

PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND POLICIES CONSULTATION: STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Ref.	ORGANISATION	COMMENT(S)	PROPOSED COUNCIL RESPONSE/ACTION
Subject Area 1: SECURING A HIERARCHY OF STRATEGIC AND LOCAL PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES			
1.	Individual (continued on next page)	The "hierarchy" suggested is not a measure of preference but a typology of public transport. It provides no guidance on where priorities may lie between these typologies and makes obvious and simplistic conclusions regarding the service delivery options. No realistic alternatives are provided to allow meaningful public debate about the policy.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>The table sets out the anticipated method of service delivery, but is not intended to be prescriptive. Decisions on methods of service delivery will be based on knowledge of the network, operational and financial constraints, demographics, market conditions, and local travel needs.</p> <p>Amend text in Section 4.2 of the Passenger Transport Strategy for clarification, amend heading to Network Typology, and remove column entitled Hierarchy Level from table.</p> <p>The proposed revised text to Section 4.2 is as follows:</p> <p>Passenger transport services (excluding dedicated school and social work transport services) vary in nature and may be categorised based on the geographical area that they serve. These services may be delivered in a variety of different ways and by different types of operators. The table below sets out the anticipated method of service delivery but is not intended to be prescriptive as the most appropriate method in each instance will be determined by local circumstances such as operational constraints, market conditions and local travel needs.</p>

			<p>[Table]</p> <p>As indicated, the services listed above will be provided by a variety of modes including conventional fixed route bus services and DRT (including community transport). The Council will assess the requirements of each service and will use the mode and means of service delivery which provides the best value solution to meet identified travel needs. All supported services will be open to the general public unless legislation requires the service to be operated on a restricted basis.</p>
2.	Individual	Rural Feeder and cross country should be fixed commercial serviced (unsupported).	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>However, it is unrealistic to expect the majority of rural feeder and cross country services to be provided on a commercial basis.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
Subject Area 2: SUPPORTED SERVICE PROVISION			
3.	Individual	People choose where they live - their responsibility for travel. Where individuals have mobility/health issues there is access to mobility allowances, which should then be reclaimed by the Council. Difficult to identify exact policies requiring amendment due to the mass of verbiage in the strategy.	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Individual policies are listed in Section 9 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy.</p>

4.	Individual	<p>The term within the policy, that Aberdeenshire Council will "seek to" maintain levels of service, results in a meaningless statement. It provides an opportunity for the Council to adhere to the policy even if it is undertaking fundamental changes (insofar as it "sought" to maintain the service but was unable to do so). This term should be removed to make the policy significantly stronger in setting out the Council's aspirations and allowing direct measurement of policy failure should it occur. The emphasis given to the use of the Performance Management Framework Model is misleading when the policy is clearly to use this and other subjective criteria to come to a decision. Greater clarity should be provided on the nature and legitimacy of these subjective criteria.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged.</p> <p>In each case, the Council would wish for the level of service to be higher than the minimum levels listed in Section 4.3.1 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy. However, there may be circumstances where provision of the level of service outlined, would not represent value for money and the advice to elected members from officers, to allow a decision to be taken, will always reflect this.</p> <p>Section 4.3.6 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy has been revised in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Performance Management Framework Model is used to compare services and rank the level of benefit that they provide. Should a service score poorly within the model other local factors will be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to fund the service, for example whether the withdrawal of the service would leave a settlement with no public transport. The final decision on awarding new or continuation bus service contracts lies with the Policy and Resources Committee.</p>
5.	Individual	<p>Choosing to provide a service based on population size may not take into consideration demographics such as age and lifestyle. There are some small settlements that may benefit from increased public transport to boost population and develop a younger average age. Or there may be a local industry that could benefit from increased transport to support employees. Catch 22 - an increase in transport may support the growth and sustainability of settlements. The supported service may be better placed with a Community Planning Group to identify need.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged.</p> <p>Local circumstance and travel needs are given consideration when evaluating whether to introduce or revise supported services.</p> <p>In identifying travel needs, the views of local Community Planning Groups will be taken into account and, whenever practicable, their views will be pro-actively sought by officers.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

6.	Individual	There is a need to target car users with the aim of reducing their impact on climate change.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>This is acknowledged in the Council's approved Local Transport Strategy, the Regional Transport Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
7.	Individual	Encouraging increased usage of passenger transport services will help to increase the viability of such services.	<p>Agreed.</p>
8.	Individual	<p>The provision of safe school transport in Aberdeenshire should be a top priority. The Scottish Government has clearly identified challenges and guidance has been provided. Aberdeenshire Council is not providing a safe service, particularly to primary school aged children living rurally, who are expected to walk 2 miles along busy, 60 mph roads with no street lighting. Providing opportunities for travel on a 'privilege basis' is NOT ACCEPTABLE when the current level of traffic along these routes renders them unsafe, even when accompanied by an adult. Aberdeenshire Council MUST provide safe walking footpaths or a safer travel option</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.8 and Policy 12.7 refer.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

9.	Donside Community Council	<p>The statement for minimum frequency needs to be more specific, Does the frequency relate to individual destinations or