

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	23 February 2010
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Complementary Uses of Existing and Future Park and Ride/Choose Sites
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/10/045

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the opportunities and challenges in increasing the patronage of bus based Park and Ride services at the current and future planned Park and Ride/Park and Choose sites, and balancing this with the need to effectively and efficiently manage these considerable assets by maximising their usage and where possible minimising the associated costs to this Council. This balance must continue to recognise, support and promote the primary function of these assets which is to support the provision of Park and Ride/Park and Choose services.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Members instruct the appropriate officers to develop a draft process for the consideration of Category 1 uses in the first instance, similar if possible to the school lets system. Members are also asked to instruct the appropriate officers to explore and report back on the possibilities associated with Category 2 uses. In assisting in the development of a draft process, Members are also asked to agree a trial 'cycle training' event at Kingswells Park and Ride Site in May 2010 with feedback on this to be included in a future report.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There should be no financial implications in the development of an appropriate process to determine applications for complementary uses as this can be done utilizing existing professional staff from Property, Facilities Management, Planning and Infrastructure, Public Transport Unit and Legal Services. One of the objectives in developing such a process would be to ensure that, should individual applications for complementary uses be successful, there would be no additional cost incurred by the Council, and where appropriate, charges would be levied which would be used to offset the revenue costs associated with the management and maintenance of the Park

and Ride/Park and Choose sites. The latter could result in net revenue savings to the Council, subject of course to legal considerations in developing an appropriate process.

#### 4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Park and Ride/Park and Choose facilities are key elements of the Local, Regional and National Transportation Strategies and as such support all levels of Government policies and objectives relating to economy, environment, safety, social inclusion, accessibility and best value. The Council has committed to the delivery of our Local Transport Strategy and to supporting NESTRANS in the delivery of their Regional Transport Strategy.

The Single Outcome Agreement for 2009-12 references the delivery of transport network improvements both directly and indirectly in 14 out of the 15 National Outcomes, thereby reflecting the importance of improving our transport network to all areas of our community.

Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking also recognises the importance of public transport – ‘Work to improve public transport in and to our city’, as well as ensuring we maximise our assets effectively – ‘Adopt an effective asset management system’.

An Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the development of both the Local and Regional Transport Strategies. At this point it is considered that as Park and Ride Services would be enhanced by complementary activity at the car park sites by virtue of encouraging greater awareness and patronage, that there would be no detriment to the travelling public. However, should Members agree to the development of a process to consider possible additional complementary activities at the car park sites, a further more specific EHRIA will be undertaken at that time.

#### 5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

No further implications have been identified at this stage and any further issues arising should the above recommendations be agreed, will be contained in future reports. These further issues will need to respond to any legal, liability, financial, health and safety and property risks that may be identified should the Council agree in the future to permitting complementary uses on Council property.

#### 6. REPORT

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council continues to arrange and manage temporary event led Park and Ride facilities (e.g. Christmas and Bonfire Night) and complementary events with partner organisations supporting sustainable transport (e.g. Getabout promotional events encouraging walking, cycling, public transport use and car sharing; vehicle emissions testing) utilising the existing Park and Ride car parks at Kingswells and Bridge of Don. More recently, the Council has been approached by external organisations, both commercial and non-commercial, to also use these car parking facilities.

The range of requests to date include the following:

- Motorcycle training
- Cycle training
- Car wash facilities
- Hot Food Stands
- Coffee Stalls
- Driver training
- Shopping deliveries

- 1.2 Whilst the Kingswells Park and Ride site is owned and managed by the City Council, the Bridge of Don site is leased from the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. It is also pertinent to note that the Kingswells Park and Ride site was procured on the basis of use as a Park and Ride facility, and this will continue to be the case as we move towards the delivery of the A96 Inverurie Road Park and Choose facility, and work in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council in the delivery of a further site along the A90 (south) Stonehaven Road at Schoolhill.

