



Moving Towards Net Zero; and a Cleaner and Greener and Healthier and Safer City and Shire

2.00pm Monday 15th March 2021 – Live Event on Microsoft Teams

Public and Audience Questions

- 1 For Any/All - The Climate Change Act 2019 has some incredibly challenging targets. The Scottish Government's recently updated Climate Change Plan sets out the intended path to deliver on those, including a commitment to reduce car travel by 20% by 2030. With so many of us still having a continued dependency on car journeys, particularly those that are single occupancy and of distances that could be replaced by alternative modes, how do the speakers think we can meet, and ideally surpass, those targets? To even attempt this, we will clearly need to get many people out of their cars and making alternative choices. Realistically, how can we do this?***

Aberdeen City Council

People need to be provided with viable alternatives to travelling in a car alone, so that they do not feel like this is the only way. Improvements planned in Aberdeen as part of the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and accompanying Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) will assist with this in making the city centre more walking, cycling and public transport friendly while further study work, looking at how to make the main corridors into the city “multi-modal”, will help identify what improvements need to be undertaken to make the main accesses to the city more walking, cycling and public transport friendly too. These are currently being undertaken on the Wellington Road, Bridge of Don to Garthdee, A96, A944 and A9119 corridors.

The promotion of sustainable transport options is also important. People need to know what is available, how to use it and to be able to find these answers out in an easily accessible way. Along with partners in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, the Council have been able to achieve this with the Getabout brand and website <https://www.getabout.org.uk/>. The website is also backed up with social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter to reach a larger audience. Another component that is useful is the promotion of real-life examples of people who travel sustainably in the area, their experiences, their help and tips, in order to provide useful information from sources that others can relate to. This is something that the Council will look to explore further. Pedestrian wayfinding information in the city centre, that demonstrates how quickly people can get from place to place on foot helps with this too so the network of wayfinding totems, recently extended, with maps, directions and walking time information are key to this.

Engagement with members of the public is crucial too in order to understand the barriers to travelling sustainably, and this will ensure that any improvements, both in terms of promotion and implementation, are designed in such a way that they are actually going to benefit users.

Opportunities for people to experience the benefits of car free spaces are important. If people can see, first hand, how much space can be created by removing traffic from areas and how that space can be used differently, then it is far more powerful. Lastly, it needs us all to work together. The Councils cannot do this alone but need the support and buy-in of Governments, Businesses, partners and members of the public to achieve all of this.

Aberdeenshire Council

This is an ambitious commitment and one which requires a much wider response than was perhaps initially thought. With heavy marketing based around consumption and major corporate business interests at stake, there is an enormous social pull to consume more, travel more and 'grow' more. With this consumption and growth model now very much ingrained into society and a multi-billion-pound industry built around this, it is going to be increasingly difficult to create a social norm around consuming less, travelling less and sharing more. There have been excellent moves towards creating the right environment for change towards less car use, however as the growth in EV market is showing, people are not switching away from vehicle use, merely changing the type of car – individuals will feel that they are making a positive environmental impact by switching to LEV's and therefore it becomes more difficult to promote the 'environmental' message. People enjoy owning a car and the associated status that comes with it. Unless we can change that social messaging of owning and being seen in a particular car, it will be difficult to make a switch away to other forms of transport.

Sustrans Scotland

To reduce car travel, we need to embed Transport Scotland's Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making by planning for walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to private car use. Significant investment will be required in infrastructure for active travel and public transport. There will need to be greater use of policy to enable Low Emission Zones, workplace parking levies, parking charges, road user charging, and road space reallocation.

Additionally we can encourage people to reduce their travel. A large number of organisations are making the shift to blended/home working permanent in the aftermath of Covid-19, with many individuals and organisations seeing the benefits. This will contribute to reducing car travel significantly.

Living Streets Scotland

- Behaviour changes focused on particularly journey types e.g., school travel
- Good planning for local facilities
- Proactive parking policies in town centres
- Space reallocation to create facilities for other modes

NHS Grampian

Encourage more flexible working to negate the need for car journeys altogether. The pandemic has shown that certain parts of the NHS' services can continue to function even if the staff are working from home. Whilst this might not be possible to encourage on a full-time basis, allowing staff to work from home more frequently will reduce commuting, thus reducing car travel for many.

