



ABERDEEN WESTERN PERIPHERAL ROUTE
STATUTORY CONSULTATION
OBJECTION ANALYSIS SUMMARY REPORT

Published: April 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

Two rounds of statutory consultation took place on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) in 2006/7 in relation to the publication of draft road orders (December 2006 and September 2007) and draft compulsory purchase orders (September 2007).

The objection periods ran from 14 December 2006 to 9 February 2007 and from 11 September to 26 November. Public exhibitions were held during both consultation periods to allow members of the public the opportunity to view the information in detail and discuss the proposals with the project team.

The following draft orders for the AWPR scheme were published:

Special Road Schemes

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road Scheme 200[]
- The A956 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road Scheme 200[]
- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) (Craibstone Junction) Special Road Scheme 200[]

Trunk Road Orders

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road Order 200[]
- The A96 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road Order 200[]
- The A956 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road Order 200[]

Detrunking Orders

- The A90 Trunk Road (Charleston to Blackdog) Detrunking Order 200[]
- The A96 Trunk Road (Dyce Drive to Haudagain Roundabout) Detrunking Order 200[]
- The A96 Trunk Road (Dyce Drive Roundabout to Craibstone) Detrunking Order 200[]

Side Road Orders

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road (Side Roads) Order 200[]
- The A956 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road (Side Roads) Order 200[]
- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road (Side Roads) Order 200[]
- The A956 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road (Side Roads) Order 200[]
- The A96 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Trunk Road (Side Roads) Order 200[]

Redetermination Order

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road (Redetermination of Means of Exercise of Public Right of Passage) Order 200[]

Rights of Way Order

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road (Extinguishment of Public Right of Way) Order 200[]

Compulsory Purchase Order

- The A90 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road and the A956 (Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) Special Road Compulsory Purchase Order 200[]

A number of statutory and non-statutory objections were received in response to the orders and this document summarises the objections received over the two phases of consultation.

2. OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES

Some 10,128 written representations were received by Transport Scotland over the two periods of statutory consultation. These were made up of 1,802 letters, 3,313 emails and 5,013 postcards. The majority of emails (83%) were channelled through the RoadSense group website – a group formed to oppose the AWPR. The postcards received were also created by the RoadSense group.

While the statutory process is intended to allow objections to the AWPR scheme to be lodged, a number of people used the consultation to feedback their support for the scheme. Some 106 representations of support were received during the consultation from various individuals and groups.

3. RESPONSES REMOVED FROM THE ANALYSIS

Some 797 representations were removed from the analysis during the process. The majority of these (717 / 90%) were because they were duplicates, whereby the same person had submitted the same objection more than once.

A further 27 representations were removed because they contained no name or address, were illegible or were lodged after the close of the objection period. However, in the latter case some discretion was applied and representations received marginally after the closing date were still included.

Some 53 objections were removed either because the sender was 'unknown at the address' or because the sender has since contacted Transport Scotland to say they wish to withdraw their objection and / or did not object in the first place.

The total number of representations considered valid (including those in favour) is therefore 9,331 of which 9,225 were objections and 106 were supporters.

The total number of objections considered valid is 9,225. It should be noted that 848 of these objections were from individuals who objected during both the first and second phase of consultation.

4. ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIONS

4.1 Statutory Objectors

Statutory objectors are owners or occupiers of land or property affected by compulsory purchase order (CPO) or statutory consultees who object to the proposed scheme. Of the 9,225 objections, 206 were made specifically in relation to the draft CPO, however a number of these were duplicates and were removed. A number of other objectors are affected by the CPO but did not specifically mention

the CPO in their objection. When these factors were taken into consideration the total number of statutory objectors was 179.

4.2 Individuals & Households

Some of the 9,225 objections were signed by more than one person, taking the total number of individuals objecting to 9,379. Many objectors were residing at the same address, making the total number of households submitting an objection 6,723.

4.3 Geographical Location

The geographical location of objectors has been analysed according to postcode. Of the 6,723 households objecting, the majority (4,971 / 74%) were from the AB postcode area. The remainder (1,752 / 26%) were from outwith Aberdeen and the North East and came from other parts of the UK and overseas.

Of the objections received from AB postcodes the majority were from AB15 (Bieldside / Cults – 1,143 / 23%), AB13 (Milltimber – 623 / 13%), AB14 (Peterculter – 488 / 10%) and AB12 (South Deeside – 426 / 9%).

The table below shows the number of objections received from households by AB postcode.

