a route operating beyond its capacity leading to significant congestion and journey time delays, particularly at peak times. The effect on traffic flow extends beyond the immediate corridor impacting on the A96 Great Northern Road, to the north, through to the B986 Skene Square, to the south. Proposals for an improved route have been considered since the early 1990's with the route cited in Aberdeen City District-Wide Local Plan in 1991. Planning Permission was previously granted for a length of the new section of road in 1996 with this forming part of a phased scheme proposed to

tie the existing lengths of dual carriageway at the B986 Skene Square and the A96 Great Northern Road.

- 2.3 An option appraisal was undertaken to identify transport improvements required along the Berryden Corridor and involved public consultation, economic and environmental exercises. This appraisal also included a traffic modelling exercise which formed the main part of the option development. The modelling incorporated committed developments and assessed the impact of predicted future traffic levels upon the corridor and surrounding road network.
- 2.4 Due to the constrained nature of the corridor there was limited scope for alternative options involving significant alterations to the alignment of the existing road and junctions outwith routing through safeguarded land. The appraisal determined that the option which provided two lanes for all traffic in both directions on the realigned route provided the most significant network benefits with the predicted traffic volumes. It identified this infrastructure improvement as the preferred option as it best met the appraisal's objectives.
- 2.5 The need for the Berryden corridor improvement has been acknowledged for some time. The Project as it currently stands has also been identified as being required to facilitate the delivery of the Union Street Pedestrianisation project (the "USP"). More recently the scope of the USP has evolved to transform the wider transportation network in the city centre as part of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (the "CCMP").
- 2.6 The purpose of the Project is to improve the efficiency of the public network by relieving congestion and improving journey time reliability while also improving infrastructure for walking and cycling.
- 2.7 Promotion of the Project is consistent with or complementary to other transport projects and strategies currently being promoted in Aberdeen City, including; A90/A96 Haudagain Improvement (Transport Scotland), and the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (Aberdeen City Council). The completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Transport Scotland) in 2019 and 'Access from the North - Third Don Crossing' scheme in 2016 provide significant new links within the transport network. The Project will further improve connectivity to these new links as well as the surrounding infrastructure.

3. Public Consultation

- 3.1 With the principle for the Berryden Corridor established, the Project has been referred to in a number of planning and transport policy documents (see section 4), which have themselves been the subject of consultation.
- 3.2 As the Project developed, the Council wrote to owners and occupiers of land who were likely to be affected. The letter drops led to a number of interested parties contacting Council officers to discuss matters directly.
- 3.3 Public Exhibitions were held at Sainsbury's Berryden Road Superstore in November 2019 and online through November and December 2019. At the end of this engagement period, there were over 1500 interactions. In addition, stakeholder engagements with emergency services, local community, business representatives and public transport providers were undertaken from November 2019 to February 2020.

4. Policy Context

- 4.1 The Aberdeen Local Development Plan (the "LDP") adopted in 2017, supports the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (2014) and takes cognisance of the Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy (2016-2021), Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (refreshed 2013) and National Transport Strategy (refreshed 2016). The LDP allocates land and promotes planning policies to enable the growth of Aberdeen over the plan period and to "ensure that all communities have access to a comprehensive and effective transport network". Good transport connections are seen as "essential to the economic prosperity of Aberdeen and the quality of life of people living and working in the city".
- 4.2 In the LDP, the section of the Project where planning permission is required, has been identified as Land for Transport (Policy T1) and has been safeguarded for the Berryden Corridor Improvement. This land extends from 100 metres or thereby south of the U308C Chestnut Row (extended south kerb line) northwards to the new junction with A96 Kittybrewster Roundabout (including junctions with minor roads) and covers the extents of the new road construction. The Project lies adjacent to areas zoned for various land uses identified in the LDP, including: Mixed Use Area (Policy H2), OP73 Mixed Use Area (Policy H2), Residential Areas (Policy H1), Neighbourhood Centres (Policy NC6).

- 4.3 In the section where conservation area consent is required, the land required for the Project lies within areas zoned for various land uses identified in the LDP, including: Residential Areas (Policy H1), Commercial Centres (NC6), OP74 (Mixed Use Area (Policy H2)), OP77 (Existing Community Facilities (Policy CF1)).
- 4.4 The Aberdeen City Council Local Transport Strategy (the “LTS”) for the period 2016 to 2021 sets out the policies and interventions adopted by the Council to guide planning and improvement of the local transport network over the next five years. The LTS vision is to develop “a sustainable transport system that is fit for the 21st Century, accessible to all, supports a vibrant economy, facilitates healthy living and minimises the impact on our environment”. The LTS sets an objective to support improvements to the road network and states that the Council will support the principle that “priority investment should be determined in order to reflect all day demand relative to capacity”. The Berryden Corridor is specifically identified as being “a strategic route used both by traffic accessing or travelling through the city centre and as a direct access route to a number of large retail developments along the corridor itself and has been identified as operating beyond capacity, leading to significant congestion and journey time delays”, thus highlighting the need for the Project. The LTS supports the aims and visions of the Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy, in which part of the Berryden Corridor Improvement is highlighted as a ‘strategic road improvement’ as part of the ‘Internal Connections – Aberdeen Area’ proposals.
- 4.5 The Aberdeen Strategic Infrastructure Plan (the “SIP”) which was published in 2013, focuses “on the development of the enabling infrastructure needed to realise the city’s aspirations” The SIP identified the Central Aberdeen Transport Infrastructure (the “CATI”) project and states that “...road improvements are required to provide sufficient capacity within the network to allow interchange between north/south and east/west traffic”. The Berryden Corridor forms part of the CATI.
- 4.6 Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan and Delivery Programme which was published in June 2015 outlines a 20-year development strategy for Aberdeen City Centre. A range of projects are identified to facilitate and support future economic growth with the intention that such growth will secure more benefits and opportunities for the communities of Aberdeen City and Shire. The Berryden Corridor Improvement is a committed project that supports the delivery of the CCMP by accommodating traffic routing changes, resulting from reduced city centre permeability.

5. Consents

- 5.1 A request for a screening opinion in relation to the Project was submitted to the planning authority. The planning authority's opinion was that the proposal would not require an environmental impact assessment (EIA) in terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2011.
- 5.2 The section of road to be widened falls under permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. As land within this section is covered by the Rosemount conservation area, Conservation area consents will be required for alterations to buildings. Listed building consent is also required for a wall along the frontage of the Category C listed former Rosemount Parish Church (currently known as The Father's House) which is to be realigned.
- 5.3 For the new road construction planning permission is required. Within this section there is a Category B listed March stone (ABD 55), marking the boundary of the Freedom Lands of Aberdeen at Back Hilton Road. As this stone is to be relocated Listed building consent is also required.