- 2 ***For both Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council - Scotland's National Transport Strategy details the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy. How do both local authorities plan to truly deliver this on our streets across the North East and "embed it in decision making by promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people"?***

Aberdeen City Council

The answer to Question 1 is largely relevant here too. Firstly, Aberdeen City Council plan to deliver through plans, such as the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), Active Travel Action Plan and our Local Transport Strategy , all of which follow the principles of encouraging mode shift

away from the private, single occupancy car and have the sustainable transport hierarchy at their core. Aberdeen's Local Transport Strategy is due to be refreshed this year and this will allow it to take account of the most recent National and Regional legislation, policies, plans and strategies. The Council also has a role in ensuring that new developments take account of the sustainable transport hierarchy and the Transport Supplementary Guidance to our Local Development Plan ensures that sustainable transport standards are built into the development management process.

The Council then plans to deliver improvements through projects and studies such as the multi-modal corridor studies being carried out across the city, which will inform future implementation of sustainable transport infrastructure, and through promotion using the Getabout brand and information as a "one stop shop" for guiding people to further information about sustainable choices. External funding has already been sought to facilitate materials, promotional campaigns, educational resources and events to assist with this and the Council will continue to explore external funding opportunities.

Engagement is a key part of getting this right, not just to ensure that what the Council develops best meets the needs of people but to give decision makers, often elected members, the confidence that they are making a decision which best reflects the views of the people.

Working together is also important to ensure that we are able to deliver a common message and benefit from the greatest amount of expertise, funding opportunities and knowledge too.

Aberdeenshire Council

Aberdeenshire will continue to adopt the Integrated Travel Town (ITT) masterplan approach as this targeted method of working with communities to deliver the infrastructure required and then backing this up by working closely with schools, business and communities to create the desired behaviour is delivering positive results. We have applied a consistent approach to marketing in local communities and will always seek to ensure that every activity or infrastructure investment is tagged to the ITT planned approach. This helps keep the messaging clear and ensures that community 'feel' included, responsible and proud of the achievements that they make. This is a deeply embedded approach and requires us to work to ensure that the messaging and support provided is tailored to the correct audience, in this case very broadly Schools, businesses and communities. We believe that this approach will support early adopters to behaviour change which provide a catalyst for others to follow and 'normalise' the desired behavioural outputs we are striving for.

- 3 For Any/All - During the pandemic, right across the globe and also locally, there has been an explosion in the number of people choosing to walk and cycle. In desperate circumstances, this has brought immense benefits to so many; for example, for their physical and mental wellbeing and for the wider environment in terms of air quality and noise pollution. How do each of the speakers think that we can capitalise on the marked changes and ensure that we don't just simply revert to old habits?**

Aberdeen City Council

The COVID-19 restrictions have shown, if the conditions are right and people have the opportunity to try it, they will travel more actively more often. Reductions in traffic levels and the temporary infrastructure, introduced to keep people safe and physically distanced, have both made it easier to walk and cycle and for people to enjoy doing it. We need to be continuing to create those conditions where people feel safe and can enjoy walking and cycling. We have been monitoring usage of the transport network, especially walking and cycling movements, throughout the COVID-19 restrictions, and this monitoring information will be key to informing bids for funding required to facilitate future infrastructure. As always, user opinion will be key to informing any new or permanent infrastructure which is proposed.

Aberdeenshire Council

This is a question that has been raised often during the pandemic. It is worth noting that the increases in walking and cycling really only occurred during the initial lockdown when legislation was in place such that travel to work was prohibited (excepting exceptional circumstances), retail and hospitality were closed and general out door exercises was limited. Because of this, it can be seen that when legislation is in place which effectively bans travel to work, closes retail and limits the amount of outdoor exercise available, individuals responded by taking the opportunity to walk and cycle more often – not necessarily for any other reason other than having no retail opportunities, time to do so and taking advantage of the allowances that were

made. With the opening of retail and limited hospitality, the levels of walking and cycling may also drop off in future.