Postcode	No. of households	Postcode	No. of households
AB1	1	AB32	174
AB2	1	AB33	31
AB10	263	AB34	35
AB11	143	AB35	12
AB12	427	AB36	4
AB13	623	AB39	251
AB14	488	AB41	42
AB15	1143	AB42	71
AB16	91	AB43	20
AB17	1	AB44	2
AB18	1	AB45	4
AB21	156	AB46	1
AB22	68	AB51	127
AB23	73	AB52	9
AB24	246	AB53	15
AB25	172	AB54	27
AB28	2	AB55	4
AB29	1	AB56	2
AB30	35	DD10*	16
AB31	187	Other AB**	2
		TOTAL	4,971

* As a result of boundary changes, this former Dundee postcode is now part of Aberdeenshire

** These respondents did not provide a full postcode

Appendix 1 of this report contains a map showing the postcode boundaries for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

Appendix 2 shows the location of objections by household plotted on a map with the proposed route.

4.4 Issues Raised

A large number of the objections received raised common issues, predominantly as a result of the use of pre-printed postcards and standardised email templates created by the RoadSense group.

Owing to the large number of objections which covered the same points, a standard response covering these points and some of the other commonly raised issues was produced. These common issues and the responses provided are included in Appendix 3 of this report.

Of the 9,225 objections, around 8,303 (90%) raised all or some of these common points.

5. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

This consultation exercise has been part of the statutory process as laid out in the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

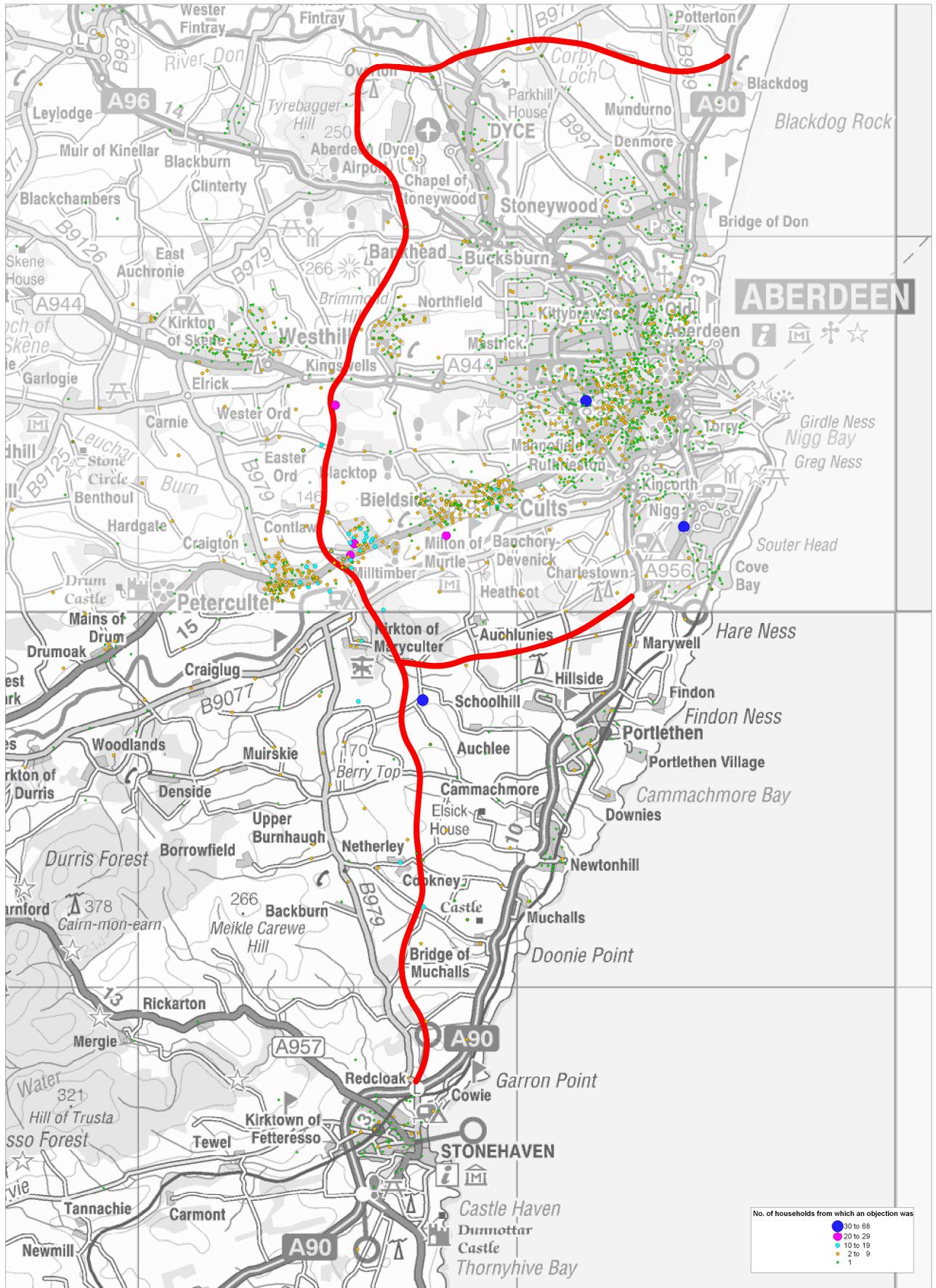
Each representation received by Transport Scotland has been replied to with a detailed response to the individual's particular objection(s).

