

BUS INFORMATION STRATEGY

2010

ABERDEEN
CITY AND
SHIRE

*a brighter
outlook*

Moving
Aberdeenshire
Forward

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Foreword

Through the framework of the Council's Local Transport Strategy, continued investment in transportation within Aberdeenshire has led to significant improvements in recent years.

It has also seen us make real progress in developing an integrated transportation system for Aberdeenshire which contributes to the development of an inclusive and safe society, a sustainable economy and which reduces the environmental damage caused by transport.

Aberdeenshire Council's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) reflects this vision. The provision of an effective public transport network will maximise the contribution public transport can make, within available resources, to a number of the national outcomes underpinning the Council's SOA.

Bus services form the core of the Aberdeenshire public transport network. The availability of high quality bus service information is a major factor in attracting new passengers and retaining existing passengers.

The Council has, over recent years, dedicated considerable effort and associated resources to the development and maintenance of a range of public transport initiatives. These include conventional 'at-bus stop' timetable displays and pioneering 'on-street' interactive journey planning facilities at key interchange points across Aberdeenshire.

It is particularly satisfying that the high standards of provision that the Council has set regarding timetable displays are consistently attained or exceeded. Given these achievements, the Strategy has been developed to build upon our success and to set the framework for continuous improvement in this crucial area of service delivery.

Our Bus Information Strategy was produced with the assistance of the MVA Consultancy and is the product of extensive informal and formal consultation with interested parties. Our grateful thanks go to everyone who contributed to the development of the document.

In these challenging economic times, the approach we have adopted is based on continued successful partnership working with operators. This collaborative approach will continue to deliver added value and a more cost-effective service to our residents.

We are confident that the Council's excellent working arrangements with the bus industry will continue and contribute to the success of the Strategy. We will ensure that we monitor the success of all parties in meeting the objectives.



Councillor Peter Argyle
Chair, Infrastructure Services Committee.



Iain Gabriel
Director, Transportation and Infrastructure



Introduction

The availability and quality of information is a major factor in encouraging the use of public transport.

1.1 What is the Bus Information Strategy?

This Bus Information Strategy has been prepared to demonstrate the objectives and means by which Aberdeenshire Council will deliver high-quality and meaningful information about the bus network in their area. The structure of the strategy is such that it is both reflective of the current position and also sets out aspirations and a framework for the future delivery of bus information in the area.

For the purposes of this strategy, local bus information means:

- information about fares, routes, location of stops and timetabling of local bus services to, from and within Aberdeenshire;
- other information about facilities for people with special needs, travel concessions, etc; and
- connections with other transport services and all other matters of value to passengers and potential passengers.

The availability and quality of information is a major factor in encouraging the use of public transport in preference to private transport. Aberdeenshire Council recognises that those without access to a car and who rely

heavily on public transport need information that is comprehensive, impartial between operators and accurate. It is also recognised that those who already use buses can be encouraged to use them more often by the provision of 'added value' information.

However, if public transport strategies are to be achieved, there is also a requirement to encourage its use by those who are currently regular car users. The information needs of someone who rarely (or has never) used public transport are different to those of the existing users. This Bus Information Strategy must recognise these different needs.

This Bus Information Strategy complies with the requirements of the national legislation set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 and other relevant legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines, namely:

- Aberdeenshire Council's Local Transport Strategy and Public Transport Policy Statement;
- Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy;
- ATCO (Association of Transport Coordinating Officers) Good Practice Guidance: Public Transport Information (February 2009);

- The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005;
- MACS (Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland) Report: Valuable for Anyone, Valuable for Everyone; and
- DfT's (Department for Transport) 'Inclusive Mobility'.

It also takes cognisance of the Scottish Government's 'Buses for Scotland – Progress through Partnership' guidance document.

1.2 Transport (Scotland) Act 2001

Under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001, Aberdeenshire Council has a duty to ensure the availability of local bus information in Aberdeenshire. Through consultation with local operators and neighbouring authorities, the Council has established a policy which sets out standards for the provision and maintenance of up-to-date and comprehensive public transport information. This is part of the Council's strategy for encouraging greater use and awareness of the public transport alternatives to travel by private car.



“...the provision of high quality information targeted at non-bus users is a key component of the strategy.”

The Act sets out the process by which a strategy for information provision should be prepared and the steps that must be undertaken within this. Sections 33 to 35 of the Act, which deal with information about bus services, are provided in Appendix A. Setting standards for the provision of local bus information in the local authority area and providing effective bus service information, will contribute towards achieving the objectives of both Aberdeenshire Council and the bus companies which provide services in the area.

Therefore, this Bus Information Strategy document delivers the requirements of the Act by:

- determining what local bus information should be made available;
- setting out the appropriate means by which it should be made available;
- examining the locations where information should be made available; and
- providing a framework for short, medium and long-term development and sustainability of local bus information standards.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act, Aberdeenshire Council has consulted on the standards set in this document and the future information strategy with the Scottish Traffic Commissioner, commercial bus operators, the Confederation of Public Transport, Aberdeenshire Area Bus Forums, Nestrans and neighbouring local authorities.

Having achieved consensus on what, how, where and to whom the information is provided, Aberdeenshire Council will implement the agreed plan and monitor its delivery. Where there are deficiencies in current provision, the Council will make arrangements, in partnership with bus operators, to rectify this. Where there are longer term objectives, the Council will develop schemes and seek funding that will enable these objectives to be met.

Aberdeenshire Council will exercise its powers under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 to ensure that information about the operators' services meet the availability and quality standards set out in this strategy. Where partnerships with operators can not be achieved, the option exists for the Council to provide the information directly or through a third party and report the operators to the Scottish Traffic Commissioner. Any costs incurred in achieving this will then be recovered from the operator(s). However, the Council will only utilise this option as a last resort and only where the operator(s) fail to comply with their responsibilities as set out in Section 9 of the Bus Information Strategy.

1.3 National Policy Context

The National Transport Strategy (NTS), published in December 2006, sets out the long-term vision for transport in Scotland. The strategic outcomes identified within the NTS, focus on tackling congestion, integrating services and infrastructure, improving connections and accessibility and encouraging individuals to make different choices about their preferred method of travel.

The NTS states that:

- buses are the dominant form of public transport in terms of journey numbers;
- access to public transport can vary widely depending on where we live, our income, and a range of other factors;
- the information available to users makes a significant contribution to encouraging people to use public transport; and
- progress made in Scotland will be reviewed to ensure that information is appropriate to the needs of different groups, including commuters and visitors.

A Bus Action Plan was also published alongside the NTS which sets out a raft of measures to improve bus services in Scotland. This Action Plan recognised the importance of good information provision as an important component in encouraging people to use bus services. Arising out of the national Bus Action Plan, the Scottish Government's 'Buses for Scotland – Progress through Partnership' document provides guidance on bus service information and this Bus Information Strategy gives due regard to this advice.

“...investment in improved bus fleet and services has resulted in passenger growth.”

Regional transport partnerships and local authorities have a particularly important role to play in ensuring that their transport strategies are in line with and support the NTS, while meeting local needs.

1.4 Regional Policy Context

The North East of Scotland Transport Partnership (NESTRANS) covers Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. NESTRANS has developed a Regional Transport Strategy which sets out the challenges facing the north east between 2007 and 2021, as well as how these challenges will be addressed. It includes an appraisal of the problems and issues affecting the region, and sets out a number of transport objectives.

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 and Scottish Government guidance.

The RTS recognises that:

- bus use is relatively low in the north east, although investment in improved services and bus fleets has resulted in growth in recent years; and
- accurate and accessible travel information “is a vital part of a high-quality bus network, and a key ingredient in attracting people to use the bus.”

In addition, NESTRANS makes the following commitments in order to achieve the objectives set out in the RTS:

- to work closely with bus operators to increase bus patronage and enhance the performance and quality of bus services across the region; and
- to set out how information could be improved, including development and expansion of ‘Real Time’ passenger information.

The RTS also commits NESTRANS to produce a Bus Action Plan presenting a detailed programme of actions needed to achieve the bus proposals set out within the strategy. The Bus Action Plan was published in February 2009. It supports:

- analysis to determine current bus information provision ie how and where information is lacking, and how and where it is needed;
- promotion of key information sources;
- production of a joint Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire information strategy, and
- funding improvements to enable ‘Real Time’ information to be provided online.

It is also anticipated in the Bus Action Plan that delivering improved travel information will require strong partnership working between the public and private sectors, and that it is also vital to ensure that public transport information is accessible to all.

1.5 Local Policy Context

Within the Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2007-2010, the Council recognises and addresses the current pressures arising from high levels of mobility in the area. The purpose of the strategy is to "set out a strategic statement regarding the future of transport in Aberdeenshire and provide a long-term vision for the different transport needs of the area."

A number of initiatives are promoted within the LTS, including:

- public transport publicity campaigns, aimed at all user groups including visitors;
- Personalised Travel Planning, including tailored service information;
- improving passenger information systems;
- development of an improved public transport marketing plan and materials; and
- an integrated approach to the provision of travel information.

This Bus Information Strategy will help to achieve the Council's wider objectives for public transport by setting out standards and a plan against which performance can be reviewed and new developments justified. It will also assist in the delivery of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement, in particular, local outcomes:

- 1.3 - a fully integrated transport network;
- 11.1 - to conserve and enhance the north east's natural and built environment and heritage by reducing the effects of transport on climate and air quality; and
- 14.3 - reduction in vehicle emissions through changes in travel patterns.

The strategy for Aberdeenshire recognises that Aberdeen City Council is a separate local authority with its own specific requirements and its own Bus Information Strategy. However, there must be sensible co-ordination between the two strategies as the requirements and deliverables will be shared by users and operators alike. The co-ordination required to achieve this should be facilitated through NESTRANS and should include consultation with operators.

1.6 Bus Quality Partnerships

In 1998, Aberdeenshire Council entered into a Quality Partnership for Public Transport with Aberdeen City Council, Stagecoach Bluebird and First Aberdeen. The partnership was subsequently re-launched in October 2005, and in turn, Nestrans joined the partnership in October 2007.

This has been an effective voluntary partnership and, as part of it, Stagecoach Bluebird contributes towards two members of staff within the Council's public transport unit, whose responsibilities include the installation, maintenance and monitoring of roadside bus service information.

