

Appendix A

Western Peripheral Route (Northern Leg)

Report on public consultation (Jan – Feb 2003)

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Western Peripheral Route (Northern Leg)

Public consultation - 7 January 2003 to 14 February 2003

Report on the findings of the consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the findings of a public consultation on the Western Peripheral Route (Northern Leg). Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils carried out the consultation.
- 1.2 The consultation period was 7 January 2003 to 14 February 2003.
- 1.3 The consultation was in accordance with the guidance given in the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and forms part of the Western Peripheral Route (Northern Leg) STAG assessment.
- 1.4 The consultation was at Stage 2 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges process. It was a consultation on three route options and was aimed at including the public view as part of the information to be used by elected members in their consideration of a preferred corridor.

2. Background

- 2.1 The route options put forward for public consultation resulted from a Stage 2 Assessment of 18 potential route permutations.
- 2.2 The 18 No. route permutations are made up of a combination of 6 No. broadly defined sections of route options - North, Central, South, Kirkhill 1, Kirkhill 2 and Bucksburn.
- 2.3 To reduce the number of route options to a more reasonable number of route proposals for public consultation an Interim Summary Table was prepared. This summary table appraised the route sections listed in item 2.2 above against the key criteria listed for assessment in the STAG manual.
- 2.4 This interim assessment resulted in 3 No. route options to be put forward for public consultation.
- 2.5 At its meeting of 9 December 2002 the North East Strategic Planning Committee (NESPC) approved the remaining 3 No. proposed route options for the Western Peripheral Route (Northern Leg) to be taken forward for public consultation. Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Full Council meetings subsequently later endorsed these recommendations.
- 2.6 It is important to stress that at this Stage 2 public consultation views **are** being sought on preferred routes. This is in contrast to the Stage 1

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public consultation where the general public was asked to provide their local knowledge regarding constraints that would affect the choice of 'preferred route'. The Stage 1 Consultation was an attempt to ensure that all necessary information was considered in the decision-making process.

3. Information made available during the consultation

3.1 Stage 2 Engineering Report

3.1.1 A written report and drawings providing an engineering analysis of all the 18 No. route options.

3.1.2 As part of the iterative design process, 2 No. minor realignments have been developed further. These realignments are located to the south of Potterton and the Kirkhill Forest areas.

3.2 Stage 2 Environmental Assessment Report

3.2.1 A written report, impact summary tables and drawings providing an environmental analysis of all the 18 No. route options.

3.2.2 Both of the realignments identified in item 3.1.2 have not had a full Stage 2 Environmental Assessment carried out on them. Nevertheless, the Environmental Consultant has confirmed that both realignments have environmental advantages over the original options.

3.3 Route Option Summary Booklets

3.3.1 Summary Booklets summarising the assessment findings for each of the 18 No. route options. It was felt it was important to produce a booklet for all 18 No. route permutations. This was intended to allow the general public an appreciation of why 15 No. route permutations were rejected.

3.4 Interim Summary table

3.4.1 A summary spreadsheet, as identified in item 2.3 above, summarising the findings of all the assessments carried out.

3.5 Information leaflet and questionnaire

3.5.1 An information leaflet describing the pro's and con's of each of the three route options approved by the Council's for Stage 2 consultation. (Attached as Appendix A)

3.5.2 A questionnaire seeking views on the relevant importance of assessment criteria and on which route option best met those views. (Attached as Appendix B)

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3.6 Information supplied only in summary format

3.6.1 Traffic report

3.6.2 Economic report

3.6.3 Economic Activity and Locational Impacts report

3.6.4 An initial air and noise assessment has been carried out. This is in the process of being finalised into a formal report. Meantime the Environmental Consultant has intimated that from the initial work carried out and the results expected, air and noise pollution would not be a critical factor for 'preferred route' selection. It is also felt that this can be adequately addressed during the detailed design of the 'preferred route'.

4. Format of the Stage 2 consultation

4.1 Press conference

4.1.1 The consultation started with a press conference on 7 January 2003. This resulted in significant coverage in the local press and television.

4.1.2 CD's containing pertinent information were provided

4.2 Exhibitions

4.2.1 Exhibitions were set up in both St Nicholas House and Woodhill House where staff were on hand to answer questions throughout the consultation period.