As per the statutory process, each objector has been asked to indicate whether, after consideration of this response, they wish to withdraw their objection.

The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 requires that a Public Local Inquiry (PLI) is held in certain prescribed circumstances. The purpose of a PLI is to examine evidence in relation to objections lodged and to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers who will then decide whether or not the scheme will proceed.

In October 2007 the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change, Stewart Stevenson MSP confirmed that a Public Local Inquiry into the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route will take place in 2008.

APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3

Q. The proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will cut a swathe through 46 km of special rural environment. Much of the route is designated greenbelt land, causing irreversible damage to it and to the River Dee Special Area of Conservation. Major wildlife corridors will be severely affected, including the Old Deeside Railway, Red Moss and the Dee and Don Valleys.

A. Although the area through which the AWPR will pass is a largely rural environment, the land required for the construction of the scheme is predominantly agricultural, and mitigation to reduce impacts has been incorporated into the design as a result of the extensive environmental survey and assessment undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. These mitigation measures include the grading out of embankment slopes to allow the potential return of land to agricultural use where appropriate and planting and landscaping of areas to mitigate against the loss of woodland.

The AWPR will pass through areas designated as Green Belt. However, the Structure Plan and relevant Aberdeen City Local Plan documents recognise that the proposed AWPR cannot be located outwith the Green Belt designation. Although in the Aberdeenshire Local Plan infrastructure development is not generally permitted within Green Belt, separate provision has been made in the Plan for the principle of the AWPR and indicative plans show the route to be located within the Green Belt. The applicable documents are as follows:

- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 North East Scotland Together (NEST), Approved December 2001,
- Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan (ACLP), Adopted September 1991,
- Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan Green Spaces New Places, published August 2004 with Proposed Modifications published August 2005 (ALPGN), and
- Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP), Adopted June 2006.

The Environmental Statement identifies loss and fragmentation of habitats including wildlife corridors as potential impacts. Mitigation has been incorporated into the design to reduce or avoid these impacts, including the provision of wildlife crossings to enable safe passage under or over the road (such as badger tunnels, otter ledges and vegetated overbridges), and habitat creation. Care has also been taken in relation to road alignment in the vicinity of sensitive moss and wetland areas throughout the route, to reduce potential impacts on their hydrological connectivity.

An Appropriate Assessment is currently being prepared in accordance with the EC Habitats Directive for the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It should be noted that the scheme proposals have been specifically developed to avoid or reduce impacts to the River Dee SAC, including avoiding any works within the river itself. The River Dee and River Don bridge designs do not require in-water piers and there will be no fragmentation of habitats local to the crossings.

Q. Sustainable alternative transport solutions, including investment in public transport and demand management, should be fully and rigorously investigated ahead of the inefficient proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) that will place an increasing burden on the local tax payer.

A. The AWPR has been developed by testing a range of alternative transport options, described in more detail below, including both public transport and road improvement options. The AWPR is part of the Modern Transport System (MTS) that includes investment in Park and Ride, rail, bus priority measures and commuter plans. The MTS was developed by the North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) and establishes an integrated package of measures to improve the economy, accessibility, integration, safety and environment. It draws on the Local Transport Strategies developed by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in 2000 and the Scottish Executive's 'Sustainable Transport Study for Aberdeen' in 1998.