The principle aims of the Quality Partnership are to enhance the quality, image and availability of bus services in the north east of Scotland. Significant progress has been achieved to date and a programme of further initiatives, linked to the delivery of the Nestrans Bus Action Plan, will address such issues as delivery of passenger information, fleet provision, development of park and ride services and improved passenger waiting facilities.



About Aberdeenshire

There is a low level of public transport dependency in Aberdeenshire due to the high level of car ownership.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the context for the Aberdeenshire Bus Information Strategy, in order to ensure that it reflects the diversity of local needs and specific requirements of the area.

2.2 Car Ownership

According to the 2001 Census, car ownership is extremely high in Aberdeenshire. Only 17.9% of households in Aberdeenshire do not have access to a car or van. This is the lowest percentage of any local authority in Scotland, with the average for Scotland as a whole being 34.3%.

High levels of car ownership and access to a car compared to the national average

This pattern can be seen in practically the entire area: only three postcode sectors within Aberdeenshire have a higher percentage than the national average for a lack of car access.

Low level of public transport dependency

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the pattern of 'no car access' across the six administrative areas in Aberdeenshire. As can be seen here, postcode sectors in the South West and the very North of Aberdeenshire have the highest percentages of households without access to a car.

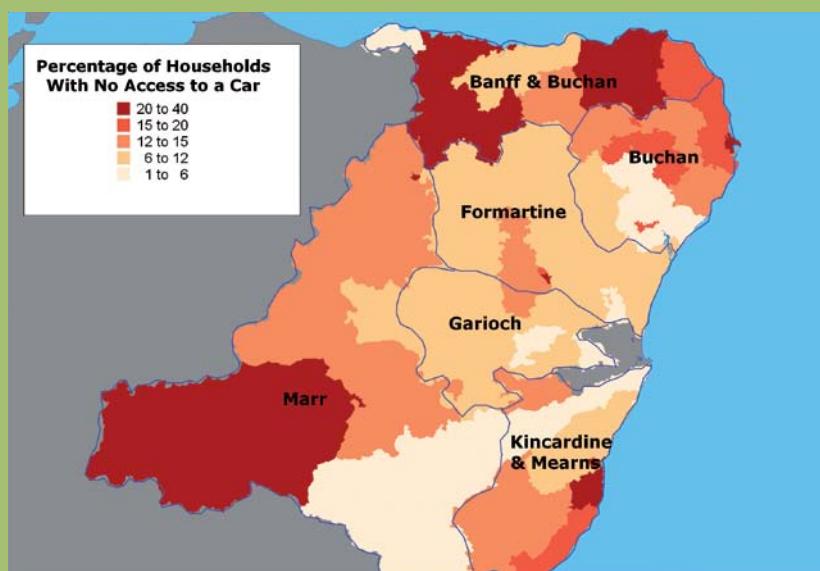


Figure 2.1 Percentage of Households with no Access to Car

Aberdeenshire also has the highest percentage of households with access to two or more cars of any local authority – the figure here is 37.3%, compared to a Scottish average of 22.4%. Only six of the 56 postcode sectors in the Aberdeenshire Council area have a lower percentage than the national average for access to two or more cars.

Potentially many households have no knowledge of public transport provision

Figure 2.2 shows patterns of ownership of 'two or more cars' across Aberdeenshire. Unsurprisingly, the South West and far North areas also have fewest households with access to two or more cars.

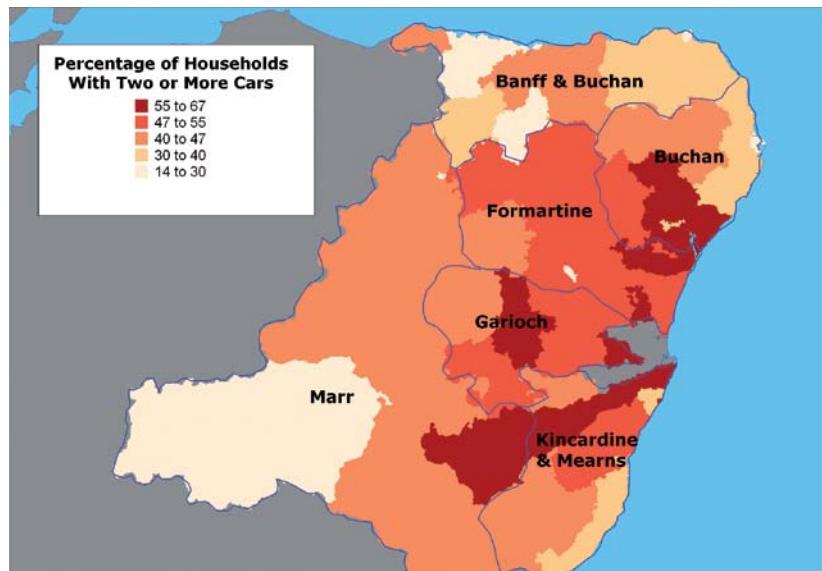


Figure 2.2 Percentage of Households with Two or More Cars

2.3 Travel to Work by Car

High level of car use for work trips – higher than the national average

This high level of car ownership is reflected in the Census data relating to how people travel to work. In Aberdeenshire, 66.7% of people travel to work or education by car (as either a driver or a passenger). This is the fifth highest figure across all local authorities: the average across Scotland is 59.1%.

Only four postcode sectors in Aberdeenshire have a lower percentage than the Scottish average. The lowest percentage is 44%; the highest is 83.3%.

“...existing bus users make up a very small proportion of the population.”

Figure 2.3 below shows the areas where most people drive to work. There seems to be a split between the East and West of Aberdeenshire here: areas down the East side of the authority have higher percentages of employed people travelling to work by car, while the lowest percentages are seen down the Western side of Aberdeenshire.

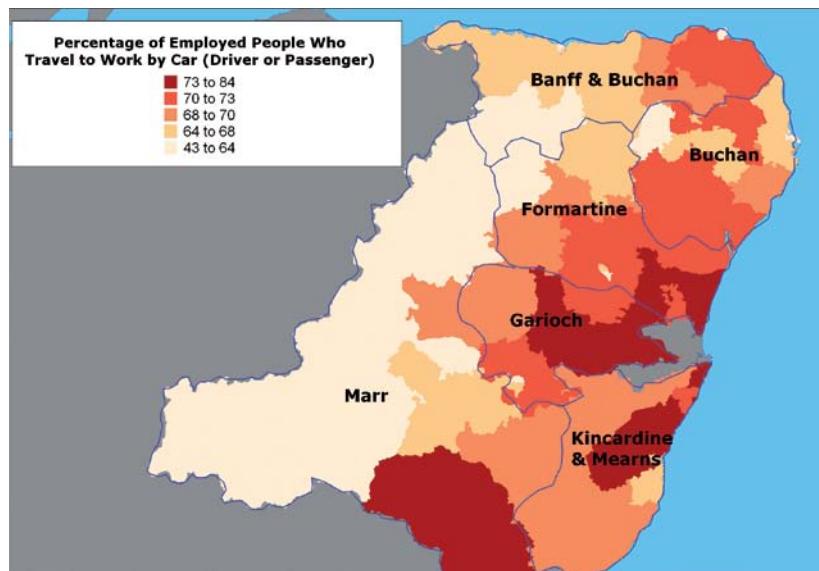


Figure 2.3 Percentage of Employed People who Travel to Work by Car

2.4 Travel to Work by Bus

Very low level of travel to work by bus – lower than the national average

Many public transport users have a choice

Only 6.9% of people in Aberdeenshire travel to work by bus: this is the seventh lowest percentage across all Scottish local authorities (the average figure is 14%).

All 56 postcode sectors in Aberdeenshire have a lower percentage than the Scottish average, the lowest being 2.4%. This can be seen in Figure 2.4 below. As the map shows, there is a higher concentration of people travelling to work by bus in the North East corner of Aberdeenshire; and the lowest percentages can be seen in central and South Aberdeenshire.

Interestingly however, 84.4% of public transport users in Aberdeenshire live in households with access to a car. This is higher than the Scottish average (63.2%) and is the fourth highest of all local authorities.

“...residents of households without access to a car depend on public transport.”

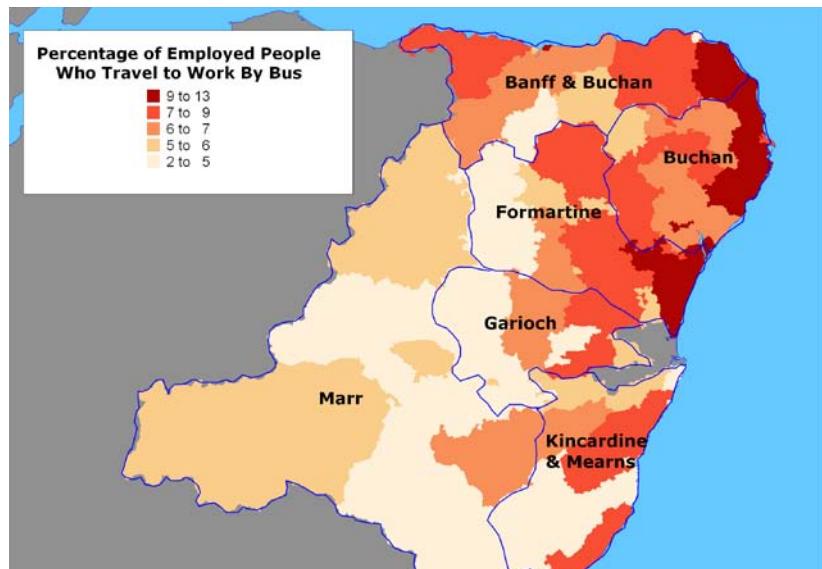


Figure 2.4 Percentage of Employed People who Travel to Work by Bus

2.5 Work From Home

Aberdeenshire - in common with all the rural authorities where agriculture is a significant employer - has a high percentage of employed adults working from or at home: the figure here is 8%, compared to a Scottish average of 6%.