4.3 Roadshows

4.3.1 Roadshows were set up between 4pm and 8pm for one evening in each of the following locations:-

Potterton	13 January 2003	80 people attending
Bucksburn	15 January 2003	220 people attending
Dyce	16 January 2003	123 people attending
Newmacher	21 January 2003	166 people attending
Bridge of Don	23 January 2003	70 people attending

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4.4 Presentations

4.4.1 Special presentations were given to the following:-

Aberdeen City Council members
Aberdeenshire Council members
Aberdeen City Environmental Forum (also provided with textual information from the Engineering and Environmental reports on CD)
Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum (also provided with textual information from the Engineering and Environmental reports on CD)
Scottish Executive

4.5 Letters

4.5.1 Letters were sent to the following:-

Aberdeen City Council members
Aberdeenshire Council members
MP's, MSP's & MEP's
All parties who wrote during the Stage 1 consultation

4.6 Evening meetings

4.6.1 Evening meetings were set up with:-

Residents in the Pitmedden House area of Kirkhill

4.7 Drawings and reports

4.7.1 Copies of the drawings and reports were inspected by:-

Scottish Natural Heritage
Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

4.8 Meetings and Site meetings

4.8.1 Many meetings and site meetings were arranged with interested local members of the public

4.9 Leaflets and Questionnaires

4.9.1 Leaflets and questionnaires were available from the exhibitions and roadshows. The leaflets were also printed in the Bon Accord newspaper. The Evening Express newspaper also carried the questionnaire on two separate evenings.

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5. Outcome of the consultation

5.1 Roadshows

- 5.1.1 The roadshows were well attended with over 600 people visiting in total. A number of these visited on more than one occasion.
- 5.1.2 The roadshows were generally well received with the vast majority of people pleased with the quantity and quality of the information on show. There was a small problem at the Bucksburn roadshow with cramped accommodation and large numbers of people however most people managed to find the information they wanted.
- 5.1.3 The general feeling of the staff attending these roadshows was that there was a significant majority feeling that the WPR was needed and was long overdue. Across all the roadshows there was a general view that the central option provided the best option. These views are noted in summaries of these roadshows attached as Appendix C.
- 5.1.4 A journalist, from the Evening Express, attended each roadshow. Their views as to the general feelings of the people attending were similar to that expressed in paragraph 4.1.3 above. This was reported in the Evening Express.

5.2 Questionnaire

- 5.2.1 1353 questionnaires have been returned.
- 5.2.2 People were asked to rate (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 very important) how important various criteria were in assessing a roads proposal. The results were:-

Assessment criteria	Average
Impact on natural environment	3.81
Impact on people	4.24
Cost	3.08
Economic benefits to the North East	4.20
Reducing road network congestion	4.65

There was a view, as expressed to officers at the roadshows, that impact on the natural environment, whilst important, should be considered within the context that there is, in this area, a very large natural environment. Any route should attempt to minimise damage but there was an acceptance that, within that context, damage was inevitable to achieve a wanted and necessary project. This perhaps explains the low figure given to the importance of impact on the natural environment.

Of other particular interest from the figures given is the relative importance attached to reducing road network congestion. This is

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closely followed by the impact on people and economic benefits. Bucksburn provides the best overall road network benefit and best economic benefit.

5.2.3 People were asked to rate the proposals by how best they met their listed criteria importance values. This resulted in the following:-

Route Option	Number of people who thought that route the best option	% of people stating a preference who thought that route the best option
Bucksburn	161	13%
South	276	21%
Central	859	66%

It is interesting that although Bucksburn provides the best overall road network congestion relief and best economic benefits and these are considered prime importance the public didn't view Bucksburn as their favoured choice. There are perhaps two reasons for this:-

- a) Whilst Bucksburn provides the best overall relief to road network congestion it provides the least relief to perhaps the worst congestion hotspot in Haudagain roundabout. Further it increases traffic on the already congested A947.
- b) The impact on people is considered very high for the Bucksburn route. This is also an issue of prime importance in the public view. It appears that the issue of people impact is considered of such significance in this case that it overrides the overall road congestion and economic benefits issue. People believe that the road network benefits and economic benefits generated by South and Central are large enough and that the extra benefits to be gained by Bucksburn come at too high a price to pay. This allied to the reduced benefits Bucksburn provides on A96 & A947 has made people consider South or Central as better options.