(Note: Park and Choose is a further development of the traditional park your car and take the bus – the ‘Choose’ element refers to more than one choice of onward sustainable travel from the car park e.g. cycling, bus, car sharing. The car sharing element may be particularly attractive to Park and Ride/Choose sites where High Occupancy Vehicle lanes are available, such as the one being considered in the medium term for the A90(s) Schoolhill car park and HOV along the A90 Stonehaven Road.)

The existing and planned Park and Ride/Park and Choose facilities are key elements of both the City and Shire’s Local Transport Strategies, the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy and the two new sites to be built on the A96 and A90(s) are also recognised as nationally important as they are both included within the Scottish Government’s Strategic Transport Projects Review which will seek to deliver their National Transport Strategy. At all levels of Government, improvements to our transport network, including increasing modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, is a significant contributor to the success of our economic objectives.

- 1.3 However, it is also recognised that as a Council delivering best value to its community, and seeking to maximise the assets that we own and control,

there may be an opportunity to consider additional complementary uses within those sites within our control, without undermining the primary function of the facility.

It should also be recognised that this Committee recently acknowledged at its meeting in November 2009 joint working with NESTRANS and Aberdeenshire Council on the future operation of Park and Ride/Park and Choose and this work continues. This issue was included as section 8 of the report entitled 'Strategic Transportation Projects'.

## 2 Opportunities and Challenges

- 2.1 As the Park and Ride facility at the Bridge of Don is not in the full control of the Council it is suggested that at this time it is not considered relevant for the purposes of the remainder of this report. Should of course, the facility be relocated at some point in the future and be within the ownership and control of the Council, then any processes in place at that time for the consideration of any complementary uses would become applicable then.
- 2.2 The Council's Lets Office manages the letting system for school and educational properties supported by the Facilities Management team to enable the let to open and operate. This system helps to maximise the use of council property without prejudice to the primary function of the educational services provided. This system also enables the consideration of a range of uses by other organisations, including other internal council and external partner services, which comply with agreed terms of use. Priority is given to the primary purpose, with other requests fitting in. Various charges are applied.
- 2.3 Recent revenue savings decisions for 2010/11 and beyond will see the removal of staff from the accommodation buildings serving the Park and Ride facilities during the day, although staff will be made available to open, close and clean the facilities.
- 2.4 The Kingswells Park and Ride site, with approximately 900 spaces, has been operating at an average parking capacity of around 35% (as recorded in the study report 'Future Development of Park and Ride in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire' completed on behalf on NESTRANS in December 2006). A week day and Saturday Park and Ride Service is provided by First. From October 2009 the provision of Stagecoach services through the site, thereby extending regular services to include Sundays and evenings. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to use this facility. This Council, with Aberdeenshire Council and NESTRANS, continue to work together with bus operators to increase public transport usage generally.

For comparison purposes only at this time, the Bridge of Don site, with approximately 700 spaces, operates at around 70-75% capacity. Both this

site and the Kingswells site are used for temporary additional Park and Ride Services e.g. at Christmas and Bonfire Night, and appropriately promotional activity as described earlier.

The future A96 and A90(s) Park and Ride/Park and Choose facilities are both being designed for around 1000 spaces each. Aberdeenshire Council are designing the A90(s) site and are including consideration of an HGV overnight parking facility to replace the one currently operating at Altens, as well as a possible weigh station in discussion with VOSA.

2.5 It is clear that there is an opportunity to utilise these facilities for complementary uses, and where this is built in from the start the associated planning, legal and procurement considerations can be addressed from the outset. For existing facilities, and the new uses being requested more recently, processes will require to be developed to ensure the following:

- Protection of the primary use of Park and Ride/Park and Choose
- Complements the Transportation strategies
- Compliance with relevant legislation e.g. planning, procurement
- Clear roles and responsibilities for decision making and management of any complementary uses
- Consideration of financial implications

### 3 Complementary Uses

3.1 There may be two distinct categories of complementary uses which would require to be addressed separately, as follows:

1. temporary, ad hoc events which require no permanent set up e.g. promotional, community, special events, training and awareness
2. permanent facilities and/or routine events which would require fixed or invasive set up, or which require lease arrangements

3.2 In both of the above categories, there should at the very least be no additional costs to the Council in supporting, facilitating or enabling any agreed complementary uses.