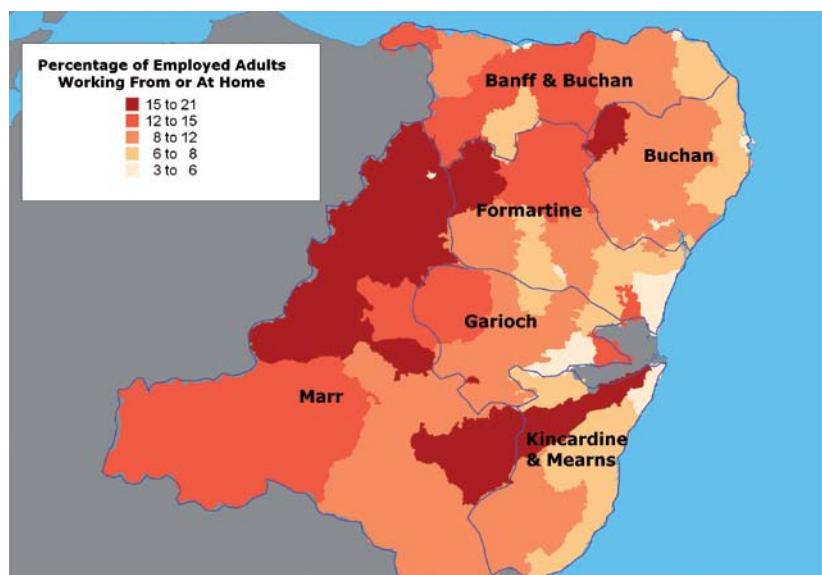


Figure 2.5 Percentage of Employed Adults Working From Home or at Home

The reasons behind the low level of travelling to work by public transport or even driving to work in western Aberdeenshire can be explained by the high percentage of adults working from home or at home in these areas. The transport needs of these people are therefore very different to those in other groups.

Less likely to be familiar with the public transport network

2.6 Age

Aberdeenshire has quite a young population. The 2001 Census found that 10% of residents in Aberdeenshire are aged 70 or over which is the third lowest figure for local authorities in Scotland. 63% of the population in Aberdeenshire are of working age (18-65) – this compares with a Scottish average of 63.4%.

Young population tend be technology focused

2.7 General Public Transport Trends and Patronage

Public transport patronage has been growing in the last decade. Relevant figures include:

- set against a base of 2001/02, Aberdeenshire Local supported service patronage has grown by 26% by 2007/08 ($798,000 > 1,005,160$);
- Stagecoach patronage has seen a 28% uplift from 2001/02 to 2008/09 ($6,121,674 > 7,836,049$); and
- an estimated bus patronage growth in Aberdeenshire in 2008/09 of 3.9%.

2.8 Conclusions

There is a low level of public transport dependency in Aberdeenshire due to the current high level of car ownership. However, Council policy is to increase the role of public transport and information will have an important role to play in achieving this, since car users will demand high-quality information if they are to be tempted away from their cars.

There are likely to be many people in Aberdeenshire with no knowledge of the availability and quality of the local public transport, since many households have two or more cars and are therefore likely to be at best infrequent public transport users. Therefore the existence, quality, convenience and cost of bus services should be promoted in appropriate places to attract potential users with these characteristics.

Although the existing public transport market is very small with very few regular users, the competitiveness of bus services should be marketed to attract these users most of whom have access to a car. Therefore, information needs to draw out the competitive advantages of the bus where these are relevant.

Aberdeenshire has a relatively young population compared to the national average. They may therefore have a higher propensity to use technology, which can be potentially useful for disseminating information and promoting public transport.

Although it is important to retain existing users, the bus information strategy should also serve non-users in order to grow public transport use which would benefit bus operators and help to achieve the Council's policy objectives.

The Council recognises that these two groups may have different information needs. Therefore this strategy will ensure that these needs are addressed and fulfilled in co-operation with the bus operators and other public transport information providers.



FROM: LONDON HAVEN
INTERCHANGE - BARCLAY
STREET / VINE GARDEN
HOLBURN JUNCTION

How Is Bus Information Used?

“Printed information at the bus stop remains the first source of info passengers seek, but this is now much more closely followed by internet and then telephone.”

3.1 Introduction

To produce a comprehensive and effective strategy for bus information, we first need to understand how it is used by the customer.

Information is used to plan and then make a journey. It is required in different formats and with different content before, during and sometimes after a journey is made. At each stage, the content and means of presentation should change according to how/why the information is used.

3.2 Before the Journey

Before the journey is made, information is needed:

- **to decide** how to make the journey by comparing suitability and availability of bus, train and other types of public transport (community transport, dial-a-bus, etc);
- **to compare** alternative times and routes for all modes provided by various operators;

- **to find** out how much the journey will cost and what fare options are available for all routes and modes;
- **to find** out when/where to start and end the journey and the time it is likely to take;
- **to locate** stops and/or interchanges required for the journey; and
- **to find out** other relevant information. For example, if it is possible to take luggage, or (for the mobility impaired) to board vehicles without assistance.

3.3 During the Journey

During the journey, information is needed:

- **for reassurance** that the journey is taking place as planned (eg is the bus running on time, going to where it should be going); and
- **to check/remind** the route planned is followed and especially, if required/relevant, where to interchange.

3.4 After the Journey

After the journey, information is needed:

- **to locate** the final destination;
- **to plan** a return journey;
- **to tell others/share experience** so that others can be informed about the positive or negative side of the journey made;
- **to check** that there was nothing better than the journey experienced between the places travelled so that it can be repeated with the comfort of reassurance; and
- **to make a complaint** or praise the experience or to find lost property.

3.5 Input to the Information Strategy

The Bus Information Strategy therefore addresses all of the information requirements highlighted above in order to provide a consistent interface for both journey preparation and journey execution, for not only the existing, but also the potential user.



What Information Should Be Provided?

“Can I make the journey by public transport at the time I want?”

4.1 Introduction

Different types of information - about the network, the individual services and also the 'access' points to the services - are needed at different stages of the journey including before, during and sometimes after a journey is made.

Here we set out what information is required at each of these stages.

4.2 Before the Journey is Made

The key questions which need to be answered before anyone commits to using public transport for a specific journey are:

- can I make the journey by public transport – at the time I want to, and in a journey time that is acceptable?
- where and at what precise times do I start and finish the journey – and how far do I have to walk/cycle/take a car or taxi to get to the starting point?
- how do I recognise/find the starting point, if required, the interchange point and then the bus I am taking? and
- how much will it cost, and how do I pay?

To answer these questions requires information, including:

Service Descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to decide the suitability and availability of services for a particular journey;• to find out where to start and end the journey; and• to locate stops and/or interchanges required for the journey.
Timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to compare alternative times and routes for all modes and the time it is likely to take; and• to find the precise times for a particular journey.
Fares and Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to find out how much the journey will cost and what fare options are available for all routes and modes; and• to find out other relevant information.
Information About the Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the operator, appearance of the bus, etc; and• the bus stop, including what to do if there is no stop.

There is also a need to provide advanced warning of planned and unplanned alterations (eg temporary diversions due to road works, public holiday service changes, service disruptions because of adverse weather, etc) that might affect both existing and potential 'journey plans'.



“...Aberdeenshire Council holds information on all bus services provided in the authority area.”

4.3 During the Journey

Once a journey has started and the passenger has left the starting point (eg home or work) – the questions which must be answered include:

- have I found the correct boarding point / bus stop?
- will the bus turn up? On time?
- is this the correct bus?
- will I get to the end of the journey when I expect to?
- will any connection wait for me?
- am I nearly there (so I can prepare to get off)? and
- have I arrived?

The information needed to answer these questions includes:

- an easily identifiable stop – preferably with a name and showing service numbers;
- is it a reliable service or can information on its punctuality be accessed;
- a bus which is clearly identified as belonging to the expected operator, and has a readable service number and destination display; and
- information on the progress of the journey (where needed) – which might be an internal display or an announcement.



4.4 At the End of the Journey

As the passenger leaves the bus, either at the end of the journey or at an interchange point, there may still be questions, including:

- where is the connection? Is it on time? Have I missed it, and if so, what do I do?
- where am I – in relation to my intended destination? How do I get there?
- where do I come back from? and
- how do I contact the bus company – for left luggage, or to complain?

The information needed to answer these questions includes:

- the same 'at stop' information as is needed at the start of the journey;
- a 'plan' of any interchange to help locate the next boarding point;
- a map of the locality; and
- contact details for the bus company and any statutory bodies.

4.5 Input to the Information Strategy

This Bus Information Strategy has therefore been developed to make sure that items of information discussed above will be available:

- where it is necessary and cost effective to provide them;
- in formats which can be understood and used by potential and existing passengers; and
- in ways which are easy to keep up-to-date.

BANFF



INTERCHANGE

Low Street



Bus Stop

211	212	213	300
301	302	305	405
442	443		

Traveline
0871 100 1234
www.traveline.org.uk
Text: 29924382
To: 977160014000

Where Should Information Be Provided?

Many residents are not regular Public Transport users, therefore do not see information at bus stops.

5.1 Overall Approach

In the previous chapter we described information needs in terms of the stages of a journey. In order to determine an appropriate strategy, these information requirements need to be tied to specific locations. The table below sets out the framework for achieving this.

Table 5.1 Where Information Should be Provided

Where the information is needed	What type of information (Chapter 4)	Why information is needed
In the home, at the workplace and at other places attended by passengers	Information Before the Journey	Many residents are not regular public transport users, therefore they do not see information at stops and on buses. It enables people to compare public transport and other options on a long-term basis and to know what is available on a day-to-day basis.
On-person information (eg carried in pocket/bag)	Information Before the Journey	Enables the bus user to make instant journey decisions (on routes, times, fares etc) and reduces inconvenient walking time to access services.
	Information During the Journey	Enables bus users to minimise the impact of changes to the plan.
On-site: bus stops and interchanges	Information Before the Journey	Can give regular passengers information on short/long-term changes to the plan.
	Information During the Journey	Enables the passenger to confirm waiting (for buses and interchanges) and journey times, as well as 'promoting' other places that they can go.
On-bus (in transit)	Information During the Journey	It reassures passengers on the journey progress, and informs of stops/interchanges they may require to use.
	End of Journey Information	
At the end of the journey	End of Journey Information	Enables passengers to locate their final destination on arrival.