The question is how can we retain these levels of walking and cycling? One of the big attractions to walking and cycling was as a result of few other activities available. A much wider social change in behaviour is required where retail is seen as less important than family time, being outdoors engaged in either walking or cycling. How this is achieved is a very long term and social problem and not easily fixed. Creating the opportunities to walk and cycle is a good start but more needs to be done to change the current mindset and model based on growth and consumerism towards one of sharing and the appreciation of quality experiences and family time.

Sustrans Scotland

Most important is the need to move quickly with investment. The Spaces for People programme showed that we can move quickly and make a positive difference where there's the political will to do. However, that does need to be balanced with the need for effective and continuous consultation. There will be loud voices clamouring for a return to 'normal' – it's important that councils take the time to consider what's best for their area in the long run, rather than reacting in response to a vocal minority. Our [Bike Life](#) project in Aberdeen will help illustrate the attitudes of the whole population, as do Nestrans' [travel surveys](#).

Living Streets Scotland

- Behaviour changes focused on particularly journey types e.g., school travel
- Good planning for local facilities
- Proactive parking policies in town centres
- Permanent Space reallocation to create facilities for other modes

NHS Grampian

NHS Grampian has frequently incentivised active travel amongst staff in the form of step challenges. As the step count includes steps that are taken outside of work, it encourages those participating in these to consider active travel options at home. This is also thought to encourage small behaviour changes around travel. Our most recent step challenge in Jan/Feb 21 highlighted the importance of physical activity and mental health, with it being held during lockdown.

NHS Grampian was awarded Spaces for People funding, and a post is currently funded to roll this out

The NHS Grampian Travel Plan is currently under review, and we hope to shortly recruit to an Active Travel Staff Engagement post.

- 4 ***For Aberdeen City Council - While appreciating motor vehicle traffic will need to be rerouted as the City Centre Masterplan takes shape, do you remain convinced that multi-million-pound dual carriageways on Berryden Road and South College Street, which focus on motor vehicles and will be dangerous places to negotiate for vulnerable road users, are what we really need? Post-AWPR traffic volumes had already drastically reduced. Now, with the impact of the pandemic, these will surely reduce further as, for so many of us, travel and work habits change perhaps for the long-term? Do we really need big, wide, fast roads for motor vehicles at the heart of our city?***

Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council remains committed to making the necessary changes to the city's road network to support the City Centre Masterplan aims to improve the public realm. Both projects will do this by providing the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the rerouting of vehicular traffic arising from the implementation of public realm enhancements including Guild Street, Union Street and Schoolhill. The corridors' improved capacity and operation will also complement their position in the City's new roads hierarchy. Committed infrastructure and developments, including the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, were included in the traffic modelling appraisal work undertaken to assess the improvement options. Further traffic modelling work undertaken to inform the detailed designs has continued to take account of the effects of AWPR.

Both projects will encourage traffic to reroute on to roads which are fit for purpose, reducing traffic flow on less suitable roads allowing them to become more people and place focused. Neither project is promoting any high-speed roads, speeds will be limited to 30mph and 20mph where and when appropriate. The successful implementation of the masterplan not only requires the enabling infrastructure provided by these projects but a 20% reduction in city centre general traffic, to be achieved through modal shift and demand management. Extensive consideration continues to be given to the needs of non-motorised and vulnerable users through the design process, in order that the projects provide improved facilities for all modes.

- 5 ***For Living Streets, Sustrans - How can you, and other national organisations, best help, cajole, support, enable the north east local authorities to accelerate delivery of the many much-needed and long overdue projects that can help make our city, towns and communities cleaner, greener, healthier and safer places?***

Sustrans Scotland

We want to be as open and supportive as possible to local authorities in the north east – we recognise that there are significant resource and financial pressures on all local authorities, and we provide a range of packages to assist with these. Where there's more support local authorities need, we're always willing to talk, and to make the case to Transport Scotland where there are funding implications.

Living Streets Scotland

Good to see / set up a Living Streets local group set up in Aberdeen / Aberdeenshire to make the case locally, but we can support. Happy to contrast compare and cajole re matching other areas ambitions.

