

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Council commissioned the Edinburgh Strategic Sustainable Transport Study Phase 1 (ESSTS1) in early 2020 to establish a policy-led rationale for future mass transit in the city. The study considered ten corridors where transit could best support policy outcomes. Four were recommended for further consideration with two prioritised for further development in the near term. These are Granton to the city centre and onwards to the south east quadrant of the city serving Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Bio-Quarter and beyond.

The Council commissioned a further Phase 2 study (ESSTS2) to further analyse the Granton and South East corridors, establishing corridor specific objectives, assessing possible route options, and carrying out preliminary analysis to support the case for mass transit.

In bringing forward ESSTS2, a Project Board has been established, comprising senior officers from the Council and Transport Scotland's Head of Strategic Planning, to oversee the project and ensure rigorous governance is in place from the outset.

The ESSTS2 study is now complete and this Executive Summary outlines the conclusions and the next steps for project development.

Policy and Objectives

The continued success and growth of the Edinburgh Region, in an inclusive and sustainable manner, will require the development and implementation of a coordinated approach to economic development, spatial planning and transport.

At a national level, this coordinated approach is being advanced through the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework and National Transport Strategy (NTS) and, in support of the NTS, the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2). At an Edinburgh City level, the forthcoming City Plan 2030 (CP2030) will set out the spatial strategy and land allocations to 2030, which will be supported by the City Mobility Plan (CMP).

ESSTS2 has examined strategic transport corridors within, and potentially beyond, Edinburgh to assess whether, and how, the development of transit-led solutions could deliver against stated transport objectives and support wider policy outcomes such as sustainable economic growth, reducing carbon, promoting equity and social inclusion and supporting healthier lifestyles. The report concludes that mass transit will contribute significantly to realising these outcomes.

As is the case with the completed tram line from Edinburgh Airport to Newhaven, the introduction of mass transit linking strategic development areas and bisecting the city centre will be a key enabler for sustainable development and will contribute significantly to:

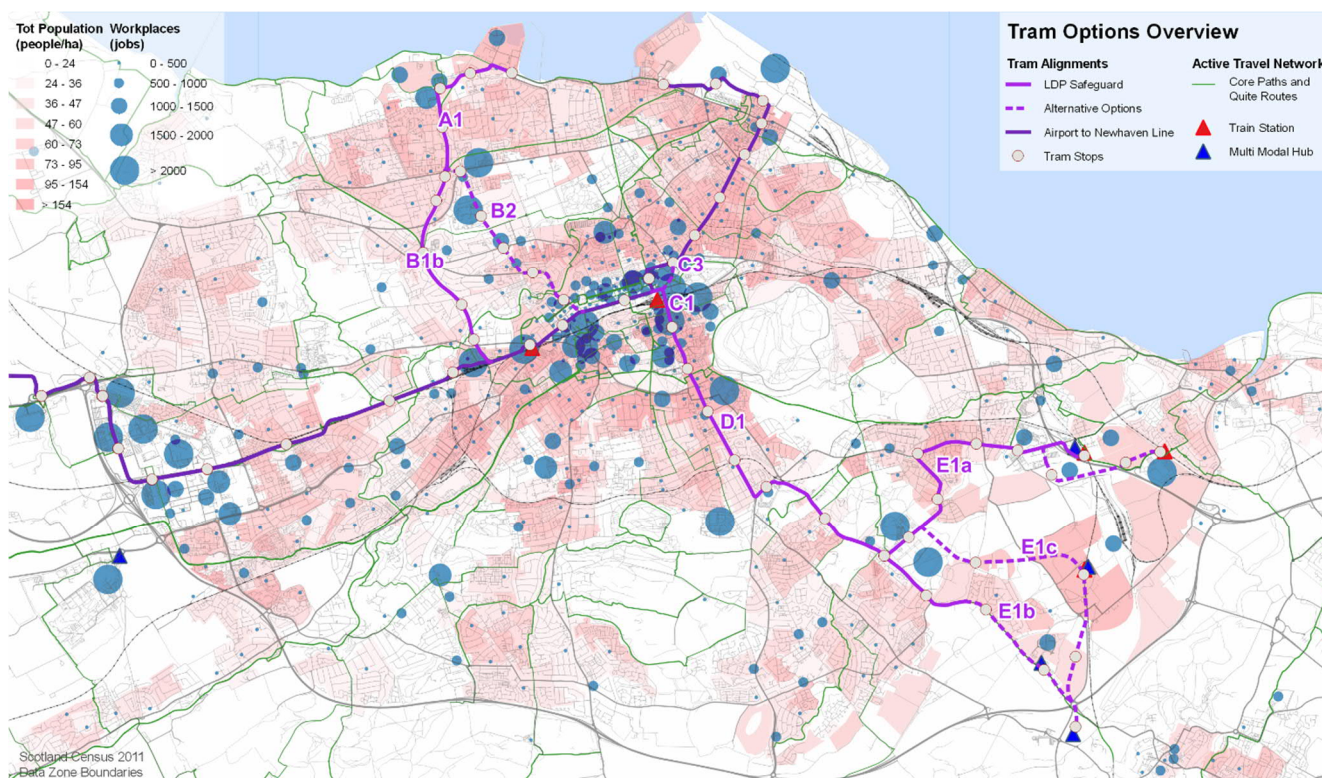
- Supporting the development of more sustainable neighbourhoods
- Provide improve connectivity to support sustainable city expansion and prosperity
- Improving access to high quality public transport and encouraging mode shift from private cars
- Providing improved access to jobs, education, healthcare and leisure by creating further opportunities for cross-city journeys
- Supporting the Councils vision for enhanced places by facilitating city centre transformation and 15-minute neighbourhoods
- Enable active travel through traffic reduction; and
- Improving air quality (zero emission at source/modal shift)