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SPECIAL

TRIP BUS SERVICE FOR KINCARDINE & DEESIDE



How Should Information Be Provided?

Access to information is as important as the quality and content of bus information.

6.1 Introduction

There are three main ways of disseminating bus information which are:

- printed materials including individual leaflets with information on services, routes, times and facilities, maps, special service leaflets, etc;
- electronic media including phone (voice or text) and web (internet); and
- 'real time' information.

Information can be in the form of either text or graphics or a combination of both. The type of information that can be provided by different media and their suitability to provide text and graphical-based information is summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Information Media

Media to be Used	Text	Graphic
Print	●●●	●●
Electronic – sound	●	
Electronic - visual	●●	●●●

● = degree of suitability

Existing and potential users' needs may differ from one another. Information can not only target a general population, but also be tailored to target specific groups. These can vary from an individual potential user to a 'class' of users (eg pensioners, school children, mobility or visually impaired). Table 6.2 summarises the suitability of different media in providing general or tailored information.

Table 6.2 Information Uses

Media to be Used	General	Tailored
Print	●●	●
Electronic – sound		●●
Electronic - visual	●	●●●

● = degree of suitability

Access to bus information is very important. Printed materials can be distributed widely to households, work places and other destinations, such as schools, libraries and hospitals. They can also be obtained from travel enquiry offices, interchanges and tourist information offices. Printed information can be static when provided at bus stops and interchanges or can be made easier to carry in the form of pocket-size timetable leaflets or books and area maps.

Although electronic media (phone and internet) are relatively more suitable to provide tailored bus information, they are still not as accessible as printed information due to the lower proportion of households' and individuals' access to phone (particularly mobile phones) and the internet. However, in recent years access to electronic media has been increasing. For example, in the last ten years,

the percentage of households with internet access and mobile phones has risen substantially. This trend is expected to continue as handsets and associated data communication costs become more affordable.



Table 6.3 Access to Information by Different Media

	Static	Mobile
Print	● ● ●	● ● ●
Electronic – sound (phone)	● ●	● ●
Electronic – visual (internet)	● ●	●
Text messaging - SMS		● ●

● = degree of suitability

6.2 'Real Time' Information

'Real time' information provides up-to-date bus arrival information for passengers who are waiting at bus stops or at other relevant locations (eg shopping centres) where users may want to access reliable information about actual operations. They display the number of minutes that passengers can expect to wait before the arrival of a bus. On-board the bus, 'real time' information can be used to display and/or announce the next stop. This can be particularly useful for passengers who are unfamiliar with a particular route. As such, 'real time' displays can be used to provide travel information at the start of, and during, journeys.

The greatest numbers of passengers likely to benefit from 'real time' information are those at well-used bus stops, such as those in town centres or at transport interchanges. However, the greatest individual benefit is likely to occur for users of low frequency service, where waiting times are considerably longer, such as those services in rural areas. The strategy will need to take this conflict into account.

'Real time' information is particularly valuable in providing reassurance – confirming that passengers are at the right bus stop, that a bus is on its way, and how long they have to wait. Therefore, as well as giving information, the system can significantly increase the perceived quality of service on offer and enhance feelings of security in using the system. This can be particularly valuable



where journeys involve an interchange – providing reassurance at the interchange point that all is proceeding according to plan.

'Real time' information can also be provided through other electronic means, including mobile phone and internet. This can both reduce the cost of providing "at-stop" equipment (especially at quieter locations) and increase the reach of the information into passengers' homes, workplaces, etc.



At Whom Should Information Be Targeted?

Existing bus users and potential users have different information needs.

7.1 Introduction

The strategy has been developed to reflect both existing information provision arrangements used in Aberdeenshire and also to facilitate better means of ensuring that existing and potential users have access to the information that meets their specific needs.

7.2 Satisfaction with Current Information Provision

The most recent Aberdeenshire Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (2009), which encompassed all areas of Aberdeenshire and included 4,133 surveys, shows that 75% (increases to 81%, when excluding 'Don't Know' responses) of Aberdeenshire residents and 83% of bus passengers are very or fairly satisfied with the ease of finding out about routes and times in comparison to 80% of overall Scottish population (Scottish Household Survey 2005-06).

65% of Aberdeenshire residents (79% when excluding 'Don't Know' responses) and 81% of bus passengers are very or fairly satisfied with the bus stop information in Aberdeenshire in comparison to 70% of

respondents in the DfT's Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (2007-08) for non-metropolitan areas in the UK.

78% of Aberdeenshire residents and 82% of bus users are very or fairly satisfied with the on-bus information in Aberdeenshire in comparison to 85% of respondents in the DfT's Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (2007-08) for non-metropolitan areas in the UK.

7.3 Existing Users

Existing users on the whole understand and know when the buses that they use run and how much they cost. Therefore, existing users' information requirements centre upon:

- day-to-day variants relating to regular services; and
- full information for other services.

7.4 Potential Users

Potential users generally have far lower awareness of what services are available, when they run or how much they cost. Their requirements therefore are far more substantial and include:

- information that will persuade them to use public transport;

- making the journey as simple as possible; and
- provision of all the necessary information in one place.

7.5 Conclusions

Overall, existing bus users have high levels of satisfaction with the bus stop and on-bus information in Aberdeenshire, compared to Scottish and UK satisfaction levels. It is recognised that more effort is needed to target potential users. Therefore, the strategy focuses on improving bus information that reaches these potential users as well as maintaining the high level of satisfaction there is amongst current bus users.

It is recognised that due to high car ownership (82.1% of households have access to a car in Aberdeenshire), many potential users have a choice and persuading them to use buses will not be easy. As such, the provision of high-quality information targeted at encouraging non-bus users to make more use of buses is a key component of the strategy.



A Bus Stop

105 201 204 410

PB74



What Information is Currently Provided?

There are over 1000 bus stop timetable displays throughout the authority area.

8.1 Introduction

In this section, the existing public transport information provision within Aberdeenshire has been reviewed to establish a baseline for the strategy. This has taken into consideration the quality and availability of information to existing and potential users before, during and after they made the journey.

8.2 Area-Wide Maps

Aberdeenshire Council, in partnership with Stagecoach Bluebird and Moray Council produces an area wide public transport map and guide. This includes details of all rail links, commercial bus services, 'Aberdeenshire Local' supported services and those bus services supported by Moray Council. It shows services between the majority of towns and villages within Aberdeenshire and Moray (and to/from Aberdeen), with an index indicating the route followed and the days of operation. There are also more-detailed service maps of the major town centres. A variety of places of interest throughout Aberdeenshire are marked on the map as well.

The guide contains references to the Traveline Scotland enquiry number and website, as well as the Stagecoach enquiry offices and major bus stations in the area.

The Passenger Transport Information section of the guide gives the contact details of the general enquiry services for both Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils. It also provides the phone enquiry details of the relevant bus, coach and rail service providers, and details of the Visit Scotland main tourist information offices. Information on the 'Aberdeenshire A2B dial-a-bus' services is also included within the guide.

8.3 Timetables and Scheduled Alterations

The majority of timetable leaflets for 'Aberdeenshire Local' supported services are produced by the Council, in a consistent style and format. In addition to the service number and timetable information, they include a schematic route representation, and contact details of the service provider and Traveline Scotland. They also include the 'Aberdeenshire Local' logo.

Every endeavour is made to publicise changes to timetables and services at least 21 days in advance of the date of implementation.

Stagecoach Bluebird also provides individual and 'service group' timetable leaflets of its commercial services. Where a number of journeys on a predominantly commercial service are supported by the Council, these departures are included in the leaflet, irrespective of the service provider.

Three other operators provide commercial services: Bain's Coaches; Deveron Coaches; and Nicoll Coach Hire. Their services are currently publicised through timetable leaflets produced by the Council in a similar format to those for 'Aberdeenshire Local' supported services.

8.4 DRT and Community Transport

A number of leaflets are available for a range of other public transport and community transport services in the Aberdeenshire area. These include demand responsive services such as 'Aberdeenshire A2B dial-a-bus' services, the '65 Special' and community buses, as well as other services provided or supported by the Council.

These leaflets include information about service description, who qualifies for the services, how the services are booked/used, timetable and route (if relevant), and cost. In the case of 'Aberdeenshire A2B dial-a-bus' services, a distinctive brand image is maintained across all publicity material and vehicle liveries.

8.5 Travellers With Disabilities

The Council produces a comprehensive public transport information pack entitled 'Helping People with Disabilities to use Public Transport'. The pack contains a range of leaflets which provide information on community transport schemes, and amongst other services the Aberdeenshire TaxiCard scheme and the Scottish Blind Persons Scheme.

8.6 Bus Stops

The Council has over 1,000 bus stop timetable displays throughout the authority area, at bus stops and in bus shelters. Typically these cases are located at interchange (on-street) stops where many bus services (and bus operators) converge and at principal boarding stops. The information in these display cases is provided and maintained by the Council. In 2008/09, 97% of the bus stops equipped with timetable cases displayed up-to-date and comprehensive information.

A Quality Partnership initiative has, in consultation with Stagecoach Bluebird, resulted in an improved design for 'at-bus stop' information and a rolling programme of bus stop flag replacement. As of January 2010, 78% of stops are equipped with the revised bus stop flag, which includes a location name, Traveline Scotland logo and contact details along with a unique txt2traveline reference code and SMS text number.

Aberdeenshire Council and Stagecoach Bluebird also have a long-standing agreement whereby they co-fund two local authority Publicity Assistants. The principal duties of the Publicity Assistants include the installation, maintenance and monitoring of all roadside public transport information.

8.7 Interchanges

At 24 key 'on-street' locations on the Aberdeenshire bus network, the Council has developed dedicated interchange facilities, where passengers can transfer between mainline corridor services and feeder, town and/or cross-country services. These locations are marketed under the banner of 'Aberdeenshire Interchange'.

At these locations, there is enhanced information provision and the opportunity is being taken to progressively introduce 'Aberdeenshire Connect', a voluntary multi-operator through-ticketing arrangement. This will require expansion of the information available to users, primarily in advance of the journey, in order to ensure awareness of both the journey opportunities and the fares available.