- 6 ***For NHS Grampian – the pandemic has shown, very starkly, the inextricable links that exist between our health and how we choose to travel. How does NHS Grampian propose to remain directly involved as we move forward?***

NHS Grampian

NHSG leadership in community planning in Aberdeen City particularly for Sustainable City work (which includes active travel).

NHSG involvement in NESTRANS Board and devolved groups, including access to healthcare.

NHS Grampian and Nestrans jointly fund the Programme Manager Post for the Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP). HTAP covers both Transport and Public Health and Access to Health and Social Care and brings together NHSG and local partners (including Local Authorities, Higher Education, and national schemes) to look at these areas jointly. Using this approach, NHS Grampian will remain directly involved.

Promotion of Active Travel to our staff.

Financial help to purchase a bicycle through the Cycle2Work scheme for staff – help those who might otherwise not have access to bikes.

More strategically, we are looking at the way we work in NHSG as part of our recovery and transformation, including a blended approach to working at home/office which is a direct response to sustainability issues.

- 7 ***For Any/All - While work is underway towards Net Zero, it is clear that everyone must be able to share in the benefits of a modern transport system that is both adaptable and fit for purpose. How do the speakers think that, at the core of decision making and policy, our transport and travel can be made truly accessible and inclusive for all and how we can, at long last, reduce the many inequalities that still exist?***

Aberdeen City Council

Choice, a successful transport system will be about providing people with options. In the 1950's and 60's the car was expected to be make the transport system more democratic by providing choice. Experience has now shown that within Aberdeen the high percentage of people without access to a private car shows that this has not happened.

Providing a range of transport modes from active travel, across public transport to appropriate use of the private car will be required. This is also very much the approach taken in both the National Transport Strategy and the Regional Transport Strategy.

We know that around 30% of households in the city do not have access to a private car and so, based on this alone, catering only for car drivers will not help around a third of the population. Therefore, prioritising infrastructure that is able to cater for the greatest number of people is key to reducing equality.

Furthermore, COVID-19 restrictions have shown us that a resilient transport network is important to ensure that people can continue to move around. Walking, wheeling and cycling are modes which meet these two areas, being cheap, accessible and able to be undertaken by most of the population. However, it is still important to ensure that people do have access to other forms of transport for when they can't walk and cycle so improvements to public transport will assist with this while access to car club vehicles and refuelling infrastructure for low carbon vehicles will ensure that where people do have to use cars, they can do so in the most sustainable way.

In terms of making transport accessible to those with disabilities, the Council has regular meetings with a range of stakeholders, including disability groups and this dialogue will be invaluable in ensuring that all users are factored into designs.

Aberdeenshire Council

It is easy to make statements around supporting sustainable and active travel, however when it comes to the reality of supporting these aspirations, decisions often need to be made that are not favourable to everyone. For example, one of the main barriers to public transport use aside from cost is journey time and reliability. One of the ways to tackle this is to provide either a dedicated mass transit system or make significant improvements along bus route corridors, providing priority at junctions, re allocating road space to create traffic free bus lanes and putting public transport before private car use.

Similarly, if we are serious about creating useful space for pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities, then road space needs to be reallocated away from cars. This often requires the removal of on street parking, removal of traffic lanes (with associated capacity issues and delay for private car users) and revised traffic signal timings (again detrimental to car users). Until we have strong decision making at all levels from the design conceptualisation to fully engaged political support during delivery and an understanding that in the short term such measures will be unpopular, we will be unlikely to achieve the modal changes we aspire to achieve.

When one considers the temporary spaces for people measures that were installed across the city and in Aberdeenshire, some of these measures, which saw the displacement of parking, did prove popular for a time. However it was the mounting pressure to return on street parking and reallocate road spaces back to vehicle use that saw these measures removed.

Sustrans Scotland

Inclusivity is crucial, and car-centred design is a key obstacle - 60% of the lowest income households don't have access to a car, compared with only 3% of the highest income households. That means that where services are designed to be accessed by car, the poorest in our society either can't access them, or have to spend a disproportionate amount of their income on running a car.