Emerging Route Options

A number of route options between Granton and the South East have been assessed as part of ESSTS2 study. Details of all options considered are contained in the Summary Report and the project team is available to provide more comprehensive overview of the work carried out.

The figure below shows the routes still under consideration that will be taken forward to the next stage of project development.

Emerging Route Options



Granton to the City Centre

The alignment of Option A1 follows West Granton Access Road from Ferry Road to Caroline Park. This option is the existing safeguarded route and provides a direct and segregated tram and parallel high-quality active travel route. From the southerly tip of A1, two options are being taken forward for further analysis, Option B1b and Option B2

The route of Option B1b ties in with the existing tram line at Roseburn and then follows the Roseburn Path from the A8 to Ferry Road, west of Crewe Toll. The alignment is fully segregated, following an old railway track bed, and now an active travel corridor and part of NCN1. The alignment is the safeguarded route for transit with existing construction powers in place. The route has enhanced active travel provision, in accordance with current design guidance. A target foot/cycle path width would be 4.5-5.0m, with 3.5m at pinch-points. To achieve the design requirements however, the majority of existing structures would be demolished and replaced.

The route of Option B2 runs ties in with the existing tram line at Shandwick Place at the west end of Princes Street and assumes an on-street route following Queensferry Road, Orchard Brae and Crewe Road South. This option has been introduced to test against option B1b in light of the additional costs associated with the demolition and reconstruction of structures. B2 has other advantages including a stronger catchment; it better serves key trip generators including the Western General Hospital and local residential street due to the on-street alignment. B2 also allows the retention of the Roseburn Path/ NCN1 as a dedicated active travel corridor and potential environmental impacts along the Roseburn Path are also avoided.

City Centre

Option C1 is the original Tram Line 3 alignment, protected within the city's Local Development Plan. The route would leave the existing route at Princes Street / South St David Street and continue east along Princes St to North Bridge. It would then follow North and South Bridge connecting into Section D above at Nicholson Square.

An operational loop is also being taken forward to the next stage of project development (C3). This would be a short section of tram route connecting the Newhaven and South East corridors via Leith Street enabling north south services to avoid Princes Street, providing greater service reliability and flexibility. As elsewhere in the city centre, delivery of this section would require a significant reduction in traffic and further reconfiguration of

the Picardy Place junction. Trams on this Section C3 would be unable to serve the existing Picardy Place stop, instead an additional stop would be provided, in close proximity, on Leith St.

Nicholson Square to Bio-Quarter

Section D is an on-street alignment between Nicholson Square and the BioQuarter. It is the protected alignment within the Local Development Plan and the only suitable north/ south route for tram as topography prohibit alternative alignments. It is also an important arterial route to and from the city centre and an established corridor of high public transport demand. Given the space constraints along this corridor between Nicholson Square and Salisbury Road there will be competing demand for space between mass transit, car, bus, and active travel. All of which will need to be assessed and trade-offs agreed.

South East Corridor Options

Three options have been considered for the South East corridor and all are being taken forward for further analysis at the next stage of project development. These are Option E1a BioQuarter to Newcraighall via largely segregated route; Option E1b BioQuarter to Sheriffhall via mixed on-street and segregated alignment; and Option E1c BioQuarter to Sheriffhall via Shawfair on segregated alignment.

Next Steps

Based on the emerging routes set out above, the next stage of project development is to produce a Strategic Business Case (SBC). This will be developed in accordance with Guidance on the Development of Business Cases in Transport Scotland, Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance and UK Treasury Guidance.

It is worth noting that stakeholder engagement to date has been limited to a handful of external bodies plus Council officers including the Active Travel team and officers responsible for Bio-Quarter, Granton, City Plan and the City Mobility Plan. At the SBC stage, it will be necessary to engage with a select number of external stakeholders. These may include Spokes, Living Streets, Edinburgh Access Panel, Sustrans, Lothian Buses, Edinburgh Trams and Scottish Government. Prior to further engagement, an engagement plan will be established and a further briefing note issued.

Assuming work starts in late February, the SBC is scheduled to be completed by September 2021 with a view to this being taken to Transport and Environment Committee in early autumn 2021.