

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Net Zero, Environment and Transport
DATE	29 August 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy
REPORT NUMBER	RES/23/165
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Will Hekelaar
TERMS OF REFERENCE	7, 8

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcomes of a recent road reclassification exercise, undertaken in accordance with the revised Roads Hierarchy for the North East of Scotland, and how this may support greater public and stakeholder understanding of the Council's strategic and long-term vision for transport in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the final revised Roads Hierarchy and the road reclassifications undertaken; and
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to promote the revised Roads Hierarchy, noting that raising awareness will inform the context behind many current and forthcoming transport projects, supporting greater public and stakeholder appreciation of the aims and objectives of these projects.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In response to an instruction from the former Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee in August 2017 ([CHV/17/061](#)), Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans and the Strategic Development Planning Authority jointly commissioned a review of the North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy. The trigger for the review was the then imminent opening of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) and the purpose was to:
- Support the effective and efficient distribution and management of traffic around the city;

- Develop a network that makes best use of the AWPR by taking advantage of the freed-up road capacity to lock in the benefits of investment by giving more priority to sustainable transport journeys;
- Facilitate delivery of the transport elements of the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) by providing a means of reducing through-traffic in the city centre, reflecting the role of the city centre as a destination rather than a through-route; and
- Form a basis for identifying future transport priorities for the region, along with the City Region Deal Strategic Transport Appraisal, Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and Local Transport Strategy (LTS).

3.2 The initial [report](#) was received in spring 2019 and identified a revised network of priority, secondary and local routes based on the alignment of routes and their future role and purpose in the context of the AWPR and CCMP. In June 2019, the outcomes were reported to the former City Growth and Resources Committee ([OPE/19/089](#)). The Committee were advised that delivery of the revised hierarchy would involve the following steps in a sequential and incremental manner:

- Road classification changes, with some roads upgraded and some downgraded in priority, including some previously unclassified roads becoming classified and vice versa;
- Road signage and junction alterations to reflect and reinforce the new hierarchy;
- A series of appraisals, on a prioritised basis, of priority and secondary corridors to identify the supporting interventions required to reinforce the hierarchy, with an emphasis on measures to prioritise those walking, cycling and using public transport; and
- Traffic management interventions on local routes within the city centre and zonal neighbourhoods to protect those areas where through-traffic is no longer desirable.

The Committee:

- Instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, following consultation with the Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services and Chief Officer – Capital, to implement a revised roads hierarchy in a sequential and incremental manner, to encompass formal reclassification of the urban road network and changes to road signage and junction improvements to reinforce the hierarchy; and
- Instructed the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to develop improvements to priority and secondary corridors to achieve a more efficient movement of people and goods, with an emphasis on walking, cycling and public transport.

3.3 In response to the instruction to seek formal reclassification of the road network, engagement took place with a number of Council teams and services and regional partners to review the outcomes of the initial report and determine the optimum hierarchy. Upon agreement of a revised hierarchy, proposals were submitted to Transport Scotland in October 2019. In June 2020, Transport

Scotland announced they were content with proposals and the reclassifications were formally approved.

3.4 The revised priority route network is therefore:

- Priority orbital route: AWPR (A90);
- Priority radial routes:
 - AWPR / Blackdog junction to King Street / Mounthooly Way junction (A92/A956 north);
 - AWPR / Parkhill junction to Inverurie Road junction, with priority route deviating from historical alignment via Victoria Street to Riverview Drive (A947);
 - AWPR / Craibstone junction to Mounthooly Roundabout (A96);
 - AWPR / Kingswells South junction to Mounthooly Roundabout (A944);
 - A944 / Skene Road junction to Woolmanhill Roundabout (previously B9119, now A9119);
 - AWPR / Deeside junction to Holburn Street (A93);
 - AWPR / Charleston junction to Leggart Terrace (A92 South);
 - AWPR / Charleston junction to North Esplanade West (A956 Wellington Road); and
 - Berryden Corridor - Belmont Road to Woolmanhill Roundabout (*formal reclassification to be progressed following completion of the Berryden Corridor improvement scheme*).

Priority routes are defined as:

- Generally radial routes connecting with the AWPR to allow movement around Aberdeen without using the city centre as a through-route;
- The main movement corridors linking the AWPR to key destinations and secondary routes;
- Key corridors for at least two modes of transport;
- Should be considered for the provision of bus lanes (if a bus route) and segregated cycle lanes where there is scope to do so, with bus and cycle priority through junctions;
- Speed limits reflective of the environment but generally 30-40mph.