We need to acknowledge the imbalance and injustice built into our current transport system. At Sustrans, we are committed to our work being for everyone, and the principle of being inclusive is at the heart of all we do. But we cannot create safe and accessible places if we do not value difference, to really listen to what people regard as barriers and challenges. We cannot create inclusive environments if the discussions and decision-making are not truly inclusive. Only by ensuring that voices of underrepresented groups are integrated in policy, planning, design and implementation, can we ensure that we create places that meet the needs of the diversity of people who want to use them.

We score Places for Everyone projects more highly if they benefit communities in the highest SIMD quintile. We also target our projects to benefit areas with high social deprivation, such as our recent partnership

project with Aberdeen City Council, Tilly-Wood Street Design Project. We put high priority on listening to everyone's views and encourage our partners to do more to do the same.

Living Streets Scotland

Proactive and prioritise projects for areas at the lower end of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
Build the capacity and support local accessibility / disability groups to engage. Don't forget disabled parking, but don't use it as an excuse to keep all parking.

- 8** ***For Any/All – the pandemic has resulted in overwhelming loss of life and also devastated our economy and so many peoples' livelihoods, how do the speakers think we can best guarantee that, while making the efforts towards Net Zero, businesses are not adversely affected and that economic recovery and growth can still be fully supported?***

Aberdeen City Council

The Council has undertaken a significant amount of work over the pandemic period helping to support local business through the administration of business support schemes and through Spaces for People by supporting business with outdoor spaces. The majority of these have been small business and the appetite from these businesses to continue to use these spaces, appears strong. In many cases the use of these spaces overlaps with that of active and sustainable travel.

More broadly Net Zero provides additional opportunities for businesses to move to more efficient operating methods and thereby reduce costs. Examples of this are more efficient heating and cooling of their buildings, reduction in waste and even the way businesses deliver their goods. Prior to the pandemic the Council with the support of NESTRANS and a European project supported business to access electric and hydrogen vehicles and electric cargo bikes.

The move to Net Zero can provide a multitude of opportunities and we must, and are, working with business to try and support them to secure these opportunities.

Aberdeenshire Council

There is a huge body of evidence that suggests that permeable, well designed, green and traffic free high streets actually attract more footfall and longer duration visits which translates into improved revenue. The current thought that suggests that a high street busy with traffic is a successful high street needs to be challenged. We can tackle climate change, health issues, air quality and support the economic vitality of our high streets jointly by reducing the amount of traffic running through them to create pleasant places to visit, spend and stay. In an age where on line shopping is very much the norm, we have to ask what is it that the high street can offer that cannot be replicated on line?

The high street cannot compete on a cost front; however the high street can provide a pleasant experience for retail where all can benefit including hospitality. This can only be achieved if we move traffic away from town centres and encourage more sustainable town centre destination trips. Planning policy needs to consider also the still popular out of town model for retail; this is neither sustainable in a transport planning context nor economically useful for local retailers.

Sustrans Scotland

It is vitally important that we support businesses as they recover from the pandemic, but it's important not to see efforts to get to Net Zero as inherently in conflict with the interests of businesses. The number of people who walk, cycle, or take public transport to access businesses instead of taking the car is often underestimated by retailers, and shoppers find pedestrianised and greener high streets more attractive than those dominated by traffic.

Taking this a step further, planning our local places as 20-minute neighbourhoods – where as many services as possible can be reached within the average 20-minute walk – will create more opportunities for local businesses, as well as strengthening communities. There will also be significant opportunities associated with the construction of new infrastructure, development of new technologies, and the potential for reduced overheads if more people start to work from home.

Living Streets Scotland

Strong focus on revival repurposing of town centres including quality outdoor space that businesses use / value. Strong focus on leveraging in funding.

- 9 For Aberdeen City Council - Who was awarded the contract for the bike hire scheme ? Is this information available to share at this point?**

Aberdeen City Council

Big Issue and Sharebike will jointly operate the scheme. Further details can be found at:

<https://news.aberdeencity.gov.uk/big-issue-and-sharebike-are-announced-as-joint-operator-for-new-ebike-hire-scheme/>.

- 10 For Aberdeen City Council - Will the low emission zone regulations be targeted at specific sectors or will it apply to all vehicles in Aberdeen from the inception?**

Aberdeen City Council

Although no formal decision has yet been made on the form and scope of the Low Emission Zone, initial air quality modelling has suggested that addressing one vehicle type in isolation is not sufficient to address all air quality issues in the City Centre, therefore the recommendation is likely to be that the restrictions apply to all vehicle types.

