

## **46 Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects**

This chapter identifies key routes used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and the key community facilities that are accessed. It then describes the impacts of the proposed scheme on those journeys and outlines measures for avoiding or mitigating these impacts wherever possible.

As a result of the incorporation of mitigation proposals into the Fastlink scheme design, access to all paths severed will be maintained via diversions or alternative routes. The diversion length for some paths will still result in some adverse impacts on pedestrian, cyclists and equestrians. Users will also experience some adverse impacts in terms of amenity value and community severance.

### **46.1 Introduction**

46.1.1 This chapter provides an assessment of the impact of the proposed scheme on journeys that are made by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians in the Fastlink study area. For ease of reference the terms 'pedestrians and others' and Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) are used to describe this group. Impacts on vehicle travellers are also considered where this is considered to be relevant.

46.1.2 In accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) (Volume 11, Section 3, Part 8), the assessment of impacts on pedestrians and others focuses on three main aspects:

- changes in journey lengths and times;
- the effect on the amenity value of journeys; and
- changes in existing and new severance of links with community facilities.

46.1.3 Routes used by pedestrians and others are important because they can provide:

- access to local countryside and more remote areas on foot, bike or horse;
- opportunities for long-distance travelling;
- safe, non-motorised access to shops, work and school; and
- opportunities to integrate access and land management.

46.1.4 The use of paths can help to improve health, reduce social exclusion, and unlike other modes of transport generally has no cost (i.e. fuel, travel tickets etc). A good path network can also encourage visitors to enjoy the outdoors and to visit places of landscape, historical and wildlife interest, therefore encouraging financial expenditure which supports the local rural economy. Well planned paths can potentially assist landowners and farmers to successfully integrate recreational use with land management operations.

### **46.2 Approach and Methods**

46.2.1 The assessment of impacts on pedestrians and others was undertaken in accordance with the general approach to environmental impact assessment outlined in Chapter 5 (Overview of Assessment Process). Specific methodology followed the guidance in DMRB Volume 11, Section 3, Part 8, and included:

- Baseline data collection: identification of the key community facilities within the study area and their catchment area, to estimate the number of users assuming that people will use the nearest available facility; and identification of key routes crossed by the Fastlink and their journey times;
- Potential Impacts: assessment of any likely changes to the journey lengths as a result of the proposed scheme with respect to journey length, amenity and community severance, prior to mitigation;

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- Mitigation design: incorporating mitigation design through an iterative process, in order to comply with legislation and national and local access policies; and
- Residual impacts: assessment of the residual impacts based on the mitigation proposals incorporated into the design.

#### Baseline Data Collection

- 46.2.2 For the purposes of journey length and amenity value assessments, the study area was defined as a corridor 500m to each side of the centre of the proposed scheme alignment as shown on Figures 46.1 a – f. For community severance assessment, the study area was defined to include catchment areas of community facilities and recreational areas potentially affected by the proposed scheme or related traffic changes in the wider area (refer to Figures 46.2 a – b).
- 46.2.3 Baseline data were collated from the following sources:
- site surveys (conducted in June/July 2006) to identify key community facilities and routes used by pedestrians and others;
  - liaison with consultees including Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, Aberdeen Countryside Project, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Community Councils and access groups such as Local Access Outdoor Forums, Ramblers Association, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Sustrans, ScotWays, Cyclists' Touring Club and the British Horse Society (see Chapter 6: Scoping and Consultations);
  - review of The Adopted Aberdeenshire Local Plan (2006) and The Finalised Aberdeen Local Plan – Green Spaces – New Places (2004) to identify land use designations;
  - review of Aberdeen's Strategy for Access to the Outdoors (2004);
  - review of Ordnance Survey Maps to identify footpaths, cycle routes, settlements, facilities, etc; and
  - a web based search to identify community facilities, bus routes, and population estimates for settlements.
- 46.2.4 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1 establishes a duty on local authorities to draw up a plan for a path network and to keep a list of "core paths". The current Scottish rights of way system will still stand, with the new core path network providing additional routes where they meet the objectives set out in the Act under Section 17 (3). At the time of data collection and impact assessment, neither Aberdeen City nor Aberdeenshire Councils had yet published their core path networks. However, the Act also states that "it is the duty of the local authority to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised." Therefore, all paths, tracks, minor and major roads, and 'navigable' watercourses with the potential of being impacted by the proposed scheme were included in this assessment, regardless of whether they were Rights of Way, possible core paths or farm access tracks.
- 46.2.5 Although surveys were undertaken to identify routes, surveys to count user numbers were not conducted because of the wide ranging legislative requirements and policy commitments to increasing NMU activity (e.g. Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 11 Sport, Physical Recreation and Open Space and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 17 Planning for Transport. These requirements would now give an impetus to improve access where low count figures might be recorded, rather than using the figures as justification for closing access. Therefore this assessment treated all paths equally regardless of usage.

### **Impact Assessment**

#### Journey Length (Distance and Time)

- 46.2.6 An assessment was made of the changes in journey lengths caused by diversions and closures of pathways as a result of the proposed scheme. All paths crossed by the proposed scheme were identified as potential 'Conflict Points', which are shown on Figures 46.1 a – f.
- 46.2.7 DMRB Volume 11 provides a method for determining the number of travellers and journey lengths. The method requires the identification on a map of key community facilities and their catchment areas. The number of users can then be estimated using the assumption that people will travel to the nearest facility. Journey lengths can be measured on the map, and an estimate of journey time can then be calculated using average journey speeds and distance travelled.
- 46.2.8 Due to the rural nature of the study area, woodland areas may represent community recreational facilities and links to them are considered important and have been included in the assessment. However, the assessment takes into account the recreational nature of the journey, and therefore the criteria provided in Table 46.1 may not strictly apply.
- 46.2.9 In accordance with DMRB, the average journey speeds for users has been assumed to be 5 km/hr for non-vulnerable pedestrians (i.e. able bodied adults), 3 km/hr for vulnerable pedestrians (i.e. elderly and disabled persons and children), 10 km/hr for equestrians, 20 km/hr for cyclists (assuming the latter two categories to be non-vulnerable). In order to assess the magnitude of impact on local vehicle travellers, it is assumed they travel at a speed of 50km/hr. These different categories of users define the sensitivity of the environmental receptors for this assessment.
- 46.2.10 The magnitude criteria are defined by change in journey length for pedestrians, in accordance with DMRB, ranging from Neutral (no change), Negligible (<150m), Minor (150-250m), Moderate (250-500m) to Major (>500m). DMRB offers guidance on the significance of these changes for the severance of pedestrian journeys between a community and its facilities. The criteria assume an increase in journey length has an adverse impact on users, indicating the shortest route is preferable.
- 46.2.11 Impact magnitude and receptor sensitivity are combined to determine the significance of impact. Table 46.1 provides an example matrix, although all impacts were individually assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account factors such as original journey length, usage and purpose. This includes consideration of the fact that, where journeys are predominantly recreational, moderate increases in journey length may be considered as beneficial by users in some cases.
- 46.2.12 The impact significance assigned by DMRB for community severance effects on pedestrians has been extrapolated for other NMU types and vehicles.

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- 46.2.13 Farm and other agricultural accesses are assessed in the Agricultural, Forestry and Sporting Interests section contained within Chapter 37 (Land Use). Accommodation works and construction impacts are discussed under Chapter 48 (Disruption due to Construction).

**Table 46.1 – Significance Criteria for Changes in Journey Length**

Sensitivity	Magnitude				
	Neutral	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
	No change	<150m	150-250m	250-500m	>500m
<b>Very High</b> Vulnerable Pedestrians	Negligible	Slight	Moderate	Major	Severe
<b>High</b> Non-vulnerable Pedestrians	Negligible	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Major
<b>Medium</b> Equestrians	Negligible	Negligible	Slight	Slight	Moderate
<b>Low</b> Cyclists	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Slight	Moderate
<b>Negligible</b> Vehicles	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Slight (>2000m)

#### Amenity Value

- 46.2.14 The amenity value of a journey is defined in DMRB as ‘the relative pleasantness of a journey’. This relates in particular to the exposure of pedestrians and others to traffic, and the associated factors of noise, air quality and safety. Visual impacts and the width of the pathways are also considerations.
- 46.2.15 Amenity value is a subjective issue and it is acknowledged that any changes in amenity value resulting from a new road would therefore also be subjective. However, for the purposes of assessment, it has been assumed that where pedestrians and others would experience a reduction in traffic or road-related noise, or visual impact and improvement in air quality, there would be a perceived improvement in amenity value. Conversely, an increase in any such traffic or road-related impacts or reduction in safety has been assumed to constitute a reduction in amenity value. It is important to note that traffic flows provided in this chapter are for a small section of the selected road only. Traffic flows along the full length of the road are likely to change due to junctions.
- 46.2.16 For the purposes of assessment of change to amenity value, all receptors (i.e. both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups) were considered to be of high sensitivity. Impact significance was assigned for each receptor qualitatively, using professional judgement and taking into account the magnitude of change with respect to existing views, air quality, traffic flows and noise levels. Full visual, air quality and noise assessments for the Fastlink are reported in Chapters 27 (Visual), 29 (Air Quality) and 30 (Traffic Noise and Vibration).

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46.2.17 The significance of impact criteria for change in amenity are described in Table 46.2.

**Table 46.2 – Significance Criteria for Change in Amenity**

Significance	Criteria
Substantial	Where there is a substantial change in the existing view and/or air quality and/or a major change (increase) in noise levels.
Moderate	Where there is moderate or noticeable change in the existing view and/or air quality and/or a moderate change (increase) in noise levels.
Slight	Where there is slight or barely perceptible change in the existing view and/or air quality and/or a slight change (increase) in noise levels.
Negligible	Very little or no discernable change from baseline conditions equating to a no-change situation.

Community Severance

46.2.18 Community severance is defined in DMRB as ‘the separation of residents from facilities and services they use within their community caused by new or improved roads or by changes in traffic flows’. The assessment of community severance relates to the impact on residents resulting from changes in amenity value, routes and journey lengths and/or times. The construction of new roads, or even relatively minor changes to existing roads, can result in significant changes to travel patterns within a community. A road may act as a barrier deterring people from using certain community facilities, or conversely, a diversion of road traffic away from a busy road may make an existing road easier to cross, thereby reducing community severance. A reduction in traffic levels is referred to as severance relief as community facilities are more accessible to NMUs.

Existing Severance

46.2.19 Existing severance is considered to be the severance of communities from their facilities, as caused by the existing road network. The assessment of the significance of potential impacts arising from severance relief was made according to DMRB Volume 11 guidelines, using the criteria shown in Table 46.3. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) was assessed against projected AADT for year of scheme opening with and without the proposed scheme (i.e. do-minimum case) in order to assess relief from existing severance. Note that the impact assessment is not conducted on roads with an existing AADT flow of less than 8,000 vehicles, as there is unlikely to be any existing severance of significance.

**Table 46.3 – Significance Criteria for Relief from Existing Severance**

Significance	Criteria	
	Built-Up Area	Rural Area
Slight	When existing traffic levels are reduced by approximately 30%.	When existing traffic levels are reduced by approximately 60-75%. If the existing road passes through a village or on the perimeter of a built-up area, use 30%.
Moderate	When existing traffic levels are reduced by between 30% and 60%.	When existing traffic levels are reduced by between 75% and 90%. If the existing road substantially bisects a village or small town, use half these figures.
Substantial	When existing traffic levels are reduced by 60% or more.	When existing traffic levels are reduced by 90% or more. If the existing road substantially bisects a village or small town, use 60%.

New Severance

46.2.20 New severance is considered as the severance of pedestrians and others from community facilities such as schools, bus stops and recreational areas as a result of the proposed scheme.

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- 46.2.21 New severance is assessed using a three point scale as shown in Table 46.4. It should be noted that the DMRB guidelines apply specifically to pedestrians. Cyclists and equestrians are less susceptible to severance because they can travel more quickly than those on foot, although they may still be deterred from making journeys which require them to negotiate additional roads and especially junctions. The sensitivity of receptor is therefore not explicitly identified in Table 46.4.
- 46.2.22 A descriptive assessment of severance of school catchment areas was undertaken and provided later in the chapter.

**Table 46.4 – Significance Criteria for New Severance**

Significance	Criteria
Slight	When a journey pattern is likely to be maintained although there may also be some hindrance to movement (such as crossing of a new road), for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pedestrian at-grade crossing of a new road carrying below 8,000 vehicles per day (AADT); or</li><li>• A new bridge will need to be climbed or a subway traversed; or</li><li>• Journey distance will be increased by up to 250m.</li></ul>
Moderate	When some residents (particularly elderly or children) are likely to be dissuaded from making trips or trips will become longer or less attractive, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two or more of the hindrances set out under 'Slight' applying to single trips; or</li><li>• Pedestrian at-grade crossing of a new road carrying between 8,000 – 16,000 vehicles per day (AADT) in the opening year; or</li><li>• Journey distance will be increased by 250-500m.</li></ul>
Severe	Residents are likely to experience considerable hindrance or be deterred from making trips to the extent that routes are changed, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pedestrian at-grade crossing of a new road carrying over 16,000 vehicles per day (AADT) in the opening year; or</li><li>• An increase in journey distance of over 500m; or</li><li>• Three or more of the hindrances set out under 'slight' or two or more set out under 'moderate'.</li></ul>

#### Mitigation Design

- 46.2.23 The development of mitigation is based on the PAN 58 approach as described in Chapter 5 (Overview of Assessment Process) to meet the intentions of the relevant legislation as described below, and presented in detail in section 46.5. In addition to the mitigation proposed specifically for pedestrians and others, other chapters should be referred to for mitigation that will ameliorate impacts on users further. Chapter 37 (Land Use) should be referred to for proposed farm accommodation bridges; Chapter 40 (Ecology and Nature Conservation) provides proposed wildlife bridge locations and ecological planting; Chapter 41 (Landscape) provides proposed planting mitigation and Chapter 48 (Disruption Due to Construction) provides proposed accommodation bridges (non agricultural). Legislation, as detailed below, affirms rights for pedestrians and others to be able to use these in a responsible manner.

#### Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003

- 46.2.24 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Part 1 came into effect in February 2005 and establishes statutory rights of responsible access on and over most land, including inland water. The new legislation offers a general framework of responsible conduct for both those exercising rights of access and for landowners. Local authorities will be given new powers and duties to uphold and facilitate responsible access rights. It gives them a duty to draw up a plan for a path network and to keep a list of "core paths" (see paragraph 46.2.4). . The 'core path network' should provide for all forms of recreational access including cyclists, equestrians and walkers.

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46.2.25 Section 13 of the Act states: "It is the duty of the local authority to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction or encroachment any route, waterway or other means by which access rights may reasonably be exercised."

46.2.26 The finalised draft core path network plans for Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council are expected to be ready by January 2008. The current mitigation proposals have therefore been designed based on existing path networks as the core path network has not yet been produced. However, through consultations with the relevant local authorities, mitigation proposals have been designed to maintain current access, and to protect the potential for access provision. Where over/under bridges are shown on the plans but are not specifically designated for use by multi-users including cyclists, equestrians and walkers.. it should be noted that under Section 1 of the Act, ("Access Rights"), these crossings may be used by the public using the countryside for the purposes set out in Section 2 ("Exercised Responsibly").

#### Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

46.2.27 Under this Act, a disabled person is an adult or child who has, or has had in the past, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term (i.e at least 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes people with physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and mental illness.

46.2.28 The Act makes it unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably than they would treat other people, for a reason related to their disability, when offering public services and facilities, thereby including paths and trails.

46.2.29 The provisions of the Act are consistent with SNH's policy of promoting 'access for all', under which access to the countryside should be barrier free and, where a structure is necessary, the 'least restrictive option' should be adopted. This means that access structures should accommodate the needs and interests of as wide a range of legitimate users as possible.

46.2.30 In accordance with the Act, access structures in the form of overbridges and underpasses, have taken into account potential barriers such as gradient, verge width, radius of bends and surfacing.

#### **Residual Impact Assessment**

##### Journey Length, Amenity Value and Community Severance

46.2.31 Residual impacts were identified following the same methodology as described above for identification of potential impacts for Journey Lengths, Amenity Value and Community Severance. However, the residual impact on pedestrians and others is assessed by taking into account the mitigation proposals as described in section 46.5.

##### Countryside Access

46.2.32 An assessment on the impact on countryside access in accordance with the methodology described in Appendix 5 of the SNH Handbook of Environmental Impact Assessment, has been included to consider access to countryside facilities. The assessment is presented under the Residual Impact Assessment section because it takes proposed mitigation into consideration.

46.2.33 The potential effects of a project on countryside access interests will usually depend on the following main considerations:

- The type of countryside access facility;
- The type of project, including its nature, scale, location, duration etc; and
- The nature of recreation practised at the site or facility.

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46.2.34 Using the defined types of outdoor facilities and types of outdoor access impacts provided by SNH in their Handbook, this chapter presents only a descriptive assessment of the impacts and mitigations.

#### **Limitations to Assessment**

46.2.35 The assessment presented in this chapter and its associated figures is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:

- The assessment is based on information provided during the consultation process. For example, the paths described may no longer be present, and others may have been missed.
- Following discussions with landowners, additional access tracks and farm accommodation works may be provided.
- Traffic data was not available for all the roads in the study area as the traffic model was developed at a strategic level given the large area which it had to cover.
- DMRB does not provide criteria for assessing the significance of change in journey length for equestrians and cyclists. The criteria provided for pedestrians are therefore used as a basis, in conjunction with professional judgement.

### **46.3 Baseline Conditions**

46.3.1 The study area is characterised by rural fields and woodlands with scattered farms connected to small settlements via a network of minor roads and tracks. The types of key routes used by pedestrians and others range from informal grassed over footpaths to stony farm access tracks to minor roads. As most of the minor roads carry little traffic, they are heavily used for recreational purposes by pedestrians and others even though no specific NMU features are provided.

46.3.2 Many routes are identified in the Scottish Paths Record and in the proposed core path network being developed by the Local Authorities (refer to paragraph 46.2.4), and a number of them are also recognised as pedestrian Right of Ways (RoWs) in the National Catalogue of Rights of Way. To be a RoW a route must meet certain conditions, the main ones being that the route must have been used by the public for at least 20 years, it must connect two public places, and it must follow a more or less defined route. The introduction of new access legislation (Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003) will not affect the status of existing RoWs but does not guarantee that these will be incorporated into core path networks.

46.3.3 In 2004, a study was conducted and a report prepared for Aberdeenshire Council on a revision of the National Cycle Route 1. The preferred option from that study was taken into consideration during the assessment and is shown in Figures 46.1 a – f as 'Proposed Cycleway'.

#### **Local Vehicular Traffic**

46.3.4 The A90 at Stonehaven is the only major road within the study corridor. The majority of the traffic in the area travels north-south along the B979, which connects with a network of minor roads providing access to local farms and residences.

46.3.5 Local vehicular traffic currently utilises the following main routes around the study area (Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) from 2005 is used to represent existing traffic volume):

46.3.6 Section Stonehaven to New Mains of Ury (see Figure 46.2a): the A90 carries 21,100 vehicles AADT with 11,000 heading north to Aberdeen. The B979 provides the means for Stonehaven traffic to enter/exit the A90 and carries up to 4,500 vehicles AADT.

46.3.7 Section Mains of Ury to Cookney (see Figures 46.2 a – b): the main traffic flows occur north-south along the B979 (2,600 vehicles AADT); and east-west along the C12K providing a connection to the A90.

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46.3.8 Section Cookney to Cleanhill (see Figure 46.2b): again, the main traffic flows occur north-south along the B979 (4,400 vehicles AADT); and east-west along the C24K and C13K (1,500 vehicles AADT) as they connect with the A90.

46.3.9 There is only one bus route identified that could be impacted by the Fastlink. Its route takes in Stonehaven, Cookney, Invercrynoch and Burnhead (refer to Figures 46.2 a – b).

#### Key Community Facilities

46.3.10 As explained in paragraph 46.2.2, community facilities were surveyed whenever their catchment area had the potential to be impacted by the proposed scheme. In accordance with DMRB, key community facilities that were surveyed included:

- Doctor's surgeries;
- Hospitals;
- Aged persons homes;
- Schools;
- Shops;
- Post Offices;
- Churches and cemeteries;
- Parks, play areas, sport centres (including riding schools), etc;
- Libraries; and
- Bus services.

46.3.11 Community facilities surveyed are listed below and shown in Figures 46.2 a – b. Also shown on the Figures are the catchment areas for primary and secondary schools.

46.3.12 There are very few community facilities along the study corridor as the area is very rural, consisting mostly of scattered farms. The only community within the Fastlink study corridor is Cookney. Stonehaven, Newtonhill and Netherley are the next closest settlements. Cookney and Netherley consist of only a dozen or so residences; Newtonhill has a population of 3,110<sup>1</sup> and Stonehaven has an even more substantial population of 10,160<sup>2</sup>. Scotland's population is estimated to rise by only 0.8% by 2011<sup>3</sup>, therefore the 2004 Census population estimates provide a suitable proxy for the proposed scheme year of opening. The number of users for the facilities identified can therefore be estimated to be proportional to the settlement population assuming that people will use the nearest available facility.

46.3.13 The only community facility within the study corridor is Cookney Hall in Cookney. Other facilities outwith the corridor include:

- Kincardine Community Hospital;

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<sup>1</sup> Source: General Register Office for Scotland (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/settlements-and-localities/mid-2004-population-estimates-for-settlements-in-scotland.html>)

<sup>2</sup> Source: General Register Office for Scotland (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/settlements-and-localities/mid-2004-population-estimates-for-settlements-in-scotland.html>)

<sup>3</sup> Source: General Register Office for Scotland (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/popproj/04population-projections/index.html>)

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Primary Schools

- Dunnottar School;
- Netherley School (to be closed);
- Newtonhill School;
- Lairhillock School (under construction);
- Maryculter School (to be closed);

Secondary Schools

- Mackie Academy;
- Portlethen Academy; and
- Cults Academy.

46.3.14 Refer to Chapter 37 (Land Use) for further details relating to community facilities in the study corridor.

**Countryside Access**

46.3.15 Given the rural nature of the study corridor, an impact assessment using SNH methodology for countryside access was conducted (refer to paragraph 46.2.32). The types of outdoor access facilities within the corridor cover both area based (e.g. parks, reserves, local open spaces and inland lochs and reservoirs) and linear access (e.g. core paths, routes, RoWs) types. Linear access outdoor facilities will be assessed in detail in Key Routes and Journey Length sections; this section will therefore concentrate on area based facilities.

46.3.16 The study area also include the following countryside recreational areas:

- Glen Ury Park
- Slicewells Wood/Megray Wood/Limpet Wood
- Red Moss Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

**Key Routes**

46.3.17 The current journey distances for the key routes were estimated from plans, and the journey times were calculated using the speed of travel provided at paragraph 46.2.9 for the more sensitive NMU type identified as using the route. The results are provided in Table 46.5, and Figures 46.1 a – f show the journey length end points (denoted as Rn) used to calculate distances (the journey descriptions in the table match the Rn markers on the figures).

46.3.18 Whilst the predominant users of the routes have been identified in the table using information provided or collected, it is reasonable to assume that all minor roads would be used by all NMUs and that paths and tracks not identified as routes would also be used by pedestrians and others where practicable.

46.3.19 National Cycle Route 1 uses the network of minor roads in the area to allow cyclists to travel from Stonehaven to Aberdeen. The roads followed include B979, U88K, C12K, C25K, C24K, north past Quoscies and Wedderhill, and along the C5K. The route is shown on Figures 46.1 a – f.

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#### **Amenity Value**

- 46.3.20 Throughout the study corridor the baseline air quality and noise levels have been measured and determined to be well within the minimum standards required (refer to Chapter 44: Air Quality and Chapter 45: Noise for details). Traffic flows provided in Table 46.5 represent traffic along a particular section (i.e. between two junctions) and not the full length of the road.
- 46.3.21 The amenity value for the key routes is provided in Table 46.5, with routes indicated on Figures 46.1 a – f.

#### **Community Severance**

##### Existing Severance

- 46.3.22 There is currently no community severance within the Fastlink corridor. There are no roads with heavy traffic; the B979 is currently the heaviest (AADT 2005 = 4500). The A90 created some community severance between the coastal and rural communities.

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**Table 46.5 – Baseline Journey Lengths and Amenity Values**

Key Route Identification			Baseline Journey Length Condition				Baseline Amenity Value		
Route No	Description	Access Type	Journey Description	Distance [m]	Time [mins, secs]	Predominant NMU Type	Amenity Description/Primary Use	Traffic AADT 2005	Safety
1	B979 south of A90 underbridge	Public road	From junction of Glenury Road access road into estate to B979 left hand turn off roundabout	470	1 min, 25 secs	Cyclists	Single carriageway providing main entry/exit point for Stonehaven onto the A90. Used for access and recreation (National Cycle Route 1).	4500, 5.2% HGVs	1.5m wide footpath on west side of the road.
2	B979 roundabout with A90 slip lanes	Public road	From A90 underpass to New Mains of Ury	250	45 secs	Cyclists	This is the A90 turn-off for Stonehaven. Vehicle traffic flows in both direction under the A90 underpass and onto the B979. The B979 is heavily used by HGVs and farm vehicles. Used for access and recreation (National Cycle Route 1).	2600, 11.4% HGVs	There is a footpath along the B979 from Stonehaven, running north to the left-hand 90 degree bend towards the New Mains of Ury, but there is only a very narrow grass verge along the rest of the B979.
3	Hill of Megray RoW (GK88) – access from B979	RoW	From New Mains of Ury to Megray Farm steading	370	4 mins, 26 secs	Pedestrians	RoW is a single bitumen track up to the Megray Farm. Access is from the B979 a few metres to the west of the roundabout. Used for access.	Not applicable.	-
4	Hill of Megray RoW (GK88)	RoW	From Megray Farm to Forester's Croft	1060	12 mins, 43 secs	Pedestrians	RoW is a single bitumen track up to the Megray Farm, then dirt/stony track to Forester's Croft. The hill climb and dirt track could be difficult for vulnerable pedestrians. Used for access.	Not applicable.	-
5	Auquorthies Road (U89K)	Public road	From junction of B979 and U89K to eastern edge of study corridor.	1030	3 mins, 5 secs	Cyclists	Minor road bounded by fields, carrying a small volume of traffic. Used for access and recreation.	No data available.	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.
6	Kempstonehill to Coneyhatch	Track	From B979/Coneyhatch access to U167K	1620	19 mins, 26 secs	Pedestrians	Dirt track becoming overgrown past Kempstone Hill. Used for access and recreation.	Not applicable.	-
7	Hill of Muchalls road (U88K)	Public road	From B979/U88K junction to U88K/U167K junction	570	1 min, 43 secs	Cyclists	Minor road bounded by fields, carrying a small volume of traffic. Used for access and recreation.	No data available.	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.

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Key Route Identification			Baseline Journey Length Condition				Baseline Amenity Value		
Route No	Description	Access Type	Journey Description	Distance [m]	Time [mins, secs]	Predominant NMU Type	Amenity Description/Primary Use	Traffic AADT 2005	Safety
8	Allochie Farm to U88K	Track	From B979 to U88K	1270	7 mins, 37 secs	Equestrians	Stony track providing access to Allochie Farm from U88K with views across the valley. Used for access and recreation.	Not applicable.	-
9	C12K	Public road	From South Cookney Farmhouse to U88K junction	1040	3 mins, 7 secs	Cyclists	Minor road bounded by fields, carrying a small volume of traffic. Used for access and recreation.	No data available.	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.
					6 mins, 14 secs	Equestrians			
10	C25K	Public road	From Cookney War Memorial to Floors Farm	1020	6 mins, 7 secs	Equestrians	Minor road bounded by fields, carrying a small volume of traffic. Used for access and recreation.	No data available.	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.
					3 mins, 4 secs	Cyclists			
11	West Stoneyhill track	Track	From West Stoneyhill to C24K	1040	12 mins, 29 secs	Pedestrians	Stony track providing access to West Stoneyhill Farm. Used for access and recreation.	Not applicable.	-
					6 mins, 14 secs	Equestrians			
12	North Rothnick Farm track	Track	From North Rothnick Farm to East Rothnick Farm	610	3 mins, 40 secs	Equestrians	Stony track providing access to North and South Rothnick Farms. Used for access.	Not applicable.	-
13	Lairhillock Road (C13K)	Public road	From U62K to East Rothnick Farm	850	5 mins, 6 secs	Equestrians	Minor road bounded by fields. Used for access and recreation.	1600, 2.5% HGVs	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.
14	Lochton – Auchlunies – Nigg Road (C5K)	Public road	From Stranog Farm to Craigentath Farm	1300	15 mins, 36 secs	Pedestrians	Minor road bounded by fields, carrying a small volume of traffic. Used for access and recreation.	No data available.	Does not have footpaths and only narrow verge.
					3 mins, 54 secs	Cyclists			
15	Blaikiewell Farmhouse track (south)	Track	From Craigentath Farm to Blaikiewell Farmhouse	1680	20 mins, 10 secs	Pedestrians	Track providing access to Blaikiewell Farmhouse. Used for access.	Not applicable.	-

## **46.4 Potential Impacts**

- 46.4.1 As discussed previously, the potential impacts of the proposed scheme on pedestrians and others journeys have been assessed with respect to journey distance and time, amenity value and community severance.
- 46.4.2 The road model assessed in this chapter incorporates design elements which will mitigate potential impacts on pedestrians and others, such as the provision of footpaths alongside the overbridges necessary to enable side roads to pass over the mainline sections of the proposed scheme. The potential impacts described in this section are based on the finalised road model and therefore take these measures into account. However, any specific mitigation required for pedestrians and others including path diversions, farm accommodation bridges, cycle lanes, and NMU bridges is not included in the Potential Impacts assessment, but is described further in section 46.5 (Mitigation) and taken into account in section 46.6 (Residual Impacts).

### **Journey Lengths (Distance and Time)**

- 46.4.3 The key routes identified in Table 46.5 were considered in relation to the proposed alignment of the Fastlink. 'Conflict Points' were identified where the proposed scheme will cross a key route (marked with a 'Cn' on the Figures, where n is a numerical sequential identifier). For each of the Conflict Points identified, the change in journey length (in travel time and distance) was estimated and a corresponding impact significance value was determined with reference to the criteria defined in Table 46.1. The results are presented in Table 46.7.
- 46.4.4 For a number of Conflict Points (generally the minor roads), the Fastlink scheme design maintains access along the route with the provision of an over/under bridge. In many cases the design maintains the original alignment of the route therefore journey lengths are not impacted. In other cases there is a slight realignment and the impact on journey length has been assessed using the criteria of Table 46.1 but the results showed Negligible or Slight impacts only. Conflict Points to which this applies are listed below:
- C1: The road design will create a new junction (Stonehaven Junction) to allow traffic from the A90 to exit onto the B979 and access the Fastlink, and for Fastlink traffic to join the A90 or continue on to Stonehaven.
  - C2: A new roundabout at the Stonehaven Junction will allow the Fastlink to connect to the existing road network with only a slight modification to the existing arrangements for the B979 to A90 slip lanes.
  - C3: Access to the start of the RoW will come off the new roundabout at Stonehaven Junction.
  - C7: The Fastlink will cross the road just north of Fishermyre Farm. The U88K underbridge will maintain access. The realignment will increase journey length by 10m (2 secs for cyclists), representing a Negligible impact.
  - C9: The Fastlink will cross the road just south of Elrick Farm. The C12K overbridge will maintain access along the road's existing alignment, with no impact on cyclist and equestrian journey lengths.
  - C10: The Fastlink will cross the road between North Cookney Croft and North Cookney Farm. The C25K will be straightened and the C25K overbridge will maintain access. The realignment will increase journey length by 460m (2 mins, 46 secs for equestrians), representing a Slight impact.
  - C13: The Fastlink will cross the road 350m west of East Rothnick Farm. The C13K will be straightened and the C13K overbridge will maintain access. The realignment will decrease journey length by 10m (4 secs for equestrians), representing a Negligible beneficial impact.
  - C14: The Fastlink will cross the road about 500m east of Craigentath. The C5K underbridge will maintain access, with no impact on pedestrian and cyclist journey lengths.

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- 46.4.5 For all other Conflict Points, the proposed Fastlink scheme design, without mitigation, would close 7 of the 15 routes identified, one of these being an established RoW, creating an overall Substantial adverse impact.

#### **Local Vehicular Traffic**

- 46.4.6 With the exception of the U89K (Auquorthies to Ury road), all minor roads will be retained, therefore the Fastlink will not have an impact on journey lengths for local vehicular movements. The impact of the proposed scheme on traffic flows (AADT) along those movements are detailed below (as a comparison with Do-Minimum predictions for year of opening).
- 46.4.7 Section Stonehaven to New Mains of Ury: northbound traffic flows along the A90 are predicted to decrease by up to 30%. Traffic along the B979 is also expected to decrease by up to 96%.
- 46.4.8 Section New Mains of Ury to Cookney: the largest decrease in traffic by percentage is predicted to occur along the length of the B979. The closure of the U89K to vehicular traffic will result in a diversion of nearly three kilometres along the new side road linking up to the U88K.
- 46.4.9 Section Cookney to Cleanhill: this section of the B979 is also predicted to experience a substantial decrease in traffic of 72%. Traffic along the C13K is predicted to decrease by 46%.
- 46.4.10 The one bus route identified on Figures 46.2a-b will not be impacted by the proposed Fastlink.

#### **Amenity Value**

- 46.4.11 Impact on amenity value is assessed at the points where pedestrians and others will have to cross the proposed scheme, either by an overbridge or underpass. The potential impact is assessed taking into account visual, noise and air quality impacts. The results are provided in Table 46.8.
- 46.4.12 The traffic data provided in Table 46.8 are projected flows for the overbridges, underpasses and link roads as there are no NMU at-grade crossings along the proposed scheme itself. In addition to the traffic travelling over/under the AWPR, pedestrians may experience some additional noise from traffic travelling along the AWPR.
- 46.4.13 The proposed scheme will provide a decrease in traffic along most of the minor roads within the study area, bringing a benefit for pedestrians and others. Also, whilst the experience of crossing the Fastlink at the Conflict Points (shown in Figures 46.1 a – f) will be adverse, it will be of short duration in most cases. Therefore the exposure to decreased air quality or increased noise levels will result in a Slight impact only.
- 46.4.14 The visual impacts listed in Table 46.8 have been assessed based on year of opening before mitigation, i.e. before new planting has become established. These impacts therefore represent the “worst case scenario”. Visual impacts are not available for all locations as only selected paths were used in the assessment (refer to Chapter 42: Visual).
- 46.4.15 As traffic and visual impacts are the greatest differentiators in this assessment, the significance of impact on amenity value has not been assessed where neither of these pieces of information have been available. This was the case for route number 5 (Auquorthies to Ury Road) and 12 (North Rothnick farm track).

#### **Community Severance**

##### Relief from Existing Severance

- 46.4.16 Although most of the minor roads in the study corridor will carry less traffic with the proposed scheme in place compared to the Do-Minimum case, none of the traffic levels are above 8,000 vehicles AADT, which in accordance with DMRB is too low to generate any severance of significance.

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##### New Severance

- 46.4.17 Access to the key community facilities (shown in Figures 46.2 a – b) is via the key routes in Table 46.5. Impact prediction on the journey lengths along those key routes is provided in Table 46.7.
- 46.4.18 Without mitigation, the following paths will be severed causing a Severe impact for pedestrians and others in terms of severance from community facilities: 3 (Hill of Megray RoW), 5 (Auquorthies to Ury Road), and 12 (North Rothnick farm track), and 15 (Blaikiewell Farmhouse track (south)).
- 46.4.19 Although most of the minor roads in the study corridor will carry less traffic with the proposed scheme in place compared to the Do-Minimum case, none of the traffic levels are above 8,000 vehicles AADT, which in accordance with DMRB is too low to generate any severance of significance.

##### **Countryside Access**

- 46.4.20 Access to the outdoor facilities listed under paragraph 46.3.16 is via the key routes in Table 46.5. Impact prediction on the journey lengths along those key routes is provided in Table 46.7.
- 46.4.21 Without mitigation, the following paths (identified using their respective Conflict Point numbers) will be severed causing a Severe impact for pedestrians and others in terms of accessing outdoor facilities: C4 (Hill of Megray RoW), C5 (Auquorthies – Ury Road (U89K)) and C8 (Allochie Farm to U88K).

## **46.5 Mitigation**

- 46.5.1 Potential adverse impacts have been minimised through the proposed scheme design, which has been developed through extensive consultation with organisations such as Aberdeen Cycle Forum, Aberdeen Countryside Project, British Horse Society, Scotways and the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils. Mitigation has also been developed so as not to hinder the development of future core path networks by both Councils, and acknowledges the need to provide for all forms of recreational access.
- 46.5.2 As a result of the AWPR Special Road status, NMU provision cannot be provided adjoining the carriageway.

##### **New access provision**

- 46.5.3 Mitigation measures include new access provision in the form of NMU overbridges, underbridges and underpasses and farm accommodation works, in addition to those provided as part of the proposed scheme design.
- 46.5.4 The access provisions at each conflict point are shown in Figures 46.1 a – f, listed in Table 46.8 and described in Residual Impacts. These have been developed to minimise the need for permanent route diversions, or to ensure that such diversions are beneficial to pedestrians and others in terms of factors such as amenity value and safety.
- 46.5.5 One of the principle aims of the mitigation is to link routes into a larger strategic network, and this will require the provision of additional paths to those already available. All proposed structures and new routes will not restrict the types or abilities of users. Where permanent route diversions have been deemed necessary, the shortest route has been proposed so as to minimise impacts on journey distance and time.

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- 46.5.6 In summary, of the seven locations where severance of existing paths may occur without mitigation, four routes will be maintained via a diversion and new access provision to cross the Fastlink, and three will be maintained via diversions only (C4 – Hill of Megray RoW, C6 – Kempstonehill to Coneyhatch, C12 North Rothnick Farm and C15 Blaikiewell).

#### **Safety**

- 46.5.7 The Disability Discrimination Act (1995), as explained in section 46.2, requires that all paths and access structures should be free from barriers. The Countryside Commission (1994) recommend that the maximum gradient for ambulant disabled and wheelchair users is 1:20, although steeper gradients of up to 1:10 may be acceptable over short distances. The BT Community Partnership and Fieldfare Trust (undated) recommend that the minimum width to accommodate all types and abilities of user is 1200mm (1.2m); if heavy use by wheelchairs is envisaged, passing places should be constructed or the ramp width increased to 1700mm (1.7m). Gradient levels of underpasses and overbridges vary between 1:200 (0.5%) and 1:14 (7.2%), providing suitable access for vulnerable users. Should gradients exceed 1:200, handrails will be provided in accordance with British Standard BS8300.
- 46.5.8 The proposed scheme will be designed in accordance with the minimum requirements of DMRB. DMRB Volume 5, Section 2, Part 4 (Technical Advice TA 91/05) provides guidance in relation to design and features for NMU provisions. The specifications in TA 91/05 meet the legislative requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (refer to paragraph 46.2.29) and incorporates the recommendations of various other bodies such as the Countryside Commission (1994), and BT Community Partnership and Fieldfare Trust (undated). Design aspects covered in TA 91/05 include gradients, verge widths, crossings, surfaces, dimensions for subways and bridges, and safety features such as parapets and lighting.
- 46.5.9 All bridges where diversions are proposed have a minimum verge width of 2.5m. Underpasses will be designed in accordance with the requirements of TD36/93 'Subways for Pedestrians and Pedal Cyclists. Layout and Dimensions'.
- 46.5.10 Where equestrian access across the route is provided, safety measures such as parapets, slip resistant surfacing and solid infill panels, are provided in line with standards identified in DMRB Volume 2 Special Structures (BD29104). Equestrian access via underbridges will have such sufficient clearance to allow riders to remain mounted as clearance meets the minimum requirement of 3.7m for ridden horses.
- 46.5.11 Widened verges to accommodate cyclists and equestrians and safety measures such as equestrian parapets have been provided where required.

#### **Landscaping**

- 46.5.12 Mitigation in the form of landscape planting is proposed along the length of the proposed scheme to reduce potential visual amenity impacts on residential properties, paths and open space. The proposed landscaping mitigation for the amenity value of routes is discussed in Chapter 41 (Landscape).

#### **Air Quality and Noise**

- 46.5.13 Mitigation of impacts from traffic noise and vibration is proposed in the form of low-noise road surfacing, the provision of noise bunds and barriers. Further details are provided in Chapter 45 (Traffic Noise and Vibration). No mitigation measures are applicable to air quality impacts as explained in Chapter 44 (Air Quality).

#### **Community Severance**

- 46.5.14 Community severance is mitigated by the measures taken for Journey Lengths and Amenity Value.

### **Countryside Access**

46.5.15 Countryside access impacts are mitigated by the measures taken for Journey Lengths and Amenity Value.

## **46.6 Residual Impacts**

46.6.1 Residual impacts are addressed in terms of changes to journey lengths, amenity value, community severance and countryside access.

46.6.2 The magnitude of residual impacts on pedestrians and others' journeys incorporating the proposed scheme design and proposed mitigation, has been assessed for each of the conflict points as shown in Table 46.7. As described in section 46.5, mitigation includes NMU overbridges and underpasses and accommodation bridges not intended for local vehicular traffic other than local farm access.

46.6.3 The significance of residual impacts on the amenity value of pedestrians and others' journeys has been assessed as shown in Table 46.8, incorporating landscape mitigation. Noise mitigation such as barriers and bunds has not been included as impacts on pedestrians and others are anticipated to remain Slight at these conflict points. For further details on proposed noise mitigation along other sections of paths Chapter 45 (Traffic Noise and Vibration) should be referred to.

### **Journey Lengths (Distance and Time)**

46.6.4 With mitigation, the proposed Fastlink will not close any of the routes identified. The new diversions will result in 5 Negligible, 3 Slight and 2 Moderate impacts.

46.6.5 Where routes have been identified as being predominantly for recreational use, assessment of residual impact significance considers that an increase in journey length may be regarded as beneficial by users in some cases. The routes (identified by their conflict point number) to which this applies are as follows:

- C6: This dirt track route has been identified as an access route, though is predominantly used by pedestrians for recreation. It provides a linkage between other recreational routes in the area mainly used by equestrians and cyclists. Since its key function is as a recreational route, the impact of the increased journey length from diversion to the south may not be wholly adverse. The residual impact significance is therefore reduced from Major to Moderate for pedestrians.
- C8: Access to Allochie Farm along this rural track is likely to be predominantly by vehicle users. NMU use of the track is identified for recreational purposes, forming part of the equestrian network in this area. The diversion could be considered to provide a beneficial impact for some users through the extension of the path network. The residual impact significance is therefore reduced from Moderate to Slight.
- C11: This rural track provides a recreational route for pedestrians and equestrians using the path network in the Cookney area. It also provides access to West Stoneyhill Farm, though users accessing the farm are likely to be motorised. For recreational purposes, an increased journey length may be considered as beneficial for some users since the path network is extended. The residual impact significance is reduced from Major to Moderate for pedestrians and from Moderate to Slight for equestrians.

### **Amenity Value**

46.6.6 The residual visual impacts listed in Table 46.8 have been assessed based on design year (2027), representing 15 years from year of opening for landscape mitigation plantings to become established. Visual impacts are not available for all locations as only selected paths were used in the assessment (refer to Chapter 42: Visual).

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- 46.6.7 With mitigation, the Fastlink will create 8 Slight and 5 Moderate impacts on pedestrians and others in terms of amenity value. Most of these are due to visual impacts (even taking into account the landscape mitigations) and from the increased traffic on the B979 to the south of the Stonehaven Junction.

#### **Community Severance**

##### Relief from Existing Severance

- 46.6.8 There are no additional mitigation proposals to provide relief from existing severance, therefore residual impacts are as per described in section 46.4.

##### New Severance

- 46.6.9 Access to the key community facilities identified at paragraph 46.3.13 is via the key routes of Table 46.5. Impact prediction on the journey lengths along those key routes was provided in Table 46.7. The severance assessment for Cookney community hall based on changes to journey length, traffic volumes and the addition of a bridge/underpass results in a Moderate adverse impact given:

- journey length increase less than 250m;
- no traffic data available but assumed to be less than 8,000 vehicles AADT; and
- new C25K overbridge.

- 46.6.10 The following residual impacts are anticipated for Community facilities that were located further out from the study corridor but whose catchment areas would be crossed by the proposed scheme:

- Kincardine Community Hospital: NMU access will not be impacted by the Fastlink. Vehicular access for residents along U89K will have an increase in journey length of three kilometres (Slight impact); access via all other minor roads will be unaffected.

##### Primary Schools

- Dunnottar School: the Fastlink will cut through the north eastern of the catchment area. However, for the few residents in the area, access to the school located south of the Stonehaven junction will most likely be done by driving or cycling the minor roads; vehicular access for residents along U89K will have an increase in journey length of three kilometres (Slight impact); access via all other minor roads will be unaffected.
- Netherley School: the Fastlink will follow the boundary of its catchment area, therefore there will be no impact. Note that this school will be closed and replaced with Lairhillock School (see below).
- Newtonhill School: the Fastlink will follow the boundary of its catchment area except for a small section of the south western corner. As the minor roads will be maintained, there will be no impact.
- Lairhillock School (under construction; anticipated to open in August 2007): the catchment area for this school is not defined yet, but assuming it will replace Netherley and Maryculter Schools, potential impacts on its catchment area will be those of those two schools (noted above and below).
- Maryculter School: the Fastlink will dissect the lower half of the catchment area. Given the size of this catchment, it is expected that most children would be driven to school. With all the minor roads in the catchment being maintained, there will be no impact. Note that this school will be closed and replaced with Lairhillock School (see above).

##### Secondary Schools

- Mackie Academy: the catchment area overlaps that of Dunnottar (above) hence the impacts will be the same. The north western section of the catchment area extends further north than Dunnottar School, however the Fastlink follows its boundary, therefore there will be no impact.

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- Portlethen Academy: the Fastlink will follow the boundary of its catchment area, therefore there will be no impact.
- Cults Academy: the Fastlink will bisect the lower half of its catchment area. Given the size of this catchment, it is expected that most children would be driven to school or using public transport. With all the minor roads in the catchment being maintained, there will be no impact.

46.6.11 From the above, the impact on new community severance would be Slight, however combined with journey length impacts summarised at paragraph 46.6.4, the result is Slight-Moderate.

#### Countryside Access

46.6.12 As explained in paragraph 46.3.15, this section will concentrate on area based facilities; linear access outdoor facilities have been assessed in detail in previous sections.

46.6.13 The assessment considers the differing issues and objectives for outdoor access facilities. Part of Megray Wood is a commercial plantation therefore access and enjoyment of that area is already subject to the regular application of restrictions during clearing operations. Whilst Red Moss SAC is of ecological and hydrological importance, it is not a major recreational destination.

46.6.14 In accordance with SNH guidance, the method for assessing impact on pedestrians and others in terms of enjoying area based facilities has been assessed by considering access and amenity value, providing a qualitative assessment. The severance and landtake of the recreational areas is assessed in Chapter 37 (Land Use). Pedestrians and others are expected to experience a degree of loss in amenity value at areas including Megray Wood where they are close to the Fastlink. However, mitigation in the form of landscape and ecological planting will reduce the impact, resulting in a Slight impact on pedestrians and others utilising the recreational areas as listed above.

46.6.15 Access to the outdoor facilities listed under paragraph 46.3.16 is done via the key routes in Table 46.5. Impact prediction on the journey lengths along those key routes is provided in Table 46.7. Of the paths identified in paragraph 46.4.21 as being severed, all will remain open with the incorporation of appropriate mitigation, but most will result in a diversion.

**Table 46.6 – Countryside Access Impact Assessment**

Outdoor Access Facility	Impacts	Mitigation
Glen Ury Park	No impact	n/a
Slicewells Wood/Megray Wood/LimpetWood	Severance of access path (C5). Reduction in amenity	Provision of U89K NMU underpass Landscaping/planting
Red Moss SAC	No impact	n/a

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**Table 46.7 – Potential and Residual Impacts on Journey Lengths**

Conflict Point No	Potential Journey Length Impact – no mitigation				Predominant NMU Type	Residual Journey Length Impact – with mitigation				
	Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance		Mitigation and Residual Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance	Comments
C1	The new Stonehaven Junction with traffic signals will be introduced on the B979 to connect the A90 slip roads. Delays to NMUs will be introduced in order to negotiate the junction.	470	0	Negligible	Cyclists	-	-	-	-	Potential functional route for the estate residents to access Stonehaven community facilities
C2	The Fastlink will replace the B979/A90 T-junction with a roundabout as part of Stonehaven Junction. Cyclists travelling south will now need to negotiate the right hand turn around the roundabout towards Stonehaven.	450	200	Negligible	Cyclists	A crossing point will be added on the B979 to avoid NMUs having to travel around the roundabout.	250	0	Negligible	Potential functional route for cyclists to access Stonehaven community facilities
C3	Access to the start of the RoW will now come off the new roundabout at Stonehaven Junction.	415	45	Slight	Pedestrians	-	-	-	-	Potential functional route for Megray Farm residents to access Stonehaven community facilities
C4	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Pedestrians	The Fastlink will dissect the RoW. An alternative path would see NMUs diverted along the B979.	1255	195	Slight	Recreational route
C5	The road will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Cyclists	The U89K NMU underpass will maintain access. The road will remain closed to vehicular traffic (diverted north along new minor road to U88K)	1030	0	Negligible	Recreational route

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Conflict Point No	Potential Journey Length Impact – no mitigation				Predominant NMU Type	Residual Journey Length Impact – with mitigation				
	Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance		Mitigation and Residual Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance	Comments
C6	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Pedestrians	NMUs will follow an alternative path along the U89K and north along the new side road to rejoin the track.	2250	630	Moderate	Predominantly recreational route for NMUs. Also used for access.
C7	The Fastlink will cross the road just north of Fishermyre Farm. The U88K underbridge will maintain access.	580	10	Negligible	Cyclists	-	-	-	-	Recreational route
C8	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Equestrians	NMUs will be diverted north to the Burn of Muchalls accommodation underpass, then southwards along the eastern side of the AWPR to rejoin the track.	1920	650	Slight	Predominantly recreational route for NMUs. Also used for access to Allochie Farm.
C9	The Fastlink will cross the road just south of Elrick Farm. The C12K overbridge will maintain access.	-	-	Negligible	Cyclists	-	-	-	-	Recreational route
				Equestrians						
C10	The Fastlink will cross the road between North Cookney Croft and North Cookney Farm. The C25K will be straightened and the C25K overbridge will maintain access.	1480	460	Slight	Equestrians	A track will be added from North Cookney Farm to the C24K.	1150	130	Negligible	Potential functional route for local residents to access Cookney Hall
				Cyclists	Negligible					
C11	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Pedestrians	NMUs will be diverted south to Cookney and along the C24K via the C25K overbridge.	2210	1170	Moderate	Predominantly recreational route for NMUs. Also used for access to farms.
				Equestrians						
C12	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Equestrians	A new track will be created to the west of the Fastlink to reconnect North Rothnick Farm to the C13K.	760	150	Negligible	Recreational route

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Conflict Point No	Potential Journey Length Impact – no mitigation				Predominant NMU Type	Residual Journey Length Impact – with mitigation				
	Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance		Mitigation and Residual Impact Description	New Distance [m]	Change [m]	Significance	Comments
C13	The Fastlink will cross the road 350m west of East Rothnick Farm. The C13K will be straightened and the C13K overbridge will maintain access.	840	-10	Negligible Beneficial	Equestrians	-	-	-	-	Recreational route
C14	The Fastlink will cross the road about 500m from Craigentath. The C5K underbridge will maintain access.	-	-	Slight	Pedestrians	-	-	-	-	Recreational route
					Cyclists					
C15	The track will be closed.	-	-	Severe	Pedestrians	A new access track will be created to the south, joining the C5K.	1800	120	Slight	Functional route for Blaikiewell Farm residents to access community facilities

**Table 46.8 – Potential and Residual Impacts on Amenity Values**

Route ID	Potential Amenity Impacts – no mitigation (see Note 1)				Residual Amenity Impacts – with mitigation (see Note 1)			
	Traffic (AADT year of opening) (Do-Minimum vs. With-Scheme)	Visual (year of opening)	Safety	Significance	Visual (2026)	Safety	Significance	Comments
1	With the proposed scheme, traffic is predicted to increase by 33% to 7069 vehicles.	Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	3.0m wide NMU verge	Slight	The route currently forms part of the National Cycle Route 1. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route.
2	The traffic with the proposed scheme is predicted to be 96% less than the Do-Minimum levels (119 vs. 3,373).	No data available	Addition of the roundabout will create a safety concern for cyclists especially.	Moderate	No data available	3.0m wide NMU verge extended 100m east along the B979 from the roundabout.	Slight	The route currently forms part of the National Cycle Route 1. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route.

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Route ID	Potential Amenity Impacts – no mitigation (see Note 1)				Residual Amenity Impacts – with mitigation (see Note 1)			
	Traffic (AADT year of opening) (Do-Minimum vs. With-Scheme)	Visual (year of opening)	Safety	Significance	Visual (2026)	Safety	Significance	Comments
3	B979: The traffic with the proposed scheme is predicted to be 96% less than the Do-Minimum levels (119 vs. 3373) north of the roundabout at Stonehaven. South of the roundabout, traffic volumes are predicted to increase by 75% to 9,330.	Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	NMUs will cross the B979 south of the roundabout (9330 AADT year of opening), walk north along a new footpath, then cross the A90 on/off ramp (6217 AADT year of opening) to the new footpath along the first few metres of the RoW. All footpaths will be 2.0m wide.	Moderate	Not applicable.
4	No data available.	Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	No change	Slight	This route will be closed, therefore few NMUs are expected to use the severed sections.
5	No data available.	No data available	No change	Insufficient data	No data available	No change	Insufficient data	The cycle route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. Magnitude of impact does not include traffic flows.
6	No data available.	Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	No change	Slight	NMUs will encounter few vehicles due to the rural nature of the route.
7	No data available.	Severe	No change	Substantial	Substantial	No change	Moderate	The cycle route currently forms part of the National Cycle Route 1. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. Magnitude of impact does not include traffic flows.

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Route ID	Potential Amenity Impacts – no mitigation (see Note 1)				Residual Amenity Impacts – with mitigation (see Note 1)			
	Traffic (AADT year of opening) (Do-Minimum vs. With-Scheme)	Visual (year of opening)	Safety	Significance	Visual (2026)	Safety	Significance	Comments
8	No data available.	Moderate/ Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	No change	Slight	The equestrian route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. NMUs will encounter few vehicles due to the rural nature of the route.
9	No data available.	Severe	No change	Substantial	Substantial	No change	Moderate	The route currently forms part of the National Cycle Route 1 and also part of a wider equestrian path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. Magnitude of impact does not include traffic flows.
10	No data available.	Moderate/ Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate	No change	Slight	The route currently forms part of the National Cycle Route 1 and also part of a wider equestrian path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. Magnitude of impact does not include traffic flows or visual impacts.
11	No data available.	Slight	No change	Slight	Slight	No change	Slight	The equestrian route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. NMUs will encounter few vehicles due to the rural nature of the route.

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Route ID	Potential Amenity Impacts – no mitigation (see Note 1)				Residual Amenity Impacts – with mitigation (see Note 1)			
	Traffic (AADT year of opening) (Do-Minimum vs. With-Scheme)	Visual (year of opening)	Safety	Significance	Visual (2026)	Safety	Significance	Comments
12	No data available.	No data available	No change	Insufficient data	No data available	No change	Insufficient data	The equestrian route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route. NMUs will encounter few vehicles due to the rural nature of the route.
13	With the proposed scheme, traffic levels are predicted to decrease by 46% to 1014 vehicles AADT.	Moderate/ Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate/ Substantial	No change	Slight	The equestrian route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route.
14	No data available.	Substantial	No change	Moderate	Moderate/ Substantial	No change	Moderate	The pedestrian and cycle route currently forms part of a wider path network. Adverse impacts are therefore considered localised in nature as the proposed diversion will only affect a small section of the route.  Magnitude of impact does not include traffic flows.
15	No data available.	Substantial/ Severe	No change	Substantial	Substantial	No change	Moderate	NMUs will encounter few vehicles due to the rural nature of the route.

Note 1: Air Quality and Noise impacts are assessed as Slight.

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### **46.7 References**

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