

Appendix 4

1 Existing Situation

1.1 In Aberdeen there are two trunk roads:

A90 Stonehaven Road/ Anderson Drive/ Mugiemoss Road/ Parkway/ Ellon Road
A96 Auchmill Road/ Inverurie Road

As national routes these roads have the highest priority for traffic.

1.2 Whilst there are A, B and C class roads in the City, with some obviously more important than others, all other roads can be considered to form a grid system (albeit not a square grid). In general the City has tried to accommodate a driver's choice of route within or through the grid using any of these roads by providing full access junctions control (traffic signals, roundabouts or priority junctions) at the busier junctions. There are very few one way or turning restrictions within Aberdeen.

1.3 Over the years Aberdeen, and its surrounding towns, have grown, with a particularly rapid rate of growth in the past 50 years, with the incoming of the oil and gas industry. Population in the north east has increased by over a third in that time and that, along with the general increase in car ownership, has increased traffic in the City. This has now reached the point where continuing to permit free choice of route for drivers in and through the City is becoming unsustainable.

1.4 There is now considerable congestion experienced at points within the system. This congestion is mostly seen at:

- The City centre
- Junctions between the trunk roads and the busier City roads
- Access points to the peripheral industrial estates
- The rivers crossing points

To quantify the level of congestion during the peak periods, a number of journey time surveys were carried out during 2009 on key city centre routes. This demonstrated that on average, journeys within the city centre area took twice as long during the AM and PM peak periods than during non-peak times. The situation is similar on the key trunk roads where on average, peak period traffic on the A90 at the Bridge of Dee is subject to journey times that are up to four times as long as during non-peak periods and peak period traffic on the A96 at the Haudagain is subject to journey times up to three times as long as during non-peak periods. Reference is also made to the (Nestrans - Regional Transport Strategy - Monitoring Report – June 2017 – Indicator 39) which suggests that the percentage of driver journeys delayed due to congestion has remained broadly similar since 2009.

- 1.5 Bus travel has experienced a long term downturn in passenger numbers. There are a number of reasons for this which have been identified through previous studies and verified with public and stakeholder engagement, and most recently in the 2015 study 'Reducing Barriers to Bus Use' jointly commissioned by Nestrans, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and First Bus. These reasons include increasing car ownership and aspiration for car ownership, increased congestion over the past 50 years and in Aberdeen's case the unpredictability of the level of congestion at any particular time of day or day of the week and its impact on longer and unreliable journey times, and the cost of fares.
- 1.6 In recent years there has been a renaissance in passenger numbers on the railway. Every small change in frequency of train or train capacity has seen demand increase to match or outstrip capacity in the peak hours. Passenger numbers in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire area have doubled in the past 10 years – double the national average growth.
- 1.7 Walking and cycling have also seen an upturn in participation. New routes are being developed and implemented but perhaps the full scope for these modes won't be reached until there is a complete safe network for users. The Council recently approved the Active Travel Action Plan 2017 to 2021 which recognises that *'Whilst these interventions are undoubtedly encouraging more people to reconsider their travel options, we are aware that much remains to be done before Aberdeen can be said to have a coherent and attractive active travel network in place, one that is accessible to all ages and abilities, and before cycling becomes a mainstream travel mode accessible to all.'* Via two rounds of consultation, the following emerged:

Key concerns expressed were:

- Infrastructure – respondents believed that the volume and quality of cycle routes and cycle parking facilities is inadequate and that footways and paths are poorly maintained;
- Volume and speed of road traffic and its perceived priority over active travel modes which can result in unsafe conditions for walking and cycling; and
- Perceptions of poor driving behaviour, with a lack of respect shown to people walking and cycling.

Respondents suggested they would like to see:

- More and better pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, particularly more crossing facilities and joined-up, continuous and linked routes. In terms of cycling, a clear preference for dedicated and segregated facilities emerged;
- An increase in pedestrianised areas and/or traffic reduction measures;
- A safer environment for people walking and cycling;
- Improved maintenance of active travel routes; and
- Improved driver education.