- 11 For Aberdeen City Council - Is there an intention/ ambition to retain some of the Spaces for People interventions within the city on a permanent basis, i.e. changes to Union Street? There is a danger that if these temporary interventions are removed that the opportunity to make them permanent may be lost.**

Aberdeen City Council

The Spaces for People interventions have been under continual monitoring and review since their implementation so that the Council can assess their impacts, especially when traffic levels increase close to their pre-pandemic levels, as they did at certain points in late 2020. Due to the speed with which the interventions were put in place it was made clear that these interventions in the current form are temporary. Any intervention that was proposed to remain would have to be appropriately considered in terms of other work being carried out across the city and in the context of the City Centre Masterplan refresh, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and the Low Emission Zone.

- 12 For Aberdeen City Council - As well as incentivising mode change through improved infrastructure and promotion etc. is there intention to reduce/ remove some city centre car parking? This would not only encourage/ necessitate mode change but would also allow this reclaimed space to be put to other uses, for instance green infrastructure.**

Aberdeen City Council

An initial Strategic Car Parking Review for Aberdeen City was completed in 2019 and identified some car parks that are potentially surplus to requirements and could be disposed of. The Council was in the process of developing the recommendations of the review into a formal Car Parking Strategy and was about to launch consultation on this when the pandemic struck and obviously badly affected the city centre economy, therefore the consultation was paused until a more appropriate time. This will be revisited, likely as part of the refresh of the Local Transport Strategy.

- 13 For Aberdeen City Council - Other Scottish cities have used the Spaces for People initiative to put in place extensive and successful schemes, in some cases making use of multiple rounds of funding. Why has Aberdeen failed to do so? The removal of the scheme installed at the beach appeared not to be based on any evidence and took place with no consultation. How do we prevent such failures in future?**

Aberdeen City Council

There was only one round of funding for Spaces for People, however the original funding pot was increased before the application phase closed. Unlike many other cities Aberdeen put in place all of the interventions it could within the funding envelope available (£1.67 million) as soon as the funding had been confirmed. As the purpose of the funding was to support active and sustainable travel during the pandemic it was deemed

necessary to get the interventions in place when they were needed, and this approach was supported by NHS Grampian. Other cities have been slower to make changes and this has led to the period to the spend the funding having to be extended.

The interventions put in place in Aberdeen were based on analysis of data provided by our walking and cycling counters across the city, areas of known high footfall such as the city centre and local centres and areas where interventions could be accommodated.

Although the public safety requirement meant that there simply was not time to consult with users before many of the measures were implemented, the Council continue to monitor the use of the transport network and have further on-street surveys planned over the next few months to gauge user opinion of the temporary measures. This monitoring will be key in informing future bids and project to create active travel infrastructure in the city. In relation to the beach, part of this intervention was removed by instruction of the City Growth and Resources committee.

- 14 *For Aberdeen City Council - Of those Spaces for People schemes that remain, concerns have been raised that these are not being enforced, due to both design flaws and lack of enforcement, with vehicles being parked over cycle lanes and vehicles driving against the traffic flow on one-ways roads. What can be done to address this and can we expect a different situation for future, permanent projects?***

Aberdeen City Council

We would encourage people to continue to report any issues they come across regarding these. For parking issues, this should be to the City Wardens <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/community-safety/city-wardens>

For vehicles driving against traffic flow, this should be reported to the police.

Any lessons we have learned from the current Spaces for People schemes will be considered for the design of future active travel infrastructure in the city.

- 15 *For Any/All - Involving the audience should mean co-design of active travel infrastructure - this practice is common in the Netherlands. Why are consultations carried out only when designs are all but finalised?***

Aberdeen City Council

Consultations are undertaken in a range of ways for a range of purposes, from options appraisals to design options, but rarely ever when the design has been finalised. Through the consultation process, consultees have the chance to influence the design by suggesting changes before a design is finalised. This starts with consultation at the feasibility stage before a design is even being prepared. It is usually deemed more useful, even at this stage, to have an option or options which are able to be commented on as a starting point so that people have something to make comments against. Once an option is selected, there is then further engagement on the design itself, so people do have many opportunities at different stages.