5.2.4 Although this consultation was specifically designed to assess views on a route option a number of people did take the opportunity to say they didn't want a WPR. This resulted in the following:-

Route Option	Number of people who did not want a WPR	% of people responding who didn't want a WPR
Do not want a WPR	51	4%

5.2.5 As well as noting the public perception of how each of the route options best meets their assessment criteria it is also possible to note how each scheme was assessed as the worst possible option. Several

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people gave only a first choice. In this case, the other 2 routes were both taken to be their worst option, hence the sum of the people expressing route worst options exceed the number of questionnaire replies and the sum of the percentages exceed 100%. This results in the following:-

Route Option	Number of people who thought that route the worst option	% of people stating a preference who thought that route the worst option
Bucksburn	1041	80%
South	272	21%
Central	212	16%

5.3 Views by area

5.3.1 Respondents to the questionnaire were asked to give their postcode in order that views could be assessed to see if there were differences in view between areas. This resulted in the following:-

People from Postcode Areas:	% of people stating a preference for each option			% of people from each area stating a preference
	Bucksburn	South	Central	
AB21 9** (Bucksburn)	2%	33%	65%	17%
AB21 7** (Dyce and Parkhill)	7%	25%	68%	8%
AB22 *** (Bridge of Don – west of Scotstown Road)	18%	16%	66%	13%
AB23 *** (Potterton, Balmedie and Bridge of Don – east of Scotstown Rd)	14%	34%	52%	9%
AB21 0** (Newmachar, Blackburn and Kirkhill)	19%	10%	71%	6%
People from all other postcodes	14%	17%	69%	47%

In this table it is interesting to note that almost half the respondents do not come from an area directly affected by any proposal. However the views of those directly affected and those not affected are not significantly different. Further, those who would perhaps benefit most from the Bucksburn route, the Bridge of Don residents (providing a

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shorter Dyce/Bridge of Don link) have also shown a strong preference for South or Central.

5.4 General comments

5.4.1 The questionnaire included a general comments box. Many respondents chose to make comments through this method. These comments have been summarised into categories for ease of understanding and taking forward to the route choice assessment. This summary is as follows:-

General comment category	Number of people making the comment
Tunnel concerns and unacceptable impact to Bucksburn area	188
Allow for future expansion, far enough out from existing built up areas - not another Anderson Drive	182
Build WPR now / should have been built years ago	138
Required to reduce congestion, journey times etc	112
Make road dual carriageway / grade separated	62
Allow good access to the airport	55
WPR should be close to City to attract vehicles by being shortest route	32
Wildlife / environment concerns	29
Needed to remove HGV's from unsuitable routes	24
Avoid building on floodplain	20
Need a new bridge over the Don	18
Spend money on other measures eg rail, bus, cycle, walking etc	13
Concern about impact of Bucksburn to Rowett Research Institute	12
Concern about Bucksburn route giving less relief to A947 and A96 and not accessing Park & Ride sites on these routes	12
Get Scottish Executive funding / Aberdeen miss out while other areas get road schemes	10
Concern about impact to property, individuals or business	10
Don't overdevelop out to and along WPR	6
Also require to dual A90 north of City	6
All routes too close to City	5

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5.5 Letters and comments

5.5.1 In addition to the questionnaires a number of letters have been received. These have included a number from people directly affected by one (or in some cases more than one) of the proposals in areas such as Kirkhill, Parkhill and Potterton. In any proposal there are going to be people directly affected and in these cases, where the comments refer to the direct effect, they have been recorded for assessment and action in the next stage of design where appropriate. Where the comments are more general these have been included in the assessment given above.

5.5.2 There have been a number of letters received from various bodies. These are summarised as follows:-

Scottish Natural Heritage

The Scottish Natural Heritage chose not to select a 'preferred route' but highlighted the impact the various route options would have on the natural heritage. However, they recognised that whichever option is chosen as the 'preferred route' there will be an impact on the natural heritage.

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency

The Scottish Environmental Protection Agency chose not to select a 'preferred route' but highlighted the impact the various route options would have on the water environment. In addition they suggested further areas of investigation that should be carried out at the next stage of the design process. However they did intimate that the Central and South options are their preferred crossing point of the River Don.

Rural Scotland

Rural Scotland raised their concerns with the Central Option due to the environmental implications. They preferred the Bucksburn Option as they perceived it to have the least impact in environmental and amenity terms. No reference was made of the South Option.

Aberdeen and District Angling Association

The Aberdeen and District Angling Association are against both the Central and South options. This preference is solely based on where the route options cross the River Don in the vicinity of their fishing pools at Parkhill.