At 19 of the 'Aberdeenshire Interchange' locations, interactive passenger information terminals have been installed providing journey planning facilities. 'Real time' information may also be particularly valuable at these locations.

In addition to enhanced information at the 'Aberdeenshire Interchange' points, the interchange opportunities are also promoted through six corridor-based information leaflets which include schematic details of the location of the interchange points, lists of relevant mainline and connecting bus services, places of interest and contact details Traveline Scotland and Transport Direct.

“...Traveline is a system that is already highly advanced, providing excellent up to date information.”

8.8 On-bus

Most buses use an electronic blind to display service number and destination on the front of the vehicle. Very few buses carry timetable leaflets or other printed information on-board for passengers to pick up, while on-bus notices are used to inform passenger of forthcoming service changes.

8.9 Traveline Scotland

Aberdeenshire Council is a member of the national travel timetable information service, Traveline Scotland, and provides bus service data for the national service on behalf of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils. In addition to providing a telephone enquiry service for the public, Traveline Scotland also operates a website which provides information on any public transport journey within Scotland and from Scotland to main points in the UK. It aims to provide accurate, up-to-date and impartial timetable information to get passengers to their destination by all available public transport services.

Traveline Scotland also operates a SMS-based service – txt2traveline. Customers with mobile phones can request bus timetable information any time, any place, simply by texting the number of the bus stop they want to travel from to the txt2traveline number – 0777 608 2 608. They then receive back the departure times and service numbers of the next few buses due at that stop. All Aberdeenshire bus stops are geo-coded and numbered for this service.

The Council has produced a leaflet which explains how to use the txt2traveline service. On the back of the leaflet, space is provided for the user to note down the codes of their 15 most frequently used bus stops.

In addition to Traveline Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council also provides information via their local Council offices and phone enquiry line. Individual bus operators also operate telephone enquiry lines to provide information on their bus services.

Figure 8.1 Traveline Scotland Journey Planner

8.10 Transport Direct Portal

The UK Government has sponsored the development of Transport Direct, a web-based journey planner which covers both car and public transport journeys. This covers the whole of the UK and allows 'door to door' journey planning, with direct comparisons between private and public transport for the same journey.

The screenshot shows the Transport Direct website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Homepage', 'Plan a journey', 'Find a place', 'Live travel', 'Tips and tools', 'Login / Register', 'Printer friendly', and 'Help'. Below the navigation is a search bar with 'New search' and 'Amend' buttons. The main content area displays a table of 'Outward journeys' for Tuesday, 09 Mar 10, leaving after 11:30. The table includes columns for Option, Transport, Changes, Leave, Arrive, Duration, and a 'Select' column. Five options are listed: 1 Bus (1 hour, 21 mins), 2 Bus (1 hour, 26 mins), 3 Bus (1 hour, 21 mins), 4 Bus (1 hour, 21 mins), and 5 Car (1 hour, 06 mins / 32.2 miles). Below the table, a detailed map shows a bus route from 'Aboyne, Interchange Victory Hall (A93 N Side 80m East of Charlestown Rd) (on A93) [SMS : 23623498]' to 'Aberdeen, St Nicholas Church (41m East of Back Wynd) (on Union Street) [SMS : 23234678]'. The map indicates a departure at 11:52 and an arrival at 13:13, with a note to 'Take Stagecoach Bluebird/201 towards Aberdeen'. On the left side of the page, there's a sidebar with 'Related links' including social bookmarking sites like Facebook, Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon, Delicious, LinkedIn, and Email. At the bottom, there's a notes section with information about accessibility, changes, returns, and travel dates, along with buttons for 'Amend date and time', 'Save as a favourite journey', and 'Send to a friend'.

Figure 8.2 Transport Direct Website



8.11 Aberdeenshire Council Website

The Council provides public transport information on their website which can be accessed at <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/public-transport/>. The sections which are included on the website are:

- public transport news;
- information on proposed and recent service changes;
- timetable information;
- journey planner;
- information on area bus forums;
- information on main corridors and interchange points;
- txt2traveline information;
- school transport;
- 'A2B dial-a-bus' demand responsive transport;
- park and ride;
- fares and ticketing;
- public transport interactive guide;
- community transport;
- concessionary travel;
- policies and contracts including information on the Quality Partnership for Public Transport; and
- information on Minibuses and MiDAS.

The screenshot shows the Aberdeenshire Council website's Public Transport page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Search, Help, Contact Us, Legal Notices, and Accessibility. Below that is a banner for 'Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea the very best of Scotland' and the Aberdeenshire Council logo. The main content area has a sidebar with a 'A to Z Index' and a 'Public Transport' section. The main content includes sections for 'Park and Ride' (with a link to Ellon and Stonehaven), 'Service Changes' (with a note about recent revisions), 'Bus Timetables' (with search fields for interchange, service number, and keyword), and 'Latest Transport News' (with links to news items like 'Aberdeenshire Council wins Scottish Transport Local Authority of the Year again!'). There are also 'Related Info' and 'External Links' sections.

Figure 8.3 Aberdeenshire Council Website

The Council's website also provides external links to Stagecoach, First, Moray Council and Traveline Scotland websites.

Further details of the information available in each of the website sections are provided below.

Transport News

This section details revisions to local bus services and provides transport-related press releases.

Service Changes

This section lists the proposed and recently revised local bus service timetables.

Timetables

Full timetable information for all services operating in

Aberdeenshire is available. Users can search for a timetable by interchange, service number, keyword, or browse 'A2B dial-a-bus' services. There is then a summary page for each service with a downloadable timetable. Users can also browse for service changes, list of interchanges, list of services and how to travel to/from Woodhill House.

Journey Planner

This section provides information on how to use the Council's Journey Planner, an interactive journey planning facility for travel within and beyond Aberdeenshire and which is available through terminals located at bus interchange points throughout Aberdeenshire and at Union Square bus station in Aberdeen City.



The Journey Planner provides information on 'next' or 'later' bus services, and alternative bus, coach and train services that are available for travel between all origin and destinations. It also provides the option of a printout of the information requested.

Step-by-step instructions on how to use the service is also provided.

Area Bus Forums

Area Bus Forums were established in 2000 in each of Aberdeenshire Council's six administrative areas to act as the principal focus for consultation on public transport matters.

This section of the website provides information on the forums, and includes venues and dates of forthcoming meetings. Contact details are also provided if further information is desired.

Main Corridors and Interchange Points

This section lists and provides links to information on the 27 principal bus interchange locations across Aberdeenshire. It also provides an interactive map where further information on facilities and services can be accessed by clicking on the relevant town of interest. It also provides six mainline corridor leaflets that are available for download, along with contact details of the Public Transport Unit where hard copies of these corridor leaflets can be obtained, as well as a leaflet providing information on onward travel within Aberdeen.

txt2traveline

txt2traveline is mobile phone texting service which allows travellers to get bus departure times sent to their mobile for any bus stop of their choice. All Aberdeenshire bus stops are included in the txt2traveline service. This section of the website provides information on how to use this service and its cost.

School Transport

This section provides background information on free and fare paying privilege school transport, as well as guidance material to parents and pupils. Timetables for local bus services which operate to/from schools across Aberdeenshire are available through the timetable section.

Links are also provided in this section to web pages on Free School Transport and School Travel Plans.

Sub-sections are also included, providing information on:

- safety of pupils;
- adverse weather; and
- monitoring of school transport, including how to provide feedback.



'A2B dial-a-bus' Demand Responsive Transport

'A2B dial-a-bus' is a demand responsive door-to-door service introduced by Aberdeenshire Council in 2004.

This section provides details of service areas, operating times, and fares. It also outlines the booking procedure for the 'A2B dial-a-bus' services.

Park and Ride

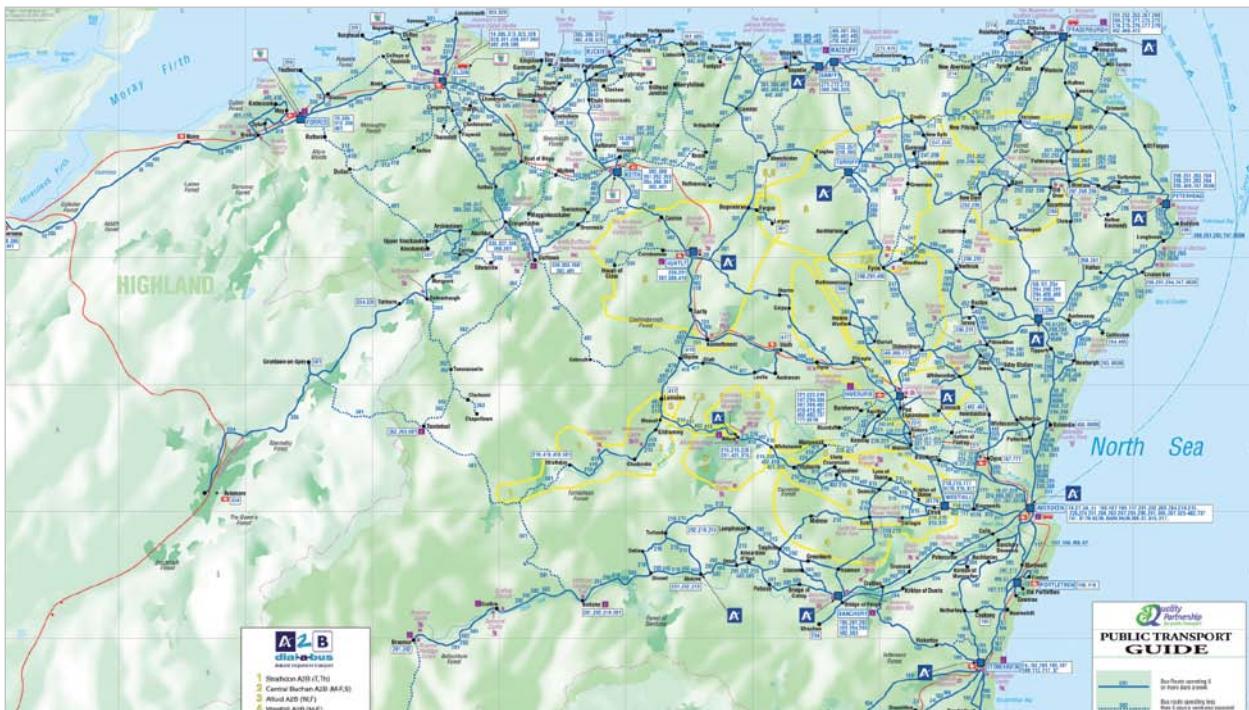
This section includes general information on Ellon Park and Ride, including service timetables, passenger facilities and fare information. It also provides information on park and ride opportunities from rail stations in Aberdeenshire.