Aberdeenshire Council

This is simply not the case. Dependent upon a scheme early engagement can take place early on to gather views and support for a scheme. Consultations with a design generally take place once a preferred option has been determined and a general alignment is consulted on. This is an effective way to engage with communities as many of the main issues have already been identified thus allowing the community to focus on other details and not flag areas that are perhaps already well know. It is also important that the feasibility design considers things that may not be publicly known such as utilities and service layouts which can impact on the final design. Consulting on a draft design is a much more efficient use of design and community time.

Sustrans Scotland

We always advocate for proactive and continued engagement from the earliest possible stage, with particular attention to protected characteristics. We need to do more to ensure that the same voices aren't being repeatedly heard, and that local people are given the time and information to be able to contribute effectively.

Living Streets Scotland

There is need to value / gain input from community development professionals – who should see transport as critical and not just something to let roads departments lead on Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Councils have done a lot of street audits and it would be worth reviewing / updating these to help inform designs and consultations.

- 16 *For Any/All - There was an article on the BBC News website yesterday saying that the Government in England wants to greatly increase bus lanes and increase bus services across England, particularly in rural areas. We have also heard that there is the Bus Partnership Fund in Scotland. Both of these proposals are welcome, but will there be the long-term political will and money available to make the transformative changes that are needed to achieve net zero?***

Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen City Council's Urgent Business Committee approved Aberdeen's Net Zero Vision and Infrastructure Plan in May 2020 and the Councils Climate Change Plan 2021-2025: "Towards a Net Zero and Climate Resilient Council" was approved in March 2021 by full Council. Therefore, the political will is there.

Approval was also recently given to apply to the £500million Scottish Government Bus Priority Fund as part of the Bus Alliance with Aberdeenshire Council and the public transport operators.

Nationally, there are commitments both in the Scottish National Transport Strategy and the updated Scottish Climate Change Plan. Funding has been available from Transport Scotland for active travel, public transport and low carbon vehicle schemes over the last few years so it is hoped that this will continue.

Sustrans Scotland

We will continue to advocate for long-term political and funding support for these projects, as public transport is crucial to reducing our reliance on cars. It's important for elected members at a local level to be given the same level of policy and evidence support as their national colleagues – there is often a contrast between party support at a national level, and resistance by local politicians.

Living Streets Scotland

Living Streets research suggests speed, time and reliability is critical to bus use. Importance of supporting native NE bus expertise should be emphasised.

- 17 *For Any/All - How do we ensure that future projects such as Spaces for People will be fully inclusive as there have been comments from disability groups about the problems with Social Distancing rules?***

Aberdeen City Council

Disability and active travel groups, along with public transport providers were the first groups consulted on in terms of Spaces for People. The Disability Equity Partnership were involved in the design of many of the interventions and helped us with the design of the Parklets and Bus platforms. They were also the reason that the majority of outdoor seating was not allowed on the footways ensuring they were kept clear for pedestrians and particularly those with disabilities could continue to benefit from the textured paving and formal crossing points. That said consultation and engagement can always be improved and the Council has regular meetings with a range of stakeholders, including disability groups, to identify and address any concerns that such users encounter with the temporary infrastructure. The Council is keen that this dialogue is maintained in the future.

Sustrans Scotland

Everyone with protected characteristics should always be given the opportunity to feed into consultations. Spaces for People projects should have encouraged this but due to the emergency nature of the interventions, a less robust consultation period than we would have liked was required. There's also a need to avoid placing the burden of scrutinising infrastructure on voluntary access panels. More training for professionals and Elected Members is required, as well as wider public engagement.

- 18** *For Sustrans - In Sustrans hierarchy travel triangle, only journeys are considered. From a rural situation, I tend to combine several functions into journeys to town and frequently involves fetching and carrying varying quantities of goods., both personal and business.*

Sustrans Scotland

Many journeys are multi-functional – going from home to school to work to shops to home, for example. Many of these journeys can be carried out using active modes, but some cannot – particularly if they involve heavy loads and/or long distances. Electric bikes and cargo bikes can tackle the dual issues of range and larger loads and make cycling much more accessible for those in rural areas, if combined with safe infrastructure. Reducing the number of cars on the road will make a big difference to our wellbeing, economy and environment. Fewer cars will also help to reduce congestion and make it easier for those who really need to drive to get where they're going.

