

Aberdeenshire Public Transport Information Strategy

Approaches to Delivery and Putting Policy into Practice

Within the context of the Council's Local Transport Strategy, Aberdeenshire Council actively market and promote public transport in line with adopted policies.

Through a suite of products delivered in partnership with the operators, Aberdeenshire Council endeavours to promote high quality public transport services and facilities across the area.



At-bus stop information

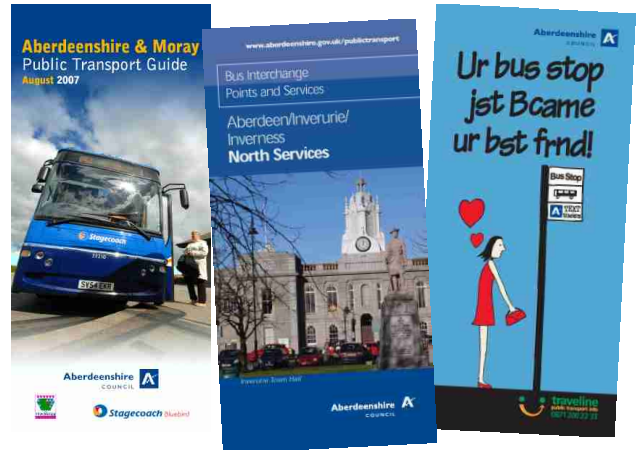
Whilst not relying exclusively on at-bus stop information, Aberdeenshire Council has invested both in high quality 'on-street' infrastructure and in the back-office processes which are necessary to maintain robust and high quality services.

Aberdeenshire Council currently maintains 1320 bus stops (including 615 bus shelters) of which 920 (over 71%) have information panels. These panels include departure times, route details and average journey times as well as contact information for operators, Traveline Scotland and our Public Transport Unit.

Locational names and Traveline Scotland phone and SMS contact details are also displayed on the flags at 83% of stops. Stop flags at key interchange points, which are marketed under the Aberdeenshire Interchange banner, also include service numbers.

The information panels are maintained and updated under a partnership agreement with Stagecoach Bluebird, who contribute 50% of the costs. Every panel is checked on a 20-day cycle, with monitoring revealing that currently over 98% of stops with timetable cases have 100% comprehensive and up-to-date information.

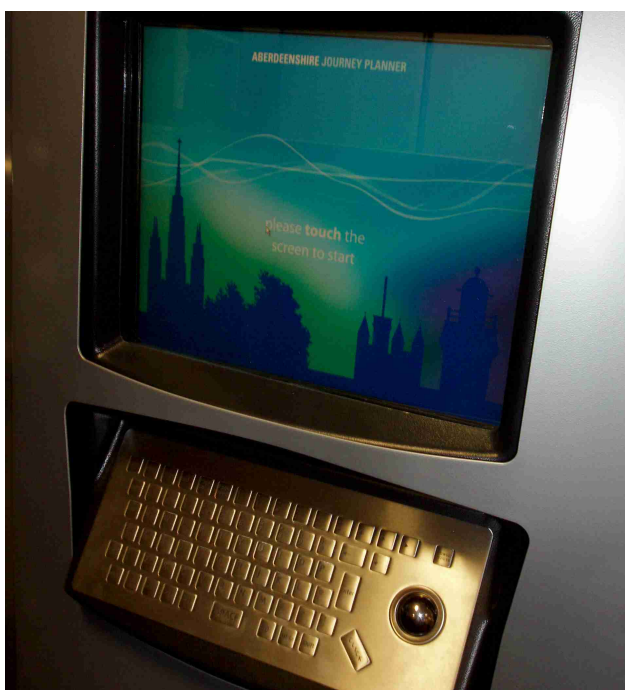
In-house timetable case insert production has been fully automated, allowing direct output from the Council's public transport service database. This database is maintained on behalf of Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and the Moray Council for internal use and for data export to Traveline Scotland and Transport Direct. The automated process also ensures consistency in quality and display format. Most recently service 'pearl-bars' have been added to the at-stop information displays



Other Publicity Material

In addition to 39 Aberdeenshire Local supported service leaflets, interchange travel opportunities are also actively promoted across Aberdeenshire through leaflets outlining all connecting travel opportunities along Aberdeenshire's mainline routes including our Quality Bus Corridors. Other more specialised material is also produced including:

- a bus guide covering the north east of Scotland, in partnership with the Moray Council and Stagecoach Bluebird;
- a suite of marketing material promoting and advertising Aberdeenshire A2B dial-a-bus, from a standard vehicle livery through, comprehensive and service specific leaflets to business cards highlighting the call centre number;
- a range of Park and Ride promotions, including leaflets, posters, car stickers and bookmarks.;
- leaflets and associated wallet/pocket sized 'cards' advertising the Traveline Scotland SMS bus times facility, with over 80% of bus stop flags carrying the relevant contact details;
- a leaflet promoting onward travel opportunities in Aberdeen City;
- a display panel detailing bus travel opportunities from Aberdeen Airport, in partnership with BAA; and,
- a guide to travel opportunities in Aberdeenshire for those with mobility impairments.



Innovation

Aberdeenshire Interchange

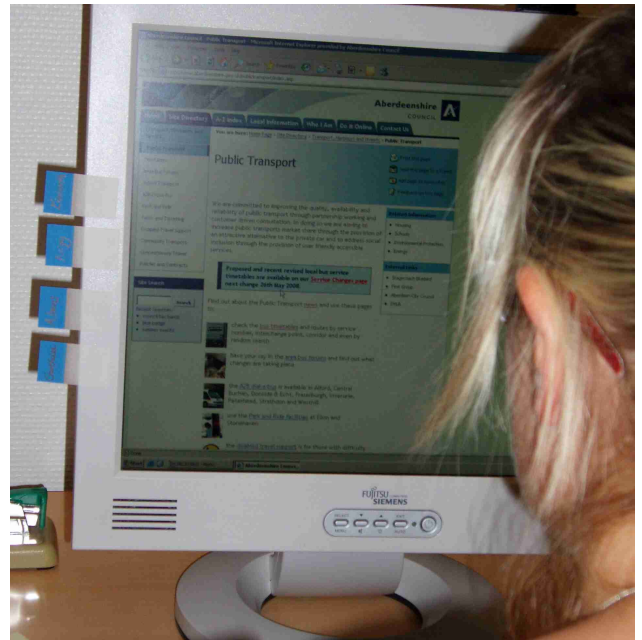
The project is aimed at achieving seamless travel through dedicated interchange points across Aberdeenshire and is just one example of how the Council has taken an innovative approach to marketing the services to the public.

In addition to Ellon Park and Ride and Peterhead Interchange, the latter a new high quality purpose built bus station, high quality 'on-street' waiting facilities have been installed at 24 key interchange points across the network.

The project is not however purely infrastructure based, with multi-operators through-ticketing being delivered through Aberdeenshire Connect ticketing arrangement and a major emphasis placed on marketing and information provision.

As well as conventional information with bus times and route diagrams, interactive passenger transport information terminals providing journey planning facilities have been installed at 19 'on-street' and 5 'off-street' locations at Aberdeenshire Interchange locations. A terminal is also provided at Aberdeen Bus Station in partnership with Nestrans, with service departure boards operating at Ellon Park and Ride and Peterhead interchange.

The interaction with the local media is highly effective with high profile coverage when new services are formally launched, on-going press releases issued to mark significant stages in service development, local radio adverts and, for example, in the case of Park and Ride, an annual competition held in partnership with the local press to further encourage increased patronage.



Web Pages

The Council have also focussed on developing the public transport pages on the corporate website www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk. In a recent industry survey the Aberdeenshire Council web site was voted the best local authority site in Scotland and one of the most compelling in the UK.

Currently the web pages are grouped into ten high level sections covering the full range of topics from timetables to area bus forums and school transport to disabled travel support.

The timetable section is fully interactive, searchable by service number, interchange points, route or settlement. All pending service revisions are also detailed as are links to major operators.

The timetable section alone now receives over 31,000 'hits' per month, whilst in May 2008, 8 of the 20 most popular downloads from the corporate site were bus timetables.

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Future Developments

In building upon achievements to date, further initiatives are currently under development, including:

- the provision of real time information;
- inclusion of a 'clickable' map on the web pages to access relevant timetables; and,
- provision of displays at Aberdeenshire Interchange points highlighting the location of important local facilities and tourist attractions.

Measurement of Results and Evidence of Progress

In 2008 across Aberdeenshire there are:

- Over 70% of stops with information panels
- Over 80% of stops displaying Traveline Scotland SMS bus time details
- Over 97% of timetable displays, with comprehensive and up-to-date information

At-bus stop satisfaction surveys carried out in June 2008 (102 passengers) gave the following results :

- 92% of passengers are aware of the information panels and that 70% make use of them.
- Of those passengers making use of the displays:
 - 85% consider the information 'easy to read'
 - 83% consider the information 'accurate and up-to-date'
 - 87% consider the information 'helpful'
 - 84% consider the content 'easy to understand', and
 - 99% that 'the publicity is maintained to a high standard'.