Fares and Ticketing

This section of the website provides guidance on the responsibilities for setting fares on commercial and supported services, along with information on the ticket types available on 'Aberdeenshire Local' supported services.

The section also provides information on the 'Aberdeenshire Connect' multi-operator through ticketing arrangement, including details of existing and proposed interchange points where 'Aberdeenshire Connect' tickets are/will be valid for travel for through-journeys from a connecting service onto a mainline service, and vice versa. Details of the relevant connecting and mainline services are also given.

Figure 8.4 Clickable Area



Aberdeenshire map

Public Transport Interactive Guide

This section of the website comprises an interactive guide based on the conventional Public Transport Guide that is produced by Aberdeenshire Council in partnership with Stagecoach Bluebird and Moray Council.

The interactive guide includes a cartographical representation of all rail links, commercial local bus services, 'Aberdeenshire Local' supported services and those bus services supported by Moray Council, which can be used to identify and download timetable information for a specific service by way of clickable maps leading to detailed bus route information and timetables.

Community Transport

In this section of the website the Council provides advice for Community Transport groups and advertises training available to them. Information on the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Forum is also provided, along with details of the services and activities of all Community Transport groups in Aberdeenshire.

Concessionary Travel

Aberdeenshire Council recognises the special travel needs of certain population subgroups, including older people and persons with disabilities.

This section includes links to information on:

- Scotland-wide free bus travel;
- Aberdeenshire Council TaxiCard Scheme; and
- Scottish Blind Persons Travel Scheme.

Policies and Contracts

This section presents the Council's public transport policy objectives as set in the Local Transport Strategy and includes information on the Quality Partnership for Public Transport. The Council's Public Transport Policy Statement and information on public transport and school transport contract awards are also provided.

Minibuses and MiDAS

In this section of the Council's website, guidance is provided for anyone intending to drive an Aberdeenshire Council minibus, including details of legislative requirements, Council policies and links through to information on the Community Transport Association's MiDAS minibus driver training and assessment scheme..

Local Operators

Local bus information is also available on the internet through the websites of bus operators like First and Stagecoach. They provide information specific to the services that they operate.

The information available from First includes:

- interactive and printable route maps;
- a journey planner;
- timetables;
- fares and ticketing details; and
- travel news.

Stagecoach also makes information available including:

- timetables;
- fares and ticketing arrangements;
- service information including changes to routes; and
- other news.

8.12 Aberdeenshire Journey Planner

Aberdeenshire Journey Planners are touch-screen facilities which provide comprehensive, up-to-date information on all local bus, coach and rail services to/from and throughout Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen and Moray.

Machines are easy to use and, by following the on-screen instructions, the best public transport options for the requested journey are returned and can then be printed out.

The Journey Planner kiosks are free to use, and are installed at 19 on-street 'Aberdeenshire Interchange' locations, along with Peterhead Interchange, Fraserburgh Bus Station and Ellon Park and Ride. Three other kiosks are located at the two principal Council Offices, Woodhill House and Gordon House, and at Aberdeen Bus Station.

8.13 Enquiry Offices

Aberdeenshire Council provides public transport information including maps and individual timetable leaflets in local council offices throughout Aberdeenshire. Similar information sources are available at the three manned public transport facilities, Ellon Park and Ride and Peterhead Interchange operated by the Council and Fraserburgh Bus Station operated by Stagecoach Bluebird.

8.14 Conclusions

Table 8.1 summarises the information provision currently available to existing and potential users. In the light of information needs of different users reviewed in the previous chapters and current bus information provision set out in this chapter, the next chapter provides a strategy and framework for Aberdeenshire Council to provide bus information which will help to address these needs and which takes into consideration the baseline situation.

Table 8.1 Current Availability of Bus Information

Journey Stages	Passenger Activity	Info Source Printed timetables, leaflets, maps and guides	Info Source Timetable information at bus stop and interchanges	Info Source Telephone and SMS enquiry services	Info Source Travel enquiry offices	Info Source Web-based enquiry services	Info Source 'Real-time' information
Before Journey	Decision Walking Waiting	●	●	●	●	●	●
During Journey	On-bus travel	●		●			●
End of Journey	Walking Reviewing Decision	●	●		●		

Aberdeen

bird
reach



The Bus Information Strategy

The Bus Information Strategy places strong emphasis on partnership working.

9.1 Overall Approach

Aberdeenshire Council recognises that there are many ways in which information could be delivered more effectively than is currently the case. However, to achieve this would require expenditure that may not justify the results achieved. Therefore the Council has adopted a pragmatic approach that takes into account the following key issues:

- **the state of affairs at the moment:** what is already being done (by operators and authorities), and how best to incorporate or enhance this, rather than requiring something new;
- **the key short-term (0-2 years), medium-term (2-5 years) and long-term (5 + years) priorities:** identifying gaps in provision which are significant; and
- **economy, efficiency and effectiveness:** a careful balance to ensure that the costs of information provision that bus operators will be required to bear are realistic in relation to the benefits, and that any expenditure by the Council is effective in meeting the wider goals.

Aberdeenshire Council's approach also places strong emphasis on partnership working, given the belief that such an approach will bring added value and a more cost effective means of service delivery.

The rest of this chapter provides a framework under which existing and potential passengers can gain access to accurate information on bus services in order to allow them to make informed journey decisions. It contains details of what information needs to be provided and where this will be available. This links directly to information on how and when information should be available and the audience at which it is targeted.

9.2 Commitments

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to ensuring the following:

- continued support for Traveline Scotland and contribution of data;
- allocation of budgets for the production and distribution of timetable leaflets for supported services;
- the provision of better bus infrastructure, including high quality bus stops and shelters with timetable display cases;
- high standards in the display and maintenance of bus stop information and to attain or exceed the Scottish Government's recommended minimum standards for such information;
- broader improvements to bus services and bus information through Quality Partnership Initiatives;
- continued joint working within Nestrans on cross-boundary bus services and new technology;
- surveys to establish levels of passenger satisfaction with public transport service delivery, including information provision;
- greater availability of specific bus information for people with mobility impairment;

- access to information for each of the key stages of a bus journey;
- high standards from bus operators on timetable leaflets and other publicity material;
- high standards from operators on the distribution of printed material;
- the production of a comprehensive bus network map, on an annual basis;
- maintenance of an internet-based information service for general travel information;
- the provision of journey planning facilities at both appropriate locations and through the internet;
- bus operators join Traveline Scotland and investigation of appropriate systems to provide journey reassurance to passengers at appropriate points on the network;
- continuing to maintain NAPTAN bus stop coding for Traveline Scotland's SMS and other timetable information systems;
- investigating appropriate ways to present relevant ticketing information;
- the provision of appropriate corridor-based information highlighting interchange opportunities; and
- monitoring the implementation and the effects of the strategy.

Aberdeenshire Council is also committed to ensuring that bus information in Aberdeenshire:

- follows the requirements of the Scottish Government's guidance on information provision, as set out in 'Buses for Scotland - Progress through Partnership';
- has due regard to the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) report 'Valuable for Anyone, Valuable for Everyone';
- has due regard to the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Inclusive Mobility';
- has due regard to Association of Transport Coordinating Officers (ATCO) Public Transport Information Good Practice Guidance (February 2009); and
- complies with the Disability Discrimination Act, 2005.

Therefore, the standards set out in the remainder of chapter 9 are in addition to those defined above.

9.3 Timetable Leaflets

The table below sets out the required standards for all printed timetable publicity and also what is deemed necessary content.

	State	Priority	Score
Bus operators should provide printed timetable leaflets for each bus service operated on a commercial basis. Timetable leaflets may contain information on one individual bus service or a collection of bus services. Bus operators should provide timetable leaflets free of charge, except in exceptional circumstances.	✓	S	EEE
Timetable leaflets that are no longer current should not be given to the public. Bus operators should either recoup expired timetables from outlets, or inform them that the leaflets are no longer correct.	✓	S	
The Council and bus operators may produce area or corridor timetable booklets. Where bus operators produce such booklets, they may make a small charge for the booklet representing no more than the cost of producing the booklet.	●	M	EEE
Where changes are made to bus services that are featured in area or corridor timetable booklets, bus operators should produce addendum leaflets or booklets containing the updated information. Bus operators should produce these free of charge and distribute them to outlets.	●	M	EE
Timetables should be in conventional matrix format (for journey direction read downwards), unless agreed otherwise by the Council.	✓	S	
Reference must be made to Traveline Scotland including the txt2traveline and NextBuses services with relevant text and logos.	✓	M	EEE
Reference should be made to the availability of fares and ticketing information.	●	M	EEE
Reference should be made as to how complaints and comments about the service can be made, with contacts details, where applicable, for Passenger Views Scotland.	●	S	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

	State	Priority	Score
Leaflets must carry an 'effective from' or a 'start' date.	✓	S	EEE
Leaflets must alert passengers to dates on which services are likely to be affected by local holidays or school holidays. Particular attention must be paid to holiday information when leaflets are being reprinted as described above. The council should inform bus operators of school holidays no later than six months prior to the beginning of each school year.	✓	S	EEE
Wherever possible, codes/abbreviations used to identify standard variations (eg school days only) must be common to all timetables and also be accompanied by clear explanations.	●	S	EEE
All leaflets must indicate (by agreed logo) 'Aberdeenshire Interchange' and other interchange facilities and all formal Park and Ride opportunities.	▲	S	EEE
Timetables must show any sections of route which are non-stop or limited stop.	▲	S	EEE
Leaflets which indicate transfer to other services must indicate if through ticketing is available or not.	▲	M	EEE
Where certain journeys (or parts of journeys) on a predominantly commercial service are secured by the Council with a different operator, timetable leaflets for the service must include the times and other relevant details for these journeys.	▲	S	EEE
Where appropriate, a route description should be provided, as well as the route map or diagram.	✓	S	EEE
Operators should provide information on relevant DDA compliant vehicle operation. Assurances of accessibility to wheelchairs should only be given where relevant low-floor operation can be guaranteed.	▲	M	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

Distribution

Stockists (of all relevant timetables) should include:

- Aberdeenshire Council offices that are open to the public;
- further and higher educational establishments;
- bus stations;
- railway stations;
- park and ride sites;
- tourist information centres;
- public libraries (including mobile libraries);
- village shops and post offices;
- healthcare facilities (including hospitals, clinics and surgeries);
- job centres;
- Citizens Advice bureaux; and
- leisure centres.