The MTS was developed using the Scottish Executive's Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) methodology to establish outcomes, objectives and problems to be solved and then assess the ability of different transport proposals to address these. Information on this document is available on the Aberdeen City Council Website: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Various options were considered in the development of the MTS and these were evaluated against the outcomes, objectives and problems to be solved. The options ranged from a do-minimum option of maintaining the existing road network, to public transport based options and road building options. A total of 12 potential options were considered. This incorporated a number of alternatives both with and without a Western Peripheral Route. The result of the MTS assessment was that an integrated package of transport measures, including the AWPR, was selected as the preferred option. The MTS includes:

- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route;
- Strategic roads;
- Park & Ride;
- Bus priorities;
- Crossrail;
- Strategic rail;
- Rail freight;
- Airport/Access to Airport;
- Ports/Maritime transport;
- Urban environment;
- Cycling, walking and safety;
- Travel plans/travel awareness; and
- Maintenance of existing network.

The MTS recognises that the existing roads and junctions are congested and cannot accommodate anticipated future traffic flows and proposes an integrated package of measures including the AWPR to address this and other objectives and problems identified. The AWPR is predicted to provide a reduction in traffic in and around Aberdeen, for example, 15% at Bridge of Dee; 21% on Anderson Drive; and a 15% reduction in traffic on the A96 at Auchmill Road. In addition, the AWPR will allow heavy goods traffic to move more freely between the industrial and commercial centres in and around Aberdeen and remove this traffic from inappropriate urban and rural roads and streets.

For a more in-depth detail of the strategy, reference should be made to the NESTRANS report 'Delivering a Modern Transport System for the North East Scotland' (March 2003).

The AWPR has a very high benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of around five times the cost of building it. A new AWPR will provide substantial benefits across the whole of the north-east of Scotland such as:

- Cutting journey times;
- Cutting congestion;
- Removing traffic from unsuitable roads;
- Improving road safety; and
- Growing the economy.

It should be noted, that over 81% of the cost of the scheme will be funded by the Scottish Government.

Q. The proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will do little to reduce traffic congestion. It will induce additional traffic and create congestion at new locations. It will

have a severely negative impact on some existing radial routes into Aberdeen.

A. The AWPR has been developed as part of a Modern Transport System (MTS), which recognises that the existing roads and junctions are congested and cannot accommodate anticipated future traffic flows. The MTS proposes an integrated package of measures including the AWPR to address this and other objectives and problems identified. The AWPR is predicted to provide a reduction in traffic in and around Aberdeen city centre, for example, 15% at Bridge of Dee; 21% on Anderson Drive; and a 15% reduction in traffic on the A96 at Auchmill Road. In addition, the AWPR will allow heavy goods traffic to move more freely between the industrial and commercial centres in and around Aberdeen and remove this traffic from inappropriate urban and rural routes.

The connectivity and accessibility benefits that the AWPR will bring will be fully realised by locking-in improvements to congestion and journey times which would ensure that these are not eroded through additional traffic growth. The MTS seeks to achieve this by linking public transport and pedestrian improvements to delivery of the AWPR. NESTRANS has emphasised that it is vital these are taken forward and fully implemented through the submitted Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) (March 2007). The RTS highlights that transport and land use policies will need to be integrated to ensure the public transport benefits of the AWPR are maximised.

The Aberdeen Sub Area transport Model (ASAM), of the Transport Model for Scotland, is a multi-modal strategic transport model covering the majority of the primary road and public transport network within the north-east of Scotland. ASAM is used to forecast changes to travel patterns that arise once a new transport scheme or policy is introduced. These resulting changes reflect the principal choices of route, mode of transport and destination the traveller will make. The model has been used to assess the effects of induced traffic and these are incorporated within the model results produced for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

The traffic model indicates that car travel times along the radial routes are likely to reduce once the AWPR is introduced when compared to the forecast future scenario should all MTS measures with the exception of the AWPR be implemented. This trend is consistent along all radial corridors and for both morning and evening peak periods with average reductions of more than 10% predicted in the opening year.

It is recognised that travel patterns will alter following completion of the AWPR and new junctions will be constructed to provide access to/from the route. Traffic modelling undertaken for these junctions has shown they will operate satisfactorily and will not introduce congestion at new locations.

Q. The proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will attract development along its length. City centre businesses will move out and become accessible only by car and the greenbelt will be under increasing threat from property developers. Both local authorities will want to grant planning permission for new development such as housing and shops along the route in order to levy funds from developers to fund the AWPR.