3.5 The revised secondary route network is:

- Secondary orbital route: Parkway / Ellon Road to Bridge of Dee via Anderson Drive (A92);
- Secondary radial routes:
 - Mounthooly Way to King Street (A96 West North Street);
 - King Street / Mounthooly Way to North Esplanade West / Palmerston Place via Commerce Street, Virginia Street, Trinity Street and Market Street (A956);
 - Woolmanhill Roundabout to North Esplanade West via Denburn Road, Wapping Street, Carmelite Street, Guild Street, College Street and South College Street (now B983);
 - Craibstone Roundabout to Dyce Drive (now B984 Airport Road);
 - Great Southern Road to Coast Road (now B985 West Tullos Road and Hareness Road);

- Parkway / Gordon Brae junction to Tillydrone Avenue / St. Machar Drive junction (now B988 Diamond Bridge);
- Mounthooly Roundabout to King Street (now B990 Mounthooly Way);
- Great Northern Road to King Street (now B991 St Machar Drive);
- AWPR to Murcar Roundabout (B999);
- Scotstown Road to Ellon Road junction, with alignment changing from Balgownie Road to North Donside Road (B997); and
- AWPR to Holburn Street (B9077 South Deeside Road and Great Southern Road).

Secondary routes are defined as:

- Secondary movement corridors (medium to high movement) allowing access from priority routes to local routes;
- Could be considered for bus lanes (if a busy bus route) and segregated cycle lanes where traffic levels are high; and
- Speed limits reflective of the environment but generally 30-40mph.

3.6 All other streets in the city are designated tertiary (local) routes as these are local access roads with little strategic function and as such are unsuitable for large volumes of traffic. In many cases, these are shopping or residential streets where their function as places for people to move around and interact safely is more important than their capacity for vehicle movements. In terms of their characteristics:

- Tertiary movement network serving local destinations;
- Formal bus or cycle priority infrastructure generally unnecessary, although depends on the volume and type of traffic;
- Traffic speeds generally 20mph.

3.7 Figures 1-3 in Appendix 1 show the previous (to June 2020) and revised (from June 2020) networks of priority and secondary routes. A number of roads have been formally reclassified to reflect their role in the revised hierarchy. These are summarised in Table A1 and shown on the map in Figure 4 in Appendix 1. Further detail on the changes, and the reasons for the changes, is provided in the Statement of Reasons (Table A2, Appendix 1).

3.8 City centre streets have been largely removed from the priority and secondary hierarchy. All priority and most secondary routes now stop at the outskirts of the city centre, from where key destinations and car parks can be accessed via local routes. This is to reflect the CCMP's emphasis on the city centre as a place that prioritises people over vehicles, as well as its designation as an Air Quality Management Area and Low Emission Zone (LEZ).

3.9 These changes were formalised at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when government advice was against all non-essential travel. As a result, it was not considered appropriate to promote these changes at that time. Now, however, given the high-profile nature of, and attention being given to, many current transport projects, such as the draft LTS, City Centre and Beach Masterplan projects, the LEZ and the Bus Partnership Fund corridor studies / Aberdeen

Rapid Transit (ART), it is considered appropriate to raise awareness of the Roads Hierarchy to add further context to these projects and how they fit with the Council's strategic and long-term vision for transport, to enable greater understanding amongst members of the public and stakeholders.

- 3.10 Changing Road classifications has no direct or immediate impact on the travelling public. The redesignations instead set a strategic context for future improvements – for example the redesignation of a section of King Street (Castle Street to East North Street) has not impacted on the ability of anyone to use that section of road to date. However, redesignating it from an A-road to an unclassified road conveys that this is no longer a primary route for travel through the city centre, it better represents a gateway to the city centre, with through-routeing accommodated on alternative A and B-roads on the outskirts of the city centre. As such, measures to support the 'Place' function of the street will take precedence over the 'Movement' function during future investment and maintenance decisions.
- 3.11 Various strands of work are now underway to help deliver the revised hierarchy and a summary of current progress is provided as Appendix 2.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any publicity or promotional activities can be achieved with existing resources.
- 4.2 The implementation of the Roads Hierarchy will influence future investment decisions and be applied to the prioritisation of maintenance resources. These changes will continue to be communicated in programme and project-specific reports to the Council and Committees.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. Road numbering is a Scottish Government function to ensure duplications are avoided. All reclassifications were approved in 2020.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report. There may be implications arising from implementation of the Roads Hierarchy and these will continue to be communicated in project-specific reports to the Council and Committees.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failing to raise awareness of the revised hierarchy could result in members of the public and stakeholders not fully appreciating the reasons behind a number of high-profile strategic transport projects.	Continue to raise awareness of the hierarchy during communication and engagement on transport plans and projects.	L	Yes
Compliance	No significant risks identified	N/A	N/A	Yes
Operational	No significant risks identified	N/A	N/A	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified	N/A	N/A	Yes
Reputational	There may be reputational risks around not adequately publicising transport changes to members of the public, potentially resulting in resistance to future changes arising from a lack of awareness of the revised hierarchy.	Continue to raise awareness of the hierarchy during communication and engagement on transport plans and projects.	L	Yes

Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified	N/A	N/A	Yes
------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----	-----	------------

8. OUTCOMES

8.1 The proposals in this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [North East Scotland Roads Hierarchy Study](#) (AECOM, 2019)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 – Roads Hierarchy Summary

11.2 Appendix 2 – Roads Hierarchy Progress

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Will Hekelaar
Title	Senior Engineer (Transport Strategy and Programmes)
Email Address	WHekelaar@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel	01224 069599