

## Transport Local Authority of the Year

### KEEPING ABERDEENSHIRE MOVING

#### Background

The Aberdeenshire Council area covers 6313 sq/km and has a growing population, currently estimated at 245,780. Aberdeenshire is home to a local economy based on oil, fishing, farming and tourism. The area is linked by some 3300 miles of roads (over 10% of the national

stock), around 100 supported bus services and 6 railway stations. The transport challenges faced by Aberdeenshire Council are numerous and varied, however, through clear strategies supported across political lines the Council is rising to these challenges and delivering high quality services to the residents and businesses of Aberdeenshire.

#### Key Highlights

- Partnership Working – car parking review, public transport improvements and TV advertising campaigns.
- Improving Road Safety – Road Safety Magic Roadshow 2012, Be Seen Cycling, Give Me Cycle Space and Operation Zenith.



- Creating Healthy Communities – Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town.
- Embracing Technology, Innovation & Leading by Example – Solar powered pay and display, electric vehicle recharging points and Chief Executive pledge.

## Local Transport Strategy

In January 2012, the Council adopted its new Local Transport Strategy (LTS) outlining the key transport issues affecting Aberdeenshire and setting out a series of actions which will support delivery of our vision:

“Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland”

The overarching philosophy of Aberdeenshire’s LTS has been developed to maximise our existing resources. Central to our approach is the guiding principle to encourage individuals and business to consider ways to travel less, travel more actively and, where vehicular travel is necessary, how journeys could be undertaken more effectively.

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/lts](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/lts)

## Partnership Working

Partnership working is central to the work we do and successful examples of our work with public and private sector colleagues are provided throughout this submission.

At the local level, through involvement in the development of the Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan and the Aberdeenshire Development Plan, the Council’s transport service is helping to ensure that the long term transportation needs of the region have been fully embedded into decision making at every level.

Working with the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire, (Nestrans) the Council have been delivering initiatives such as GetAbout and the Health & Transport Action Plan (HTAP), and supporting the implementation of specific projects such as the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and designs for new Park & Choose sites and campaigning for more stations after the successful reopening of Laurencekirk.





Through the GetAbout partnership, the Council continues working with a wide range of partners to promote the adoption of sustainable modes, including further investment in screening the GetAbout Liftshare TV ad and road show events.

Similar strong relations exist at the national level with colleagues at Transport Scotland, with whom we are working to help provide a 50Kw Rapid Charge Point in Laurencekirk, with an aspiration for three more in Aberdeenshire, as part of the wider Plugged in Places network of charge points across Scotland.

Supporting Nestrans in the delivery of their Bus Action Plan is ongoing. A key element of this is the annual survey of bus user satisfaction in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Overall, Aberdeenshire bus users continue to show high levels of satisfaction with the overall service and the vast majority of aspects of bus service delivery.

Aberdeenshire Council has extended the bicycle friendly buses campaign to the new X7 service. Central to achieving cross-boundary promotion of the service has been a partnership approach undertaken between Aberdeenshire Council and public transport colleagues at Aberdeen City, Angus and Dundee City Councils, together with Stagecoach Bluebird and Stagecoach Strathhtay.

Aberdeenshire Council and partners have developed a Fares and Ticketing Strategy for Aberdeen City and Shire which was approved in April 2012. The council is also piloting the Under 21 Mega Discount card on the A947 service offering young adults a 50% discount, part paid by the council and part by the operator.

As was set out in the Local Transport Strategy, a comprehensive review of car parking in Aberdeenshire is now being undertaken.

Aberdeenshire Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of 109 car parks across the region covering some 4,000 spaces. Pay & Display car parks currently account for just over 1,100 of these spaces across 27 sites in ten settlement locations.



As part of this work initial car parking reviews were undertaken in Banchory, Huntly, Ellon and Fraserburgh during 2012.

Consultation events are underway to discuss with local businesses and residents the pricing of Pay and Display parking in their town. This reflects our commitment to adopt a partnership approach to working with local communities and our support of the economic vitality of our towns.

## Improving Road Safety

Aberdeenshire Council is proud of its record on working with partners in the field of Road Safety, with casualty figures for the North East Scotland relatively low when compared to national levels. The number of fatalities in North East Scotland has reduced significantly from 45 in 2006 to 11 in 2012.

Promoting road safety is integral to all aspects of Aberdeenshire Council's approach to delivering an integrated, modern transport system.

A recent example has been the 'Be Seen Cycling' campaign delivered in autumn/winter 2012. A radio advertising campaign promoted the need for cyclists to ensure they are visible when riding in the dark. This campaign will be expanded with bus stop and bus poster advertising for autumn 2013.

Aberdeenshire Council seeks to promote road safety awareness to young people at each stage of their education experience. This begins with the Road Safety Magic shows seen by all P1-P3 pupils over a three year programme.

Ensuring our young people have the experience of learning to ride bicycles safely, via Bikeability cycle training in P5 and P6, is a priority for Aberdeenshire Council.

Aberdeenshire Council has funded the broadcasting on STV North of the 1 Second 1 Life TV advertising in October 2012 and January 2013. Data from STV indicates that with just 6 broadcasts over five days at the end of August 2012 an audience of 192,400

people saw the advert. This is 26% of the total potential STV North audience. Further broadcasts have been advance purchased for 2013.

In 2012 Aberdeenshire Council successfully applied to work with Cycling Scotland on their Give Me Cycle Space campaign based around a number of schools in Peterhead and Westhill. A successful bid for Fraserburgh in 2013 has now been confirmed.

The Safe Drive Stay Alive roadshow event was delivered in 2012 for the eighth time to 5000 secondary pupils from across the north east towards the end of their time at school.

Aberdeenshire Council broadcast further TV screenings of the successful Operation Zenith motorcycle road safety campaign advert. Further screenings have been purchased for 2013.

## Creating Healthy Communities

A key initiative in Aberdeenshire has been the Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town Project. In 2008, Peterhead was chosen to be Aberdeenshire's first pilot Cycle Demonstration Town (CDT). Since then the council has been working to provide new





walking and cycling infrastructure and improve existing routes and paths in and around Peterhead. With improved opportunities for walking and cycling, backed up with a series of proportional events and activities, the aim is to increase levels of walking and cycling in the area.

To date just under £1m has been invested in Peterhead financed from a number of sources, including the Council's Strategy Unit, Roads and Landscape Service, Nestrans and Sustrans.

Examples of how the project is being delivered include:

- Upgraded paths and lighting.
- Additional cycle parking has been installed within the town.
- A new town centre map illustrates typical 5 minute time bands for use by walkers and cyclists.
- Six bicycles have been made available at Aden Country Park to help support health activity recommendations made by local health practitioners.
- Aberdeenshire Council, in partnership with Peterhead Projects Ltd, launched Bike It! in the town in June 2012. As part of the event, Buchan residents were also asked to donate unused or unwanted bicycles to Peterhead Projects as part of their wider 2Reuse Scheme. The CDT project has also funded the training of three local residents to Bronze Velotech standard to assist with the bike refurbishment.



- Walk it, Bike it, Try it maps were launched.
- The inaugural spring Aden Bike Challenge, held in partnership with Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, attracted in the region of 250 participants, most of whom were residents from Peterhead.
- 2012 closed with a screening at a mobile cinema in Peterhead of a short film produced by officers from the Strategy Unit highlighting the work done in Peterhead and the progress made, along with the views of a range of residents.

During 2011, a number of permanent monitoring sites were installed across Peterhead. While it is too early to draw conclusions from all of these sites, data obtained from a historical site suggests that cycling has been increasing year on year by a factor of 50%, from a base of 388 total trips at this particular site in 2009 to 945 in 2011.

Attitudinal surveys confirm that the project has encouraged around 38% of residents to cycle more often.

Each year a number of our 168 schools receive new or improved cycle parking facilities. Towns such as Banchory benefit from proactive teaching staff helping deliver training for parents to deliver cycle training. This is combined with campaigns such as No Car Day at Banchory Primary School, which included street banners designed by pupils and an incredible effort to travel to school by active means. The school also celebrated receiving the Cycle Friendly School award.

Three Aberdeenshire schools took part in Living Streets Walk Once a Week initiative.

Two further towns in Aberdeenshire benefitting from the council's commitment to improve infrastructure and encourage active lifestyles are Blackburn, which has seen a path upgrade encompassing a trial use of plastic kerbs and Aboyne where the Academy was announced as the winner of The Big Pedal, a national inter-school cycling competition co-ordinated by Sustrans.

## Embracing Technology, Innovation & Leading by Example

Aberdeenshire Council continues to embrace technology, innovation and seeks to lead by example.

When considering the strategic value of the Pay & Display car parks, the 2012 Local Transport Strategy for Aberdeenshire took into account the current machine stock and identified for improved efficiencies in the operation and management of our pay and display car parking assets.

Alongside this, improvement in the car parking facilities will assist in the delivery of other LTS actions, particularly in the role of supporting Electric Vehicle technology.

With the replacement of old machines with those powered by solar energy, an opportunity is being taken to provide supply for an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

In support of our Carbon Management Action Plan and efficiency drive the council's pool car scheme continues to expand on a cost neutral basis with 1% of all business mileage already transferred from grey fleet to pool vehicles.

Our Chief Executive, Colin Mackenzie, pledged last year to use public transport once a week for his daily commute of over 100 miles as his New Year resolution in 2012. He has published on his blog that he kept his resolution.



## Conclusion

Aberdeenshire Council is proud to have a long record of embracing innovations in the transport sector. This has been recognised through numerous awards including being named as the “Scottish Transport Local Authority of the Year” in both 2008, 2009, ‘commended’ at the 2010 Awards and winner again in 2012.

The local authority’s Transportation Team has been recognised at the National Transport Awards 2012. The team received the top honour in the Most Effective Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement Project category.

However, opportunities always exist to improve the services we provide and through this submission and others within specific categories we have sought to present a number of initiatives that highlight our commitment to ongoing improvements.



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