A. Any future development proposals in the area of the route will be addressed and controlled by both Councils' local plans. While planning policy is a matter for the Local Authorities, it should be noted that their current plans do not anticipate development along the length of the AWPR. The Aberdeenshire Local Plan was adopted on 30 June 2006 while the Aberdeen Local Plan has now been through a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). Both of the current local plans have been developed with knowledge of the AWPR proposals but neither include provision for a development corridor adjacent to the AWPR route. No junctions are being provided along the AWPR to cater specifically for development proposals

Q. Rural areas will be exposed to noise and air pollution, while parts of Aberdeen city centre will remain in breach of air quality standards.

A. In terms of noise predictions, some rural areas in proximity to the AWPR will be exposed to higher

levels with the scheme than they would be exposed to without the scheme. However, careful consideration is being given to where mitigation should be provided and what form this mitigation should take. In considering the threshold at which mitigation should be provided, note has been taken of both the likely increase in the existing noise levels and the World Health Organisation 'Guidelines for Community Noise' (2000).

The results show that with the scheme in place the net results over the wider study area (outwith the core study area, 500m either side of the proposed route) in the 15th year after opening would be that 1,865 fewer people would be annoyed by noise than would be annoyed by noise without the scheme in place. This is considered to be a significant beneficial impact.

A detailed air quality assessment has been undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). As part of this, a model has been used to predict concentrations of the principal traffic pollutants, nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM₁₀), at almost 1,000 key locations across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Concentrations have been predicted both without and with the proposed AWPR in operation. The locations at which pollution levels have been predicted are termed 'receptors', as shown in Figure 55.1 of the Environmental Statement, and typically represent houses beside roads. They also include residential properties that would be closest to the AWPR.

The predicted impacts of the proposed scheme on local air quality range from 'moderate adverse' to 'substantial beneficial'. The majority of beneficial impacts are expected within the densely populated areas of the city and within Aberdeen City Council's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), while the adverse impacts would mostly occur close to the proposed scheme, where fewer people would be exposed. The scheme would not cause any of the air quality objectives or EU limit values to be exceeded. It would, in fact, reduce the number of exceedences of the air quality objectives and EU limit values. More than 75,000 properties are likely to experience improved air quality as a result of the proposed scheme, compared with fewer than 20,000 properties that would experience deterioration in air quality.

Aberdeen City Council has declared an AQMA in the centre of Aberdeen because of exceedences of the Government's air quality objectives. Sixty-one of the receptors assessed are located within this area and air quality is expected to improve at every one of these receptors as a result of the AWPR. In addition, the City Council is currently investigating further measures to improve city centre air quality.

Q. Construction of the proposed Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) will lead to an increase in both the length and number of car journeys thus resulting in higher carbon dioxide emissions. The project therefore contradicts and undermines national and local climate change policies and targets.

A. There will be a small increase in the overall number of vehicle kilometres travelled following the introduction of the AWPR. This is likely to be the result of providing a faster but longer route for some journeys and also by reducing congestion on other routes such that people will also be able to travel further within the same amount of time, so may choose to live further away from their place of work.

Current predictions for the AWPR scheme show an extremely small increase in global carbon dioxide emissions in relation to total emissions from Scotland. This increase is expected to be more than offset by emission reduction measures applied elsewhere in Scotland, such that total emissions will decline.

Delivering carbon savings is a central feature of Scotland's National Transport Strategy. The Scottish Government intends to present a 'carbon balance sheet' for transport in future reviews of this Strategy. This will present the impact of all Scottish transport policies and projects that are expected to have a significant impact on carbon, whether positive or negative. This recognises the need to do more than simply focus on the positive contribution transport will be making without showing how this relates to the negative impact of other Scottish transport policies and projects. The aim will be to show that the Scottish Government - through its own actions - is continually reducing the overall

impact of Scottish transport measures.

The increase resulting from the AWPR does not, therefore, undermine the overall aim of climate change policies, which is to reduce total carbon dioxide emissions.

Q. The financial costs are high but the benefits are few. This proposal is not justified compared to alternative transport investment options using the Scottish Executive's own guidelines. The cost estimate excludes additional costs for under/overpasses and adjustments to the radial routes into Aberdeen and mitigation of the damage it will cause. The benefits of this particular route in both economic and traffic terms are grossly overstated. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) cost-benefit analysis excludes consideration of the associated social and environmental costs.

A. The AWPR has a very high benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of around five times the cost of building it. This compares very favourably with other road schemes and public transport schemes. A new AWPR will provide substantial benefits across the whole of the north-east of Scotland such as:

- Cutting journey times;
- Cutting congestion;
- Removing traffic from unsuitable roads;
- Improving road safety; and
- Growing the economy.