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Aberdeen Environmental Forum

The Aberdeen Environmental Forum initial comments were that there had been no information made available justifying the need for the road proposal. This work is covered in the 'Modern Transport System' STAG Appraisal, which proves the viability for the Western Peripheral Route. Unfortunately this information has not been made available to-date, but it will be in the near future. Nevertheless, it has been considered in the assessment process.

Bearing the above in mind they chose not to intimate a route view but preferred to comment on other general factors related to the proposal for a Western Peripheral Route. This was based on their opinion that insufficient information had been made available for consultation. The other factors they put forward for comment were their concerns about future development in the 'Green Belt' and the planned implementation of other transportation measures. They intimated a more detailed comment at the next stage of consultation of the 'preferred route'.

Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum

The Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum indicated no route preference, expressing concerns about the 'broad brush' approach used throughout the selection process to date, they feel actual impacts have not yet been assessed. They are concerned that there appears to be a weighing towards visual rather than environmental impacts but appreciate that all routes have a similar impact. They have highlighted the view that the route should not be rapidly absorbed into the city or be overly developed. Light pollution should also be minimised.

Aberdeen Friends of the Earth

The Aberdeen Friends of the Earth initial comments were that there had been no information made available justifying the need for the road proposal. This work is covered in the 'Modern Transport System' STAG Appraisal, which proves the viability for the Western Peripheral Route. Unfortunately this information has not been made available to-date, but it will be in the near future. Nevertheless, it has been considered in the assessment process.

Bearing this in mind they chose not to intimate a route view but preferred to comment on other general factors related to the proposal for a Western Peripheral Route. Again, this was based on their opinion that insufficient information had been made available for consultation. They tended to concentrate on the negative impacts a large road proposal would generate. They intimated that congestion charging combined with traffic demand management should be assessed with or without the Western Peripheral Route.

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Scottish Wildlife Trust

Scottish Wildlife Trust consider the 'South Option' to be the least desirable. They were complimentary of the fact that the three remaining route options avoid the most important nature conservation sites, but endorsed the need for the next stage of Environmental Assessment incorporating mitigation measures.

The Rowett Research Institute

The Rowett Research Institute has serious concerns with the 'Bucksburn Option'. They would prefer either of the other two alternative routes. Their reasoning is recorded in an 'in confidence' letter.

Aberdeen City Council Archaeology Unit

The Aberdeen City Council Archaeology Unit have raised their concerns about the location of the Central and South Options affecting the setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. From the point of view of local archaeology they would prefer the Bucksburn Option.

TransForm Scotland

This 'sustainable transport' organisation is against major road building in principle and as such has not indicated a preferred option. They state that the consultation has not addressed multi-modal transport issues. This work is covered in the 'Modern Transport System' STAG Appraisal, which proves the viability for the Western Peripheral Route. Unfortunately this information has not been made available to-date, but it will be in the near future.

Newhills Bowling Club

A petition containing 126 No. signatories was received from the Newhills Bowling Club expressing their concern and impact the 'Bucksburn Option' would have on them personally and their club.

Bankhead Academy School Board

Whilst supporting the need for a Western Peripheral Route the Bankhead Academy School Board considered the 'Bucksburn Option' not to be a viable option. This is due to their concerns with the safety of pupils. These safety aspects are related to the periods before and after construction, the attraction of more traffic to the vicinity of the school and fragmentation of the catchment area. Their preferred option would be Central followed by South.

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Walkers at Kirkhill Forrest

A signed petition containing 18 No. signatories was received from members of the public who use the tracks and trails in Kirkhill Forest. They considered the Kirkhill Forest, to be under threat as a valuable amenity, should the Central or South options be selected.

Stoneywood School Board

The School Board was primarily concerned with pupil safety during and after construction of the Bucksburn Option, in particular, where it passes through Stoneywood/Bankhead areas. In addition they highlighted the nearby 'Green Burn' as an educational tool for the pupils.

Belhelvie Community Council

Belhelvie CC support the South route due to its closer proximity to the city, providing more of a draw to Bridge of Don traffic. They are concerned with the loss of greenbelt and the redrawing of the city boundaries. They would like a cycle/pedestrian link from A90 to Formartine and Buchan Way and Park and Ride sites.

