

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	11 May 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Roads Hierarchy
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/089
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report advises Members of progress to date on the preparation of the new roads hierarchy, which will provide a policy context for future transport planning and forms the basis of identifying future projects after completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Note the contents of this report,
- ii) Agree the proposed principles for the future distribution and management of traffic across the City, following the opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route,
- iii) Instruct officers to engage with stakeholders on the proposed framework and intended hierarchy including an on-line consultation with stakeholders and the public, and report back to the appropriate Committee after the summer recess.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Financial implications will be included in future reports as more defined projects and business cases become available. Funding has been made available from NESTRANS in 2015/16 and 2016/17, to take forwards the framework and design of the new locals roads signing which will require to be implemented with the opening of the AWPR.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any other implications will be included in future reports as detailed information becomes available. A new Roads Hierarchy is required for the City post-AWPR, not only to ensure the City maximises and locks

in the benefits of this and other major transport infrastructure under construction across the City, but also to ensure the successful delivery of the Local Development Plan, the Sustainable Energy Action Plan, the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and the recently approved Local Transport Strategy. There will be implications in terms of changes to people and goods routing, traffic management and modal/ route priority.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The AWPR is currently planned to be opened at the end of 2017 and this provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to shape the city's transport infrastructure to better meet the current and future needs of a global City and support the continued economic wellbeing. At the same time, the recently approved CCMP, a 25-year improvement plan for the city centre, sets out to transform the heart of the city from one which is heavily congested with motorised vehicles, into a world class destination which encourages and facilitates pedestrian and cycle movement, similar to other advanced global cities.
- 5.2 A report on Transport Implications – City Centre Masterplan Projects, is also being presented to this Council meeting for consideration. A key issue identified in that report is the need to reduce general peak traffic levels by some 20%, to enable the transportation and public realm objectives relating to pedestrian, cycle and bus movement in the city centre streets to be achieved. Traffic modelling undertaken for that report indicates that the “Inner Relief Road” approach, as originally envisaged within the CCMP, will not provide the overarching principles to enable delivery of the masterplan and so an alternative approach has been developed.
- 5.3 This alternative, which has been identified from a range of options considered, requires a different approach for the distribution of traffic across the City and to/around the City Centre, which:
- maximises the use of the AWPR,
 - directs traffic to the most appropriate routes as early as possible in the journey,
 - enables good access to the City Centre with appropriate priority for active and sustainable modes. This report seeks to identify what this new approach to the City's road network could look like.
- 5.4 Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire local authority areas both have some of the highest car ownership rates in the UK and in the post-AWPR era, continued increases are unsustainable if the wider aspirations identified in paragraph 4.1 above are to be achieved. It will therefore be necessary to manage how people travel by car in a different way. Car traffic will continue to be accommodated but it may require alternative routes to be taken to reach destinations, which may be longer in distance and time.

- 5.5 In order to ensure access is maintained to a city centre which aims to prioritise people movement over motorised vehicle congestion, it will be necessary to ensure that the whole transport network, from the outskirts at the new AWPR, all the way into the heart of the city centre, is modified and managed to prioritise and support active and sustainable travel, enable appropriate movement of goods, and where necessary, improved to support identified areas of development. With much of the existing road space being for pedestrians and other sustainable modes in the longer term, it is not desirable or practical or affordable to create a road network that deals with projected levels of car traffic, especially in an area with existing air quality problems. Instead, the intention is to retain access to all city centre car parks, albeit certain car parks will be easier to access from particular directions than others and support people access via mass transit modes, such as bus and train travel.
- 5.6 Efficient and high quality bus travel will become even more important in ensuring good access to the city centre, so traffic management measures to support this will be considered which will make that modal choice more attractive to people who currently depend on the private car for making such journeys, especially those undertaken during the peak periods on the road network, when queues and delays are at their highest levels.
- 5.7 The successful delivery of the above, which will take several years to achieve, will:
- help encourage and increase walking and cycling for short trips which will contribute to a healthier society and a reduction in activity related illness,
 - enable a more reliable, punctual and attractive public transport network to operate,
 - support appropriate commercial and residential development,
 - deliver improvements to the environment both in terms of vehicle emissions and noise levels,
 - make best use of the built environment, from our buildings, to areas where people want to spend time during the course of a day.
- 5.8 The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) was used for a high level assessment, to sift through the options then identify a preferred option. Full details of the assessment methodology and 3-stage process used, are contained in Appendix 1 to this report. The preferred option consists of the creation of 3 zones with demand management restriction for vehicles movements between them. Public transport and cycling corridors will penetrate each of the zones, while CCMP / Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) proposals for pedestrians and cyclists and public transport users will remain in the city centre. This option is illustrated on a plan at the end of Appendix 1.