- 19** *For Aberdeen City Council - Aberdeen has so far relied heavily on shared paths rather than pedestrian and cyclist segregation, with conflicts on busy paths such as Deeside Way and, ironically, the beach esplanade. This is not fit for purpose if the Council wants to promote active travel grow the walking and cycling rates as set out in the Active Travel Plan. Shouldn't active travel schemes be planned and built for forecasted/desired, rather than current, capacity and demand? Can we expect properly designed, safe and future-proofed projects?*

When designing schemes, we must take into account National design guidance in order to secure funding to delivery infrastructure. Transport Scotland are currently reworking a key piece of this guidance "Cycling by Design" with a view to launching the new document this year. The Council has already commented on early drafts of this and will be using the finished article to inform future designs.

Engagement remains a key part in the development of any new schemes and the Council would urge members of the public to continue to give us feedback when these schemes are under development.

- 20** *For Any/All - How do we avoid only 'preaching to the converted' and get these messages out further?*

Aberdeen City Council

There is always a danger that consultation leads to either supporters or objectors to a scheme responding. As part of any consultation process the relevant design teams will seek to engage with other groups such as community councils, business groups, disability groups etc., to try and get a balanced view of the proposals. COVID-19 restrictions and the forced changes that came with them have given most of the population a real opportunity to change their routines, the way they work and their transport choices. This includes people who probably would not have considered walking and cycling previously. With these changes comes a great opportunity for people to be more open to making longer term changes. Therefore, we need to work together, partly to understand what has worked well in encouraging active travel during COVID-19 restrictions, but also what could be done better for future active travel schemes and to continue to promote the benefits. We also need to encourage people to share their good experiences with others to inspire them.

Aberdeenshire Council

This is an excellent question and an issue that is problematic. Often when we develop infrastructure it is often viewed as being for 'cyclists' and there is an implicit feeling that all modal users are all tribal i.e. part of that group. We need to get the idea across that we are all drivers, public transport users, cyclists and pedestrians and everything we deliver is for the benefit of all. When we engage publicly via events, online or promotional activities we do so with an audience which is already known to some extent. How do we achieve great exposure to a wider audience? One technique relies on encouraging people to experience alternative measures of travel and there are some good examples of this. Taking a taxi which is powered by Hydrogen or Battery is a great way to expose someone to the technology and generate constructive discussion from a genuine LEV user i.e. the driver. The launch of H2 buses is another way; albeit just how many passengers were made aware they were on a H2 bus is unknown but otherwise a good opportunity. Aberdeenshire promotes an E-Bike scheme for staff to take and try an ebike for blocks of up to 4 weeks. This has led to around three quarters of trial users going on to purchase their own e-bike.

On a wider platform, we somehow need to communicate that our travel choices are something that impacts society at a much bigger level than we perhaps are aware. From out-of-town retail trips to how we choose to access town centres, how we opt to drive children to school when a walk would clearly be healthier; how we choose to travel to work – all these choices not only impact on our own health but on that of others around us. Getting this message across is difficult and we need to look at how others have successfully presented their own messages, for example the NHS and smoking cessation.

One other suggestion I have heard of is the idea of building cycle training into driver training; this would at least allow future drivers to view the road from a different perspective.

Sustrans Scotland

This is a significant challenge, and will require a number of different approaches, including:

- proactive efforts to reach people who aren't engaging with consultation processes
- Engagement with a wide range of community organisations
- Learning lessons from public health, including advertising campaigns
- Drawing on the knowledge of local elected members and community representatives, to understand who to engage with and how

All partners will have to play their part in this, and recognise the crucial role of effective, 2-way communication with the public in the successful delivery of projects.

Living Streets Scotland

Take a much stronger / strategic approach to planning for behaviour change outcomes including individual values, social norms as well material things such as infrastructure.