In addition, the places outlined below should be supplied with a full reference set of timetables:

- Aberdeenshire Council offices that are open to the public;
- public libraries;
- Tourist Information Centres; and
- other agreed places.

Timetable leaflets must be with the distributor 10 days before 'start date' and with the stockists at least one week before.

Except operators who provide both start and end dates on all timetables, all other operators must provide a summary of their printed timetable information to Aberdeenshire Council at least twice a year. Dates should be agreed between the Council and operators. These summaries should indicate which local services are wheelchair-accessible and which can accommodate bicycles. They should also clearly indicate where through-ticketing or integrated ticketing is available.

Responsibilities

Operators will be responsible for the production of leaflets to the above standard and content and incorporate the necessary resource requirement into their business strategies.

Where an operator fails to produce a timetable to the above standard and content, Aberdeenshire Council will reserve the right to procure or produce in-house leaflets. All costs incurred in so doing will then be recovered from the operator.

Operators will be responsible for the distribution of relevant leaflets in accordance with the above requirements.

Where operators are unable to take on the distribution responsibilities outlined above, Aberdeenshire Council will co-ordinate and procure the required distribution on a rechargeable basis.

Aberdeenshire Council will make a proportionate contribution to the production of any leaflet which incorporates details of supported journeys.

9.4 Area and Network Maps

Area and Network Maps are very popular with bus users. They are particularly useful for visitors to the area or for new users of public transport. The following table describes the required content and standards for these maps.

	State	Priority	Score
All relevant services must be included, irrespective of operator, including demand responsive transport (DRT) services. Where possible, an indication of service frequencies (or times of operation in the case of DRT) must be provided.	✓	M	EE
All major interchange opportunities must be highlighted. Maps should refer to integration with other modes of transport, access to major destinations and provide details of cross-boundary services to/from Aberdeen City, Angus, Highland, Moray and Perth & Kinross, as appropriate.	✓	S	EEE
Maps must carry an 'effective from' or a 'start' date.	✓	S	EEE
Main visitor attractions, places of interest and public buildings should be clearly shown.	✓	L	E
Routes which have become established as offering wheel-chair-accessible vehicles and bicycle-carrying vehicles should be indicated.	▲	S	EEE
Park and ride opportunities should also be included, with an indication of the number of parking spaces available.	●	M	EEE
Contact details must be provided for each operator.	✓	S	EEE
Reference must be made to Traveline, including the txt2traveline and NextBuses services with relevant text and logos.	●	S	EEE
Information on how to make complaints or compliments must be given.	▲	S	EEE
Maps may carry advertisements, but these advertisements must not detract from the purpose of the map or influence the layout.		L	E

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

Responsibilities

Bus operators may produce bus network maps as part of their marketing strategy. However, the Council believes there is merit in the Council taking the lead in producing a comprehensive network map in conjunction with all operators in order to provide an overarching representation of the bus network in Aberdeenshire. Aberdeenshire Council holds all information on bus services provided by all bus operators operating in the authority area. It is clearly therefore in a position to promote the areas bus network as a whole to the public. Therefore, Aberdeenshire Council will continue to produce Area-Wide Network maps in association with Moray Council and Stagecoach Bluebird.

Aberdeenshire Council, in partnership with operators, will also produce corridor-specific network maps.

It is essential that maps contain composite and comprehensive information on all operators' services and Aberdeenshire Council may seek a partnership contribution from operators for their production and distribution.

The responsibility for co-ordination and procurement of these maps will rest with Aberdeenshire Council.

Aberdeenshire Council may seek a partnership contribution from operators for subsequent reprints, with the operators' contribution being based on the number of services detailed within the maps. Operators and the Council will have shared use of the maps and the associated electronic files for use with other promotional material.

In addition to these maps, operators can produce area and/or network maps that may only include their services.

The same distribution list and the qualities mentioned for Timetable Leaflets will apply to Area and Network Maps.

9.5 Service Alterations

It is essential to ensure information regarding changes to bus services is communicated effectively to users to avoid any inconvenience or anxiety. This table describes what actions should be taken when service alterations are scheduled.

	State	Priority	Score
Where appropriate the local Press must be used for advance notice of all significant scheduled changes (minimum notice required – one week). Changes due to emergencies do not apply.	▲	S	EEE
Local radio must be advised of all significant scheduled changes and emergency changes.	▲	S	EEE
Advance notice of temporary route diversions must be displayed at bus stops affected by the diversion, prior to the effective date and time.	✓	S	EEE
Traveline must be advised of all scheduled temporary changes (eg public holiday alterations) (minimum notice required – one week) and non-scheduled changes (as soon as possible).	●	S	EEE
All service changes should be publicised at least two weeks in advance of their implementation date on the Council's website	✓	S	EEE

Where changes are minor, the advanced notice of changes must include full details of the alterations. Where changes are more complex, passengers should be advised of which services are affected and where to obtain more details. Where services are changed at short notice, due to road closures or other unforeseen circumstances, the Council and operators will make every effort to notify affected users, but can not guarantee to meet the standards set out above.

Responsibilities

The provision of notification of planned changes/alterations should be as follows.

Aberdeenshire Council:

- Traveline Scotland notification;
- bus stop notifications; and
- internet publicity.

Bus operators:

- local radio and press; and
- on-bus notices.

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

9.6 Bus Stop Timetable Displays

Information at bus stops can be a prime source of information for bus users. The following table shows the minimum standards and content for roadside publicity.

	State	Priority	Score
Bus stop displays must be 'stop-specific' and display specific departure times for that stop.	✓	S	EEE
Displays must be composite and should be produced in colour.	✓	M	E
Graphical route representation should be included wherever practical, by means of a pearl bar.	✓	M	EE
Displays must carry an 'effective from' or a 'start' date.	✓	S	EEE
Displays should carry, where practical, information on ticketing opportunities.	▲	L	EE
All service departures from the stop must be displayed and for each service, reference should be made to the operator and its contact details.	✓	S	EEE
Bus stop displays should be updated for every registered service change and revised information should be displayed no earlier than three days before the date of implementation and in all cases by the day of the change.	✓	S	E
Reference must be made to the Quality Partnership for Public Transport by means of the partnership logo.	✓	S	EEE
All displays must include contact details of Aberdeenshire Council's, Public Transport Unit.	✓	S	EEE
Reference must be made to Traveline Scotland with logos.	✓	S	EEE
Reference should be made to how to make complaints and compliments.	▲	S	EEE
Information will be displayed at bus stops affected by planned disruptions to the service route, eg road works.	✓	S	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

Responsibilities

The Council reserves the right to decide what information is included in Council owned display cases. However, the Council will work in partnership with the operators in doing so.

Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that the information on static timetable displays is composite and comprehensive. Information on services operated by different companies will be displayed in an integrated and logical fashion.

The Council will co-ordinate the provision of comprehensive static timetable

displays in accordance with the above standards and may share the costs of doing so with the appropriate operators in a fair and equitable manner.

The Council will continue to meet the costs of providing, erecting and maintaining the information display cases. Provision of static stance information at bus stations will continue to be provided by the Council.

In providing and maintaining bus stop information, the Council will aim to ensure that, at all times, at least 95% of displays are up-to-date and contain comprehensive information of all service departures from the stop.

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

9.7 Interchange Information

It is accepted that information required at Interchange sites will be more complex than at regular bus stops. The next table describes additional information that should be provided at Interchange sites.

Content and Standards	State	Priority	Score
All interchanges, bus stations and Park and Ride sites should have clearly marked and consistent labelling of stops and/or stances.	✓	S	EEE
All interchanges, bus stations and Park and Ride sites should display a graphical description of the layout of stops and/or stances, where appropriate.	▲	S	EEE
All static timetable displays will refer to individual stop/stance labels.	✓	S	EEE
Where static or 'real time' electronic information displays are provided at interchanges, bus stations and Park and Ride sites, the departure information displayed must include reference to stop/stance labels	✓	S	EEE
Journey planning terminals will be installed and maintained at all bus stations, Park and Ride sites and key interchange points.	✓	S	EEE

Responsibilities

The Council will continue to meet the costs of providing, and maintaining information at Interchange sites.

9.8 Bus Stop Flags

The following table sets out the appropriate standards and content for information displayed on a bus stop flag.

	State	Priority	Score
A single bus stop flag complying with appropriate regulations will be fitted to all bus stops (including a point at the centre of each community/village where hail and ride applies).	✓	S	EEE
All bus stop flags should include a name. Bus stop names should be a generally known local name agreed with the bus operators and must be sustainable and reflect that lodged in the NAPTAN database.	●	L	EEE
Bus stop flags at key locations, including all designated 'Aberdeenshire Interchange' locations, should include service numbers.	✓	S	E
Bus stop flags should clearly display a unique bus stop reference code with Traveline Scotland's text2traveline phone number.	●	M	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| S | Short term |
| M | Medium term |
| L | Long term |

Score

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| E | Economic |
| E | Efficient |
| E | Effective |

Responsibilities

The Council will continue to meet the costs of providing, erecting and maintaining the bus stop flags.

The Council will co-ordinate the information provision in accordance with the above standards.

9.9 Real Time Passenger Information at Bus Stops

Although no Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system currently exists in Aberdeenshire, the following table describes how any such system should be displayed at bus stops.