- 5.9 For the zones to be effective in terms of regulating general traffic routing into the city centre, traffic management measures will be required. Those details will form part of the next stage of assessment as the boundaries are at this time indicative and potentially subject to modification and options will be reported back to the appropriate Committee, along with proposals for advising members of the public.
- 5.10 The following principles will be applied within the framework
- Strategic radial routes from the AWPR junctions will focus trips into and out of the city centre and to key locations. The key radials therefore are:
 - North-east* – A90 Ellon Road/ A956 King Street
 - North* – Third Don Crossing/ Berryden Corridor
 - North-west* – A96/A947 Inverurie Road/Great Northern Road/ Oldmeldrum Rd/Stoneywood Rd/ Berryden
 - West* – A944 Skene Road/Lang Stracht/Westburn Road
 - South 1* – Stonehaven Rd/ Great Southern Rd/ Riverside Drive
 - South 2* – A956 Wellington Road/ Queen Elizabeth Bridge
 - Former ‘through city traffic’ will be directed to AWPR and round the city
 - Routeing from the city centre will direct ‘all traffic’ to the nearest available key corridor to access the new A90 (AWPR):
 - HGV traffic will be routed around AWPR as much as possible rather than through the city centre
- 5.11 The CCMP supporting and enabling transportation measures as identified in the CCMP report being considered by this Council meeting, has to be managed and operated in a way that manages general traffic around the city centre. For example, if you approach the city centre from the north, you would be advised to select one of the north car parks then return the way you came, after your stay. Alternatively, if you wished to park at Union Square and your origin was from north of Aberdeen, you would be directed round the AWPR or Parkway and Anderson Drive (depending how far north your journey started) to then approach this car park from the south.
- 5.12 The de-trunked A90 (Anderson Drive / Parkway) through the city will defer to the key radial routes in the new roads hierarchy, and be used for orbital links between the radials. This will help to achieve traffic reduction in the city centre; improve bus punctuality and reliability; and redress the balance between place and movement in the city centre.
- 5.13 Combined with the delivery of public realm improvements in the city centre which are proposed in the CCMP, streets will be given the hierarchy of priority recommended in the national policy “Designing Streets” – with walking, cycling, public transport, freight, taxis, all afforded higher priority than private cars.
- 5.14 A number of strands of work are already underway or have been completed to help inform the development and delivery of such a new

roads hierarchy and will tie into the objectives of the Local Development Plan, and the CCMP:

- new signage for the city's local roads network is currently being developed to complement the AWPR signing, and this is summarised in Appendix 2 to this report,
- various junction reviews are underway to identify options post-AWPR that could better meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport This includes reviewing junctions on the current trunk road, as these are expected to be transferred to the Council's responsibility in 2018.

6. IMPACT

6.1 Improving Customer Experience –

The contents of this report and the recommendations relate to the delivery of the new roads hierarchy, which if successful in achieving the benefits associated with the completion of the AWPR, will improve Aberdeen for all those who live in, work in and visit it.

6.2 Improving Staff Experience –

By developing a defined, fully resourced programme of delivery for the new roads hierarchy, with key stage decision making, committed to by the Council, this will enable staff, with stakeholders and the public, to confidently and timeously optimise the benefits of the AWPR completion.

6.3 Improving our use of Resources –

Further resources will continue to be required for the wider delivery of the transport network plan to support the successful provision of a range of benefits for citizens and business across the City. The intention is to benefit from economies of scale, by co-ordinating delivery of the new roads hierarchy, the associated signing review, the CCMP and SUMP, cross-city connections, and elements of the Local Transport Strategy Action Plan. Officers will continue to maximise opportunities for external funding to assist with delivery.

6.4 Corporate -

Positive decision making informing the progressive implementation of the new roads hierarchy directly supports a range of policies and strategies including:

Aberdeen – the Smarter City vision:

- *We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience,*
- *We will provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote bio-diversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside,*

- *We will invest in the city where that investment demonstrates financial sustainability based on a clear return on investment,*
- *We will encourage cycling and walking,*
- *We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.*

6.5 Public –

The contents of this report are likely to be of public and media interest as it relates to how the road network will be managed following completion of the AWPR, which is a significant investment for the City and Region.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

7.1 The new roads hierarchy will contribute significantly to the regeneration of the city centre, and if the new roads hierarchy cannot be implemented for the completion of AWPR in December 2017, the potential benefits of the AWPR would not be realised in the city.

7.2 If a decision is not made, then there are the following risks:

- Reputational risk – undermines the Council investment into AWPR, Berryden Corridor Improvement and CCMP, so the public / stakeholders could perceive that the Council is unable to deliver strategic improvements to the city on time or deliver the projects to lock in the benefits of the AWPR;
- Traffic disruption – without adequate directional road signing and delivery of associated projects to lock in the benefits of the AWPR, road users including bus passengers would be likely to suffer from further congestion and delays;
- City Centre Masterplan – Unstable traffic conditions will occur if robust plans are not put in place to address the projected increases in vehicle movements, and this will inevitably result in poorer air quality in various parts of the city.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Mark Wilkie
 Senior Engineer – Transport Strategy and Programmes
MWilkie@aberdeencity.gov.uk
 01224 523482