Belhelvie CC were pleased with the realignment of the Central route away from Potterton. Concern was raised about the proximity of the route to the Blackdog settlement and that HGV traffic would access the Industrial Units there close to the proposed junction. There was concern about the junction at the B999/ Central route and the B977, with residents fearing the use of Potterton and Belhelvie as a 'rat run', though local commuters would benefit when travelling to Dyce.

Bridge of Don Community Council

The Bridge of Don CC were pleased that the WPR was being progressed and, in general, supported the Central route, provided environmental issues were addressed.

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General Comments

- Approx 70 people attended the meeting.
- Good support for the need for a WPR.
- Large number of residents from the northern end of Jesmond Drive, ie Lee Crescent, Ashwood area concerned about proximity of route to rear of their properties.
- General comments from most consultees regarding the access from Bridge of Don to WPR.
- Environmental concerns were raised by a number of consultees regarding the impact of all routes on the surrounding area.
- A number of comments were raised relating to the future expansion of the city and that Central route would cater for this.

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General Comments

- Approx 220 people attended the meeting
- Good support for the need for a WPR
- Generally very much against the Bucksburn option
- General comment is a by-pass should go around built up areas and not through them. People were still not satisfied even after explaining the traffic distributional purpose of the route with regard to the city traffic
- Concern over impact on people. A comment heard throughout the evening was why are the people of Bucksburn having to experience another major road scheme passing through their community (this is in reference to the Bucksburn Diversion built in the early 90s).
- As expected there was a lot of interest with regard to the 'cut and cover' tunnel and how its construction would impact on the area
- Concern intimated about the indicative junction arrangement on the A947 in relation to the proposed traffic movements required to access the WPR to allow users from Dyce, Bankhead and Bucksburn to travel in a southerly direction.
- Concern with increased WPR traffic usage attracted to the A947 junction to access/egress Dyce along the A947 which is already experiencing congestion

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General Comments

- The roadshow was attended by 123 residents
- A number of the people attending were directly affected by the proposals. Those who requested were offered more private meetings to discuss how the proposals would affect them.
- There was a general feeling that the Bucksburn route wasn't as helpful to Dyce as the Northern routes where people perceived better benefits to the Parkhill area. People seemed to believe that the route should circumnavigate Dyce not split it from the main body of Aberdeen.
- There was a general appreciation that the Kirkhill route would better serve the airport.
- There was a general appreciation that the tunnel in Bankhead was too disruptive for a residential area.
- There were a number of comments relating to allowing for expansion in the City and that the Central route would best cater for that.
- There was some concern expressed about the environmental impact in the Kirkhill area with particular regard to the standing stones.

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General Comments

- 166 people attended the meeting
- Good support for the need for a WPR
- Not adverse to the Central Option, bearing in mind this is the closest option to Newmachar.
- General support to not adopt the Bucksburn proposal due to its impact on people. This view is supported by the public's perception that the purpose of a 'by-pass' is to go around the obstacle.
- Concern over land severance - impact on viability of farms - access bridges.
- Comment from a number of people in relation to the need for a grade separated junction on the B997 to allow access to the WPR - as opposed to having to detour to the A90(N) junction to gain access. It was intimated that any junction constructed would inevitably lead to a traffic usage increase in the local road network leading to the junction.
- Concern of what will happen to the local road system. It was intimated that the local road network would require detailed consideration in how it would align with the 'preferred corridor'.
- Other comments in general were related to Stage 3 design work - final position of junctions, crossover/under bridges, screening by planting, noise bunds etc.
- Individuals who intimated strong opposition to any of the routes were those people whose property was in 'close' proximity to a specific proposal and were thereby directly affected.
- It was noted that this was a second visit to the roadshows for a small number of individuals (approx 5 people).

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General Comments

- Approx 80 people attended the meeting
- Good support for the need for a WPR
- Not adverse to the Central Option, bearing in mind this is the closest option to Potterton
- Concern over land severance - impact on viability of farms - access bridges.
- General appreciation of the proposed re-alignment
- Mixed comment from a number of people in relation to the need for a grade separated junction on the B999 to allow access to the WPR - as opposed to having to detour to the A90(N) junction to gain access. It was intimated that any junction constructed would inevitably lead to a traffic usage increase in the local road network leading to the junction.
- Other comments in general were related to Stage 3 design work - final position of junctions, crossover/under bridges, screening by planting, noise bunds etc.
- Evening Express supports the comment above regarding the local support for the Central option.