1.8 The City centre, as the main regional centre for shopping and leisure, is very car dominated making movement around the City difficult for pedestrians and cyclists. Recent consultations as part of transport reviews including the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and the City Centre Masterplan development show a clear desire for a more pedestrian friendly environment. Transportation modelling carried out for the City Centre Masterplan shows that traffic in the City centre has high percentages of through traffic (that traffic with a destination beyond the City centre) and traffic simply crossing the city centre to a more desirable car park for the occupant's reason for travel. Key outcomes of this modelling revealed the following:

- Around 15% of all traffic generated within the city centre has a destination in the city centre
- Across the city, 30% of all trips can be classed as strategic or through trips without a city centre destination. For the key strategic routes eg. Union Street, Guild Street and Market Street, between 10% and 45% of trips can be classed as through trips without a city centre origin or destination
- Significant volume of east west trips e.g. Union Street, Guild Street– Mostly routing from south to north
- 47% of trips to city centre car parks involve crossing the city centre
- 59% of people in Aberdeen live within 5km of their place of work
- 71.7% of journeys within Aberdeen City are under 5km

1.9 Air Quality is a recurring issue particularly in the City centre. Areas have been declared as Air Quality Management Areas because they breach guidelines for the levels of NOX and particulate matter. Although the recorded levels are dropping to near the maximum guideline levels, these levels are still high.

2 Major Changes and Aspirations

2.1 There are a number of major changes to the transport system that are either completed, underway or will shortly be underway that will have significant impacts on the movement of people and goods in the City. These include:

- The Diamond Bridge (*open*)
 - Construction of this bridge has brought significant relief to the Bridge of Don, Ellon Road area and the Haudagain junction
 - Substantial pedestrian and cycle facilities have also been constructed as part of this project
- The airport link road (*open*)
 - This has significantly improved congestion from the access to the Dyce Industrial Estates and the airport
- The Craibstone Park and Ride (*open*)
 - This has increased the park and ride alternative to city centre parking
- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route/ Balmedie to Tipperty (*under construction – planned opening winter 2017/ 18*)
 - This has three major impacts on how transport operates in the City:

- Through traffic and cross City traffic will be able to use this route taking traffic out of the City
 - The trunk roads, the national high priority routes, will be removed from the city built up area to the AWPR boundary meaning the current City trunk roads will no longer need to have the level of priority currently afforded to them
 - The freed up capacity created on the local road network can be used to 'lock in the benefits' of this major investment for active and sustainable modes
- Ellon Park and Ride
 - This car park is being expanded – planned opening winter 2017/18
- Inverurie Railway Station car park extension
 - This will reduce traffic on the A96 Inverurie Road - planned opening winter 2017/18
- Scottish Government has announced two proposals that will significantly increase capacity and frequency on the railway. These improvements are scheduled for completion by December 2019.
 - Refurbished High Speed Travel trains (similar to the ones currently on the London route) are to be introduced on the inter Scottish City routes in 2018 increasing capacity by over 20%
 - The Rail Revolution proposals will introduce a local rail service running between Inverurie and Montrose providing a frequent service to all stations between these points by December 2019
- Kintore Railway Station
 - A new railway station will be built in Kintore by 2019. This will reduce traffic on the A96 Inverurie Road
- The Haudagain junction improvement (construction to start after AWPR opens)
 - This will reduce traffic delays on the A96 Inverurie Road

2.2 The Council also has a number of aspirations that will change travel in the City. These include:

- The City Centre Masterplan
 - The successful implementation of the transport aspects of the Masterplan will necessarily mean a reduction in vehicle traffic in the City centre with the available space being reprioritised for sustainable modes, namely public transport, cycling and walking.
- Berryden Road upgrading
 - This will provide an improved route for traffic accessing the north part of the City centre and facilitate the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan and prioritisation for walking, cycling and public transport
- South College Street/ Queen Elizabeth junction & Wellington Road upgrades

- This will improve access to the City centre for traffic from the south and facilitate the delivery of the City Centre Masterplan and prioritisation for walking, cycling and public transport
- Bridge of Dee study
 - This study is trying to identify improvements for traffic crossing the River Dee incorporating walking/ cycling/ public transport improvements in the area
- Locking in the benefits of the AWPR
 - This project is looking at changing priorities at junctions along Anderson Drive to give greater priority to the radial routes and to walking/ cycling/ public transport and looking at the radial corridors themselves in terms of their strategic nature for all modes including freight transport eg the on-going Wellington Road Multi Modal Study.