3.3 Category 1 uses could be addressed with an appropriately modified system similar to the school lets process. This process could support the efficient and effective consideration of applications should such events be easily demonstrated to comply with the issues identified in Section 2.5. Further discussion would be required to identify charges, if any, that would be applied, bearing in mind that there may be additional staff required, and some applications may be received from commercial organisations. In the case of commercial applications, consideration should be given to developing a set of charges to ensure that the Council derives a level of income which is commensurate with the level of commercial activity.

- 3.4 Category 2 uses will require more detailed consideration. Fixed or permanent uses may take up currently under-utilised car parking spaces which our strategies aim to fill in the longer term. Some uses may require physical consideration of aspects such as drainage which require further detailed consents. Bearing more permanent uses in mind, the construction or amendment of any existing infrastructure/buildings may have to be undertaken and there are procurement issues relating to how the Council may allow businesses to benefit commercially by operating within the Park and Ride sites. Rather than allow a 'first come, first served' approach to permitting use of the site, a procurement approach may deliver better value for the Council.
- 3.5 A recent request for use of the lower car park at Kingswells has been received to undertake cycle training which, if considered appropriate, could be used as a trial for developing a process for category 1 uses, as well as inform a process for category 2 uses. The details of this application are as follows:

Request details (in brief):

- Venue: Lower car park, Kingswells P&R
- Date: Sunday 16 May 2010
- Timings: 10:30 - 12:30 (estimated)
- Frequency: Initially one off but depending on success may look to do again on more regular basis
- Charges: Free event. Only cost would be the running costs of the P&R cabin (if used)
- Purpose: To encourage youngsters to cycle
- Participants (Estimated): Min 20 - 30 youngsters (and parents); Max 100
- Involved on the day: City Wardens, Grampian Tigers (TBC), Grampian Police (TBC)

Additional information:

- May have some stalls/stands to advertise cycling related subjects.
  - Barriers may be in place by May next year so would need to supply keys to open and close them
  - If P&R cabin used then would need to ensure left in clean and tidy state.
- 3.6 This application could be considered a Category 1 use – temporary in nature; not undermining the primary use; use supported by local, regional and national transportation policies.

## 4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Council and partner organisations have clear transportation strategies which support the key element of Park and Ride/Park and Choose facilities, which we continue to delivery, promote and support. Complementary uses could be accommodated when the car park sites are not fully utilised which will further the objectives of the respective

organisations in promoting awareness of the Park and Ride facilities, as well as encouraging increasing use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 4.2 It is a requirement of the Council to work to achieve best value and in this respect we may have an opportunity to maximise the use of these important transportation assets which could further the delivery of the policies of the Council. Particularly in the current economic climate, any complementary uses should not increase the burden of costs on the Council.
- 4.3 Processes for the consideration of applications for complementary uses must be transparent, equitable and in accordance with all necessary legislations. This Council should also ensure that whatever may or may not be developed in terms of a process, that we take into account that these Park and Ride sites are part of a network of local and regional facilities, with the future locations considered to be of national importance.
- 4.4 A trial as suggested above could be used to inform a draft process for the consideration of Category 1 and 2 uses.

## 5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members instruct the appropriate officers to develop a draft process for the consideration of Category 1 uses in the first instance, similar if possible to the school lets system. Members are also asked to instruct the appropriate officers to explore and report back on the possibilities associated with Category 2 uses. In assisting in the development of a draft process, Members are also asked to agree a trial 'cycle training' event at Kingswells Park and Ride Site in May 2010 with feedback on this to be included in a future report.

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### BACKGROUND PAPERS

All background papers are referenced within the main body of the report.