The AWPR is a key element of the Modern Transport System (MTS), which is the transport strategy for the north-east of Scotland developed by the North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS). The MTS was developed and appraised through the Scottish Executive's Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG). It draws on the Local Transport Strategies developed by Aberdeen City and Shire Councils in 2000 and the Scottish Executive's 'Sustainable Transport Study for Aberdeen' in 1998. The MTS strategy was endorsed by the Scottish Executive in January 2003 and now forms the basis for the development of the longer-term submitted Regional Transport Strategy (March 2007) to 2021 developed by NESTRANS.

In addition, a STAG appraisal of the MTS was undertaken (an overview is available on the Aberdeen City Council website). The MTS STAG examined options for transport in the north-east of Scotland and concluded that an integrated package of measures would provide the best opportunity to meet the objectives set out within the STAG analysis.

The estimated scheme cost is £295 – £395 million. The cost estimate includes construction of the entire scheme, including under and overpasses as well as local adjustments to side roads and provision of mitigation measures as well as purchase of land and professional fees. This cost does not include other local roads or public transport proposals that are to be taken forward as part of the MTS.

In terms of economic benefits, the Benefit to Cost Ratio highlighted above, has been evaluated over a 60-year period in accordance with current national guidance, excluding optimism bias (which is an allowance for project uncertainties). When optimism bias is included a BCR of well over three is achieved, which represents a high return in comparison with the costs of the scheme and is well above the level of return required to justify government expenditure. The cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken using current national guidance and methodology, which does not include assessment of, or contain guidance on, the consideration of social or environmental costs. However, the costs of mitigating environmental impacts are included in the scheme cost and are therefore included in the cost-benefit analysis.

The Aberdeen Sub Area transport Model (ASAM), of the Transport Model for Scotland, is a multi-modal strategic transport model covering the majority of the primary road and public transport network within the north-east of Scotland. In terms of the traffic benefits of the scheme, the model

indicates that travel times along the radial routes are expected to reduce once the AWPR is introduced when compared to the forecast future scenario should all MTS measures with the exception of the AWPR be implemented.. This trend is consistent along all radial corridors and for both peak periods with average reductions of more than 10% predicted in the opening year.

Q. The route will create barriers between local and diverse communities. The route will form a major physical and psychological barrier that will split communities forever.

A. The need to minimise any severance that may occur as a consequence of the scheme has been recognised and measures are being developed to mitigate this. These include overbridges and underpasses, located at various points along the scheme, which will maintain links between communities and facilities such as schools, bus stops and recreational areas such as woodlands. Further information on community impacts and proposed mitigation measures are available in the Environmental Statement.

Q. There is no demonstrable need for the Fastlink, which was included merely for political expediency. The choice of a new Fastlink paralleling the existing B979 Stonehaven to Netherley Road was a political decision. Two connections off the A90 instead of one will be more costly and cause significantly greater environmental damage.

A. The inclusion of the Fastlink improves the overall efficiency of the scheme allowing long distance strategic traffic to get around the city more quickly while reducing traffic on both the busiest stretch of the A90 between Stonehaven and Aberdeen and the existing B979 Netherley Road.

The proposed Fastlink, in addition to catering for strategic traffic, will also provide an alternative route away from future major maintenance work on the existing A90 between Stonehaven and Aberdeen. Maintaining the A90 between Stonehaven and Aberdeen and keeping traffic moving is becoming increasingly difficult. This has been demonstrated by a number of recent roadworks, which have caused significant disruption and delays. Online widening would be very disruptive to traffic and would require extensive and complex traffic management arrangements and significant land and property purchase to reduce the number of crossings of the main road and to correct the current substandard alignment.

It may be noted that in overall terms the scheme as a whole has a very high benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of around five times the cost of building.

As with the entire scheme, a great deal of care has been taken to reduce or avoid environmental impacts through consideration of scheme design and mitigation.

Q. The route will only remove a very small proportion of heavy vehicular traffic from the city. The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) would only remove a very small number (2% according to the 1998 Oscar Faber study Sustainable Transport for Aberdeen) of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) trips from the city, because only a small percentage is HGV 'through-trips', i.e. 'trips not having an origin, destination or intermediate-call to make within the city'.

A. The original Aberdeen Sub Area Model (ASAM) was developed during 2002. Since that time the model has undergone continuous enhancement, making use of additional information including Roadside Interview (RSI) and traffic count data and up-to-date planning data.

Data extracted from the current ASAM model indicates that around 17% of HGV traffic travelling in and around Aberdeen will transfer to the AWPR once it is in place. Approximately 8% of current HGV movements are through trips and the AWPR will remove the majority of these from the city. A further 9% of total HGV trips will also be removed from unsuitable roads by the introduction of the AWPR. These are HGVs travelling to and from Aberdeen city from the surrounding area.

There are also four major industrial areas in and around the city, namely the Harbour, Altens/Tulloch, Dyce/Kirkhill and Bridge of Don which generate a significant number of HGV trips. The AWPR will assist in removing a number of these HGVs from inappropriate urban and rural routes.

Q. The route is not part of a coordinated multimodal transport package nor does it form part of an integrated transport network.

It is the current policy of the Scottish Executive to appraise new transport schemes within the context of what is known as a multimodal study, to consider all possible reasonable alternatives to the construction of environmentally damaging and financially costly schemes such as the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR). There has been no full and complete study to identify, examine and test all of the alternatives to the proposed AWPR.

A. The AWPR is part of the Modern Transport System (MTS) that includes investment in Park and Ride, rail, bus priority measures and commuter plans. The MTS was developed by the North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) and establishes an integrated package of measures to improve the economy, accessibility, integration, safety and environment. It was developed through testing and appraisal of a range of alternative transport options, described in more detail below, including both public transport and road improvement options using the Scottish Executive's Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) methodology. The MTS draws on the Local Transport Strategies developed by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in 2000 and the Scottish Executive's 'Sustainable Transport Study for Aberdeen' in 1998.

The various options considered in the development of the MTS were evaluated against the outcomes, objectives and problems to be solved. The options ranged from a do-minimum maintenance-only option to public transport based options and road building options. A total of twelve potential options were considered. This incorporated a number of alternatives both with and without a Western Peripheral Route. The result of the MTS assessment was that an integrated package of transport measures, including the AWPR, was selected as the preferred option. The MTS includes:

- The Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route;
- Strategic roads;
- Park & Ride;
- Bus priorities;
- Crossrail;
- Strategic rail;
- Rail freight;
- Airport/Access to Airport;
- Ports/Maritime transport;
- Urban environment;
- Cycling, walking and safety;
- Travel plans/travel awareness; and
- Maintenance of existing network.

For a more in-depth detail of the strategy, reference can be made to the NESTRANS report 'Delivering a Modern Transport System for the North East of Scotland' (March 2003). Additionally, for further information regarding STAG methodology refer to 'STAG assessments of the Modern Transport System & MTS projects' on Aberdeen City Council's website.

Q. The route was promoted without proper regard to due process. There has been no full and proper appraisal of either the alternative routes or the selected route. Contrary to the Scottish Executive's own guidance there has been no attempt to explain why consideration of any alternative route has been abandoned.

There is no coherent or rational explanation as to why the route was chosen. Either this information is being purposely withheld or the decision was forced without proper analysis.

A. Correct procedures have been followed. The scheme is being promoted under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which sets out the requirements for publication of draft orders, receipt of objections and consideration of these in the forum of a local inquiry.

During the summer and autumn of 2005 consideration was given to the feedback received from the informal public consultation held in the spring of that year, correspondence and the reports into the impact of the Murtle Route. This consultation was not part of the statutory process. The relative performance of each of the route corridors, as assessed based on the Scottish Executive's STAG appraisal methodology, was also considered. This information is available to view on the project website (www.awpr.co.uk).

Prior to making a decision on the preferred route corridor, a report was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to examine the relative performance and benefits of the Murtle, Milltimber and a Milltimber Brae/Fastlink option. This latter scheme combined the Fastlink section of the Peterculter/Stonehaven Route with the Milltimber Brae route.

The information which led to the choice of the route corridor and the preferred route has been documented (The Consolidation Assessment Report, the Initial and Final Stage Assessment Reports) and has been on the project website since December 2006.

Q. Members of the public were misled during the public consultation exercise.

The consultation in March 2005 was flawed and public servants misled members of the public. Many local people believed officials and their advisers when told that the outermost routes were not being considered seriously. The consultation process was totally inadequate. The options were listed but the public views were not taken into account.

A. The informal public exhibitions in March 2005, which were not part of the statutory process, were held to provide factual information about the five route options that existed at that time and to enable residents, businesses and other interested parties the opportunity to express an opinion regarding the options. The Milltimber Brae and Peterculter/Stonehaven options were both included in the consultation and the public was invited to provide feedback on all the routes shown. The Scottish Executive team received more than 7,600 responses, many of them relating to routes other than Murtle. No options had been ruled in or out and it was not a referendum on the proposals. The report from the public consultation has been available on the AWPR website since November 2005.

Q. The Stonehaven Fastlink/Milltimber Brae route was not one of those identified in the public consultation process.

The route that the Minister selected was a new route and is not one of those on which the public had been consulted upon during the consultation exhibitions in spring 2005. A new route should have only been considered after a further round of public consultation.

A. The Milltimber Brae and Peterculter/Stonehaven options were both included in the informal consultation (that is, not part of the statutory process) held in Spring 2005 and the public was invited to provide feedback on all the routes shown. Elements from those two routes were selected to form the

preferred route corridor announced in December 2005. The exhibitions at that time were intended to gather information on public opinion to assist the decision making process. The statutory process that started with the publication of the draft road orders includes a period of consultation on the proposals. This correspondence forms part of that consultation.

Q. There has been a conflict of interest amongst those designing the route. The same company has been contracted, without transparent procurement procedures being followed, to carry out the engineering design and prepare the environmental statement of the chosen route.

A. It is standard practice in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK to appoint a single organisation to provide both engineering and environmental assessment services. The appointment of Jacobs to this role in late 2003 followed normal procurement practices utilising the usual European Union rules for such appointments. It may be noted that an advantage of this arrangement is the ability of the environmental assessment to directly influence the emerging engineering design proposals. In accordance with normal practice, the Environmental Statement is subject to an independent audit.

Q. The route divides and fragments the green belt. The route will cause irreversible damage to the green belt which was established to prevent inappropriate development and to check the unrestricted sprawl of built up areas.

A. The AWPR will pass through areas designated as Green Belt. However, the relevant Aberdeen City Local and Structure Plan documents recognise that due to locational and operational criteria the proposed AWPR cannot be located outwith the Green Belt designation. Within the Aberdeenshire Local Plan, although infrastructure development is not generally permitted within Green Belt, separate provision has been made for the principle of the AWPR, and indicative plans show the route to be located within the Green Belt. The applicable documents are as follows:

- Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 North East Scotland Together (NEST), Approved December 2001,
- Aberdeen City District Wide Local Plan (ACLPL), Adopted September 1991,
- Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan Green Spaces New Places, published August 2004 with Proposed Modifications published August 2005 (ALPGN), and
- Aberdeenshire Local Plan (ALP), Adopted June 2006.

Development proposals in the area of the route will be addressed through both Councils' local plans. While planning policy is a matter for the Local Authorities, it should be noted that their current plans do not anticipate development along the length of the AWPR. The Aberdeenshire Local Plan was adopted on 30 June 2006 while the Aberdeen Local Plan has now been through a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). Both of the current local plans have been developed alongside the AWPR taking full cognisance of the proposals but neither include for a development corridor adjacent to the AWPR route.

Q. The increasing cost of the proposed road will hit North East taxpayers and lead to cuts in public services.

A. The estimated scheme cost is £295 – £395 million. The cost estimate includes construction of the entire scheme, including under and overpasses as well as local adjustments to side roads and provision of mitigation measures as well as purchase of land and professional fees. This cost does not include other local roads or public transport proposals that are to be taken forward as part of the MTS. It should be noted, that over 81% of the cost of the scheme will be funded by the Scottish Government and the Fastlink will be entirely funded by the Scottish Government.

The AWPR has a very high benefit to cost ratio (BCR) of around five times the cost of building it. This compares very favourably with other road schemes and public transport schemes. A new AWPR will

provide substantial benefits across the whole of the north-east of Scotland such as:

- Cutting journey times;
- Cutting congestion;
- Removing traffic from unsuitable roads;
- Improving road safety; and
- Growing the economy.

In terms of economic benefits, the Benefit to Cost Ratio highlighted above, has been evaluated over a 60-year period in accordance with current national guidance, excluding optimism bias (which is an allowance for project uncertainties). When optimism bias is included a BCR of well over three is achieved, which represents a high return in comparison with the costs of the scheme and is well above the level of return required to justify government expenditure.

The level of service provision in public services, with or without the AWPR, is a matter for the local authorities to decide. As joint funding partners of the scheme, both local authorities will be considering their funding options for the delivery of the AWPR. These costs must also be considered alongside the estimated economic benefits of the new road to both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.