	State	Priority	Score
LCD screens should provide 'real time' bus information for the next five services due at a stop, where appropriate.	▲	M	E*EE
RTPI should be capable of delivery via SMS, WAP and internet.	▲	M/L	E*EE
System should allow for easy updating of its database.	▲	M	E*EE
System should be modular (allowing easy expansion) and be "future proofed" (so far as possible) for 10 years after initial installation.	▲	M	E*EE
Audio information will be provided, as appropriate, for the visually impaired and those with reading difficulties.	▲	M	E*EE
RTPI system should meet European Service Interface for 'Real Time' Information (SIRI) standard, to permit ease of information interchange between the Aberdeenshire RTPI system and that of a neighbouring local authority or regional transport partnership, in order to accommodate cross-boundary services.	▲	M	E*EE
Aberdeenshire Council will seek funding to provide 'real time' passenger information on electronic displays at key interchanges, bus stations and Park and Ride sites.	▲	M	E*EE
'Real time' electronic displays will be used to indicate the next available bus services to key destinations with information related to its stop and/or stance label, service operator and time.	▲	M	E*EE
'Real time' electronic display system must be compatible with the Council's own database and that used by Traveline Scotland.	▲	M	E*EE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

*Economic viability is the subject of a more detailed study than has been possible in preparing this strategy

Minimum Standard:

- the Council, in partnership with Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council and relevant operators, will review all existing RTPI schemes and develop a strategy for implementing RTPI on key commuting corridors, at interchange points and at other key locations throughout the Council's area (subject to funding); and
- the Council and relevant partners will look at providing RTPI across as many media as possible, including bus stop displays, the Council's website, mobile telephone, and information kiosks.

Aspirational standard:

- the Council will provide multi-modal 'real time' information at key locations including interchanges, bus stations, and Park and Ride sites; and
- the Council, in partnership with neighbouring Councils and/or Regional Transport Partnerships, will investigate the feasibility of providing RTPI on the main cross-boundary corridors.

Responsibilities

The Council will provide and maintain all the necessary equipment in an agreed partnership approach with the operators.

Bus operators should ensure that any RTPI compatible equipment fitted to their vehicles is fully functional so as to ensure the operation of the RTPI system.

The Council and operators will continually review future technology enhancements and opportunities for commercial integration.

9.10 On-bus Information

The following table sets out the content and standard required for on bus information.

Content and Standards	State	Priority	Score
Bus operators in Aberdeenshire must at all times comply with Schedule 2 of the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations, in terms of route number and destination displays.	✓	S	EEE
Where practical, buses should carry up-to-date printed timetable and fare information for the services on which they are operating.	✓	S	EEE
All regular drivers must be able to give full information to passengers in respect of timetables, fares and special ticket promotions for the route being operated. Where specific connections are publicised for that route, drivers should also be aware of the timings for the connecting services. At all times, drivers must make a reasonable endeavour to assist passengers in obtaining any information required to complete their journey.	✓	S	EEE
Notification must be provided 21 days in advance of any service change and also provided details where further information can be obtained.	✓	S	EEE
The council will investigate the feasibility of on board announcements informing passengers of next stop and destination.	▲	L	E

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

Responsibilities

Operators are responsible for displaying notification of service changes on-board their vehicle in accordance with Reg 6 (2) of the Public Service Vehicle Regulations 2001 (SSI 2001No219) whereby operators are required to display, for 21 days before any change to that service, in each vehicle provided for that particular service.

9.11 Provision of Information on the Internet

The internet is an extremely useful and increasingly popular method of accessing information with ever increasing means of accessing such web based information. The table below describes the content and standards required for web sites providing public transport information.

Content and Standards	State	Priority	Score
Aberdeenshire Council will continue maintaining its website for public transport and will ensure that all information remains valid and up-to-date.	✓	S	EEE
Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that there is appropriate reference and/or links to Traveline Scotland, Transport Direct and the websites of relevant operators.	✓	S	EEE
Aberdeenshire Council will continue to develop its website for bus information, in particular to include a journey planning facility.	▲	M	EEE
Aberdeenshire Council will require the operators of all Council supported services to provide route, timetable and ticketing information for its website.	✓	S	EEE
Transport Direct should provide internet-based information on routes, times and locations of bus stops and transfers to other modes.	✓	S	EEE
Transport Direct should provide a 'journey planner' facility.	✓	S	EEE
Where bus operators provide timetable information on their websites as part of their marketing strategy, they should ensure that such information remains up-to-date at all times.	✓	S	EEE
Dates of forthcoming timetable changes should be included at least fourteen days before the date of implementation.	✓	S	EEE
Bus operators' websites must contain logos of Traveline Scotland and Transport Direct with direct hyperlinks.	✓	S	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

Responsibilities

Each organisation is responsible for insuring all information provided on their website is accurate and up-to-date.

9.12 Traveline Scotland

Aberdeenshire Council considers that Traveline Scotland offers a comprehensive and effective telephone enquiry service and should therefore be the single authoritative source for telephone enquiries.

Aberdeenshire Council considers that Traveline Scotland meets the public's requirement in the appropriate way and will therefore, where the operator does not make a direct contribution, recoup a sum from each operator towards the cost of operating Traveline Scotland in proportion to the benefit received. The benefit will be assessed by the Council on the basis of the number of public enquiries received by Traveline Scotland relating to each operator or service.

The following table describes the current and planned services provided by Traveline Scotland.

Content and Standards	State	Priority	Score
Traveline Scotland should provide telephone information on routes, times and locations of bus stops and transfers to other modes.	✓	S	EEE
Traveline Scotland will provide SMS text-based timetable information.	✓	S	EEE
Traveline Scotland should be the main source of information for Transport Direct.	✓	S	EEE
Aberdeenshire Council will require all operators of supported and commercial services to be members of Traveline Scotland.	●	M	EEE
Traveline Scotland Include details of RTPI data via the Internet and SMS if a RTPI system is introduced to Aberdeenshire.	●	M	EEE
Traveline Scotland should provide a 'journey planner' facility on its website, unless superseded by Transport Direct.	✓	S	EEE

Key for Content and Standards

State

- ✓ Exist
- In-development
- ▲ Planned

Priorities

- S Short term
- M Medium term
- L Long term

Score

- E Economic
- E Efficient
- E Effective

9.13 Monitoring the Strategy

We will monitor the effects of the strategy through the following four main sources:

- annual and 'one-off' customer satisfaction surveys;
- feedback through the Council's Area Bus Forums;
- passenger usage trends supplied by operators; and
- monitoring of any complaints and/or compliments received by the Council regarding local transport information.

In particular, the council will monitor the performance of information provided through an agreed set of performance indicators. Such performance indicators will reflect the Council's principal objectives regarding the provision of passenger information and will reference the agreed Quality Partnership for Public Transport standards and Targets:

- 95% of bus stops to have up to date and comprehensive timetable information by 2015
- 100% of information provided at stops to comply with national guidance on comprehensive information by 2015
- 100% of bus stop to carry location sign by 2012
- Where RTPI is available, this will be at least 95% accurate
- On board information to be provided on buses at least 21 days before a service change – 100% by 2011
- Timetables to be made available at least 14 days before a service change – 100% of service changes by 2011.
- Traveline number and SMS code to be displayed at all boarding stops – 100% by 2012

The results from our performance monitoring will be reported on an annual basis and will be published on the Council's website.

Appendix A - Extracts from the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001

Provision of information

33 Information about bus services

(1) Each local transport authority shall from time to time determine, having regard to their relevant general policies—

- (a) what local bus information should be made available to the public (in this section referred to as the "required information"); and
- (b) the way in which it should be made available (in this section and in section 34 of this Act referred to as the "appropriate way").

(2) Before making such a determination, the authority shall consult—

- (a) the traffic commissioner;
- (b) such organisations appearing to the authority to be representative of users of local services as they think fit; and
- (c) such other persons as the authority think fit.

(3) Each authority shall from time to time ascertain whether the required information is being made available to the public in the appropriate way.

(4) If an authority ascertain that the required information is not being made available to the public in the appropriate way the authority shall seek to make arrangements with the operator or operators of the local services concerned under which the operator or operators agree to make the information available in that way.

(5) In this section—

- "local bus information", in relation to a local transport authority, means—
 - (a) information about routes and timetabling of local services to, from and within the authority's area;
 - (b) information about fares for journeys on such local services; and
 - (c) such other information about facilities for disabled persons, travel concessions, connections with other public passenger transport services (within the meaning of the 1985 Act) or other matters of value to the public as the authority consider appropriate in relation to their area; and
- "travel concession" has the meaning given by section 68(7) of this Act.

(6) This section and sections 34 and 35 of this Act do not apply to any local authority to the extent that any part of the area of the authority is comprised in the passenger transport area of the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority.

34 Duty of authority to make information available

(1) If a local transport authority are unable to make satisfactory arrangements in pursuance of section 33(4) of this Act, they, or two or more such authorities acting jointly—

- (a) shall make available, or secure that there is made available, in such manner as they determine, such information as is not being made available in the appropriate way in their area, or each of their areas (whether by virtue of arrangements made under section 33(4) of this Act or otherwise); and
- (b) may recover from the operator or operators of the local services concerned the reasonable costs incurred by them in doing so as a civil debt due to them.

- (2) In determining for the purposes of subsection (1)(b) above what is reasonable in relation to a particular operator, the authority, or as the case may be authorities, shall have regard to—
- (a) the amount of information which has to be made available; and
 - (b) the way in which that information has to be made available, in respect of the local services provided by that operator.
- (3) If the authority, or as the case may be authorities, require an operator to provide information to them or another person in order to perform their duty under subsection (1)(a) above, the operator shall provide the information at such times and in such manner as may be specified by the authority (or authorities).
- (4) The authority, or as the case may be authorities, shall give notice to the traffic commissioner of any requirement imposed under subsection (3) above.

35 Bus information: supplementary

In carrying out their functions under sections 33 and 34 of this Act, local transport authorities—

- (a) shall act in the manner which is, in the opinion of the authority, most economic, efficient and effective; and
- (b) shall not act in such a way as to discriminate (whether directly or indirectly) against any operator, or class of operator, of local services.

39 Penalties

Where the traffic commissioner is satisfied that the operator of a local service has, without reasonable excuse—

- (c) failed to comply with section 32(1) or 34(3) of this Act, the commissioner may impose a penalty on the operator.



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