Ashgrove Connects

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Stage 2 Report

September 2022

Project website: https://ashgroveconnects.commonplace.is/

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What we've done: About the project

Ashgrove Connects gets local people involved in making Ashgrove Road, Ashgrove Road West and Laurelwood Avenue work better for those who live, work, study and visit here.

This is part of a programme of improvements across the city that will help provide everyone with safer, healthier and more sustainable transport and lifestyle options.

The project considers opportunities that complement the proposed infrastructure changes along the Berryden Corridor to ensure the communities of Ashgrove Connects benefit.

Aberdeen City Council recognises that to enable all people (regardless of age or ability) to travel by active and sustainable modes and to engage in community activities, a holistic solution for the built environment is required. That is why this project has been developed in partnership with the communities who live and work in the area.

Who is involved?

Aberdeen City Council: Leading the delivery of the project.

Nestrans: Funding Stages 1-2.

Atkins: Working on behalf of Aberdeen City Council to deliver the initial stages of the project.

Stakeholder Working Group: Providing stakeholder and community representation to help the project remain in line with community priorities.

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What we've done: Timeline

The indicative project timeline of the key stages is outlined below. Aberdeen City Council has employed a consultant, Atkins, to work with the local community to deliver Stage 1 and 2.

- Stage 1: Define
- Stage 2: Develop
- Stage 3: Design
- Stage 4: Detail
- Stage 5: Deliver
- Stages 1 and 2: Spring to Autumn 2022 (Atkins commission)
- Stages 3 to 5: approximately 2 to years (subject to approvals and funding)

The first stage of the project focussed on building an understanding of how the streets and public spaces are perceived and used to define local priorities and establish Design Objectives. The findings from Stage 1 are available to read on the project website: https://ashgroveconnects.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/emerging-themes/step1.

The second stage of the project has focussed on the following key elements:

- Development of Initial Designs to present ideas of what could be delivered to respond to local priorities
- Community and stakeholder engagement to understand what people like and what they would change about the Initial Designs
- Traffic modelling to identify the impact of the Initial Designs on the local and wider network

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What we've done: Design Objectives

The priorities that emerged from Stage 1 of the project were used to develop Design Objectives. These set out what the project should achieve and will be used to ensure the designs remain in line with community priorities as they develop.

Traffic: the street is a slower, quieter, and calmer environment where traffic access is retained but people feel safer, and traffic is less of a barrier to community activity for people of all ages and abilities.

Crossing and junctions: using junctions is an easier and more comfortable experience, which is accessible for people of all ages and abilities by all means of travel.

Place quality and greenspace: the street feels more attractive and safer for people to spend time in, with improved access to and through local greenspaces, the distinctive feel of local spaces enhanced, and an overall net gain of 'green'.

Walking: people of all ages and abilities can more easily walk to access facilities safely, comfortably, and independently.

Cycling: people of all ages and abilities are able to move around by bicycle safely, comfortably and independently.

Parking & loading: provide parking and loading within a reasonable distance of homes and businesses ensuring equitable access for all.

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What we've done: Initial Designs

The Design Objectives were used to guide the development of Initial Design Ideas for two areas: Ashgrove Road West; and Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue. Within each area, key sections of the design were presented to show what could be possible.

The community were asked to consider the different ideas and feedback on what they liked and what they would change or combine.

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What we've done: Engagement Activities

During June and July, engagement took place with the community and stakeholders to present and collect feedback on Initial Design Ideas to inform further development of these.

- 872 visitors to the website
- 8 activities held
- 75 respondents
- 92 contributions
- 182 news subscribers

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What we've found out: Demographics of respondents

Respondents were asked about their gender and age to provide an understanding of how balanced the engagement process had been. Similar to Stage 1, there were slightly more female respondents and most fell within the 35-44 age category.

Pie chart: Respondents' gender (number =54)

Pie chart: Respondents' age (number = 48)

All demographic questions were optional and only capture those who submitted this information through the project website. Respondents could only select one option for each question. Respondents who previously submitted this information during Stage 1 did not have to re-enter this.

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What we've found out: Travel habits of respondents

Respondents were asked about their connection to the area to provide an understand of their interest in the project.

Similar to Stage 1, the majority of respondents were local to the area when combining 'I live here' and 'I work here'. There was an increase in respondents who travel through the area.

Pie chart: Respondents' connection to the area (number = 118)

Respondents were asked about their preferred travel mode to provide an understanding of how people move around.

Similar to Stage 1, most respondents prefer to travel by active modes when combining 'on foot' and 'by bike' followed 'by car'.

Respondents' preferred travel mode (number = 128)

All demographic questions were optional and only capture those who submitted this information through the project website. Respondents could select multiple options for each question. Respondents who previously submitted this information during Stage 1 did not have to re-enter this.

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What we've found out: Feedback on the initial designs

The total number of contributions received was 92 of which 82 were comments and 10 were agreements with other comments.

Analysis of the feedback received on the initial designs has been split into two: Ashgrove Road West; and Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue.

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What we've found out: Ashgrove Road West – Overall Feedback (1/2)

Respondents were asked to feedback on the overall design ideas for Ashgrove Road West against the design objectives:

- **80% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*creating a slower, quieter street environment*."
- **84% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making crossing the road and using junctions easier and a more comfortable experience*."
- **89% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making the street feel more attractive and safer for people to spend time in*."
- **84% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making it easier to walk*."
- **80% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs *"enabling people of ages and abilities to move around by bicycle."*
- **49% agreed or mostly agreed** and **37% were neutral** about the designs*"providing parking and loading within a reasonable distance of homes and businesses ensuring equitable access for all."*

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What we've found out: Ashgrove Road West – Overall Feedback (1/2)

People supported:

- Level of ambition.
- 20mph speed limit.
- Dissuading through traffic.
- "Very impressed with the plans, especially the separate pedestrian, cycle, road ways."

People queried:

- Emergency service access.
- Ongoing maintenance.
- Access to and visibility from driveways.
- “Not sure how drive access can be maintained and have safe cycle ways. All this planting is good but current maintenance of green in the city is rubbish.”

People suggested:

- Improve signage to the Foresterhill Health Campus.
- Provide secure bike storage.
- Demonstrate how the designs will integrate with wider infrastructure changes.
- *“The changes clearly need to be integrated into an overall design in relation to Berryden Corridor and Anderson Drive potential revisions.”*

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What we’ve found out: North Anderson Drive

This Idea emphasised the junction as a gateway into Ashgrove Road West, telling people that it is primarily a local access street rather than a through traffic route with a new public space.

Most like design features:

- Protected, separate cycle and walking space
- Parallel crossings
- Trees and greenspace
- 20mph speed limit

People supported:

- Change of environment
- New public space
- Improved crossings

People queried:

- Impact of McDonalds
- Traffic congestion
- Enforcement of traffic speeds

People suggested:

- Sequencing of traffic lights
- Screening for public space
- Two lanes on approach to North Anderson Drive

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What we’ve found out: Foresterhill

This Idea simplified the junction to reduce the safety concerns people have, reduce the time to cross and dissuade through traffic.

Most like design features:

- Protected, separate cycle and walking space
- Trees and greenspace
- 20mph speed limit

People supported:

- Simplified junction
- Improved crossings
- Removal of parking bays on approach

People queried:

- Simplified junction
- Improved crossings
- Removal of parking bays on approach

People suggested:

- Simplified junction
- Improved crossings
- Removal of parking bays on approach

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What we've found out: Cornhill

These Ideas presented two layouts to enable people to cross the road, make the junction feel safer and more attractive to move through and spend time in.

Most like design features:

- Trees and greenspace
- Parallel crossings
- Protected, separate cycle and walking space

People supported:

- New crossings
- Safer junction
- Improved public space / greenspace

People queried:

- Noise impact of crossings
- Reduced visibility from greenspace
- Access to school

People suggested:

- Swap location of bus stop and crossing
- Close Braefoot Road instead
- Increase footway width

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What we've found out: Westburn

These Ideas presented two layouts to provide more priority for people walking, cycling and wheeling and to make the junction feel safer for all travel modes.

Most like design features:

- Protected, separate cycle and walking space
- Trees and greenspace
- 20mph speed limit

People supported:

- Priority crossings
- Slowing approach to junction
- Enhanced greenspace

People queried:

- Understanding of roundabout layout / priority of users
- Reduced visibility
- Impact of opening the wall

People suggested:

- Improve sequencing of traffic lights
- Slow down approach from Westburn Drive
- Filter lane onto Westburn Drive

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What we've found out: Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue – Overall Feedback (1/2)

Respondents were asked to feedback on the overall design ideas for Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue against the design objectives:

- **77% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*creating a slower, quieter street environment*."
- **69% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making crossing the road and using junctions easier and a more comfortable experience*."
- **67% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making the street feel more attractive and safer for people to spend time in*."
- **69% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs "*making it easier to walk*."
- **69% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs *"enabling people of ages and abilities to move around by bicycle."*
- **50% agreed or mostly agreed** about the designs *"providing parking and loading within a reasonable distance of homes and businesses ensuring equitable access for all."*

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What we've found out: Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue – Overall Feedback (2/2)

People supported:

- 20mph speed limit.

- Improved visibility and crossings.
- Aesthetic improvements.
- “Really hope that some combination of these ideas actually comes to fruition!”

People queried:

- Location of parking bays.
- Emergency service access.
- Moving traffic volume and parking onto other residential streets.
- “Reducing parking spaces will shift the cars to other streets - not necessarily solving any issues in the larger sense.”

People suggested:

- Reduce traffic volume further.
- Extend 20mph zone to cover Elm Place.
- Encourage businesses to promote off-street customer car parks.
- *“More greenery should be planted, not just trees, and Ashgrove Road is wide enough to accommodate this along with a cycle path.”*

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What we’ve found out: Idea A (One-way)

This Design Idea introduced a one-way system for traffic (on Ashgrove Road from Berryden Road to Laurelwood Avenue and on Laurelwood Avenue itself) to create more space for greenspace and people walking, cycling and wheeling.

Most like design features:

- 20mph speed limit
- More trees and greenspace
- Protected, separate cycle and walking space
- Parallel crossings

People supported:

- Reduced traffic conflict
- Enhanced greenspace opportunities
- New crossings

People queried:

- Reduced traffic conflict
- Enhanced greenspace opportunities
- New crossings

People suggested:

- Reduced traffic conflict

- Enhanced greenspace opportunities
- New crossings

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What we've found out: Idea B (False one-way)

This Design Idea introduced a one-way system with residential access for traffic on Laurelwood Avenue to create more space for people walking, cycling and wheeling.

Most like design features:

- 20mph speed limit
- Protected, separate cycle and walking space
- Parallel crossings

People supported:

- Reduced traffic volume on Laurelwood Avenue
- Residential access
- New crossings

People queried:

- Journey time for residents on Laurelwood Avenue
- Reduced parking bays
- Loss of greenspace

People suggested:

- Retain more parking space
- Retain more greenspace
- Promotion of off-street parking

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What we've found out: Idea C (Quiet Street)

The Design Idea introduced a quiet street approach to give people of all ages confidence that they can cross and cycle on the road without fear of traffic.

Most like design features:

- 20mph speed limit
- More trees and greenspace
- Cycling and driving in the same space / at the same speed

People supported:

- Enhanced residential streets
- Reduced noise and air pollution

People queried:

- If this approach would be achievable
- If this could be integrated with Berryden Corridor

People suggested:

- Close Laurelwood Avenue (or provide for residential access only)
- Remove speed cushions

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Workshop with Cornhill Primary School

The purpose of the workshop with pupils of Cornhill Primary School was to present, discuss and develop the Initial Design Ideas through a 3D model.

This highlighted:

- Positive feedback to many of the key design features, particularly more crossings, gateway features, secure cycle parking, modal filters, pocket parks and informal play areas.
- The need for secure cycle parking to enable more people to cycle, particularly for those living in high rise flats.
- The opportunity to trial some of the designs to gain more feedback from the community before making changes permanent.

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Workshop with Crosby House Care Home

The purpose of the workshop with residents and staff of Crosby House Care Home was to understand their travel behaviour, identify barriers to moving around and highlight improvements.

This highlighted:

- Many residents and their families travel by foot, wheelchair, and car/taxi to access the care home. Residents tend to travel along Ashgrove Road West, Ashgrove Road, and Laurelwood Avenue to visit the hospital/GP, shop, meet family/friends, and visit the park.
- Identified issues included high traffic speed and volume, high kerbs, no resting places, poor pavement conditions, and restricted visibility at junctions, particularly at the Ashgrove Road entrance to May Baird Avenue.
- Positive feedback to many of the key design features, particularly more crossings, 20mph speed limit, gateway features, continuous footways, and enhanced greenspace.

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Workshop with Residents of Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue

The purpose of the workshop with residents of Ashgrove Road and Laurelwood Avenue was to understand their priorities for change including traffic flow, parking and greenspace.

This highlighted:

- Identified issues included high traffic speed and volume, traffic congestion, restricted visibility from parked vehicles, and maintenance of greenspace.
- Support for a one-way system but concerns about increasing traffic volume on Laurelwood Avenue as a result.
- Support for quiet streets but unsure whether this is achievable.
- Support for improved greenspace but need to consider smaller trees/pockets rather than tall trees which create visibility and maintenance issues.

- Concern at displacing parking to other streets and locating spaces near high walls, increasing risk of vandalism.
- Priorities for change highlighted reducing traffic speed and volume, improving crossings, enhancing place quality, meeting parking demand where possible, and improving cycling connections.

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What happens next: Design Development

The feedback received from the community and stakeholders on the Initial Designs has helped to develop a Concept Design for the project. The key features of this include:

- 20mph speed limit on Ashgrove Road and Ashgrove Road West;
- Reduced carriageway width and crossing distances;
- Continuous footways at side roads to provide priority for people crossing;
- One new controlled crossing of Ashgrove Road West;
- A significant net increase in the number of street trees and green infrastructure;
- Two new opportunities for public realm features as gateways into the community;
- Segregated cycle tracks on Ashgrove Road West; Ashgrove Road between Westburn Drive and Laurelwood Avenue; and Laurelwood Avenue and Elm Place;
- Enhanced bus stop facilities and cycle bypasses of bus stops; and
- Reduction in available on street parking commensurate, prioritising residential need where required.

It is recommended that the design for Ashgrove Connects is further developed alongside Berryden Corridor and other network improvements in the area, including the A944/A9119 and A92 multi-modal studies.

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Next steps

Following completion of Stages 1 and 2, the project was successfully approved at Aberdeen City Council's City Growth and Resources Committee on the 21st of September.

An application will now be made for further funding to develop the project through Stages 3 and 4. These stages would include further opportunities for the community and stakeholders to view and feedback on the design as it develops in more detail.

Until funding has been secured for the next stages, there will be minimal progress made on the project. Further updates on the project will continue to be communicated through the project website once funding has been secured for the next stages.

Please make sure to sign up to receive latest news through the website by visiting https://ashgroveconnects.commonplace.is/news.

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Thank you to everyone who participated in the project so far.

For more information and to stay up to date as the project progresses, please visit the project website: https://ashgroveconnects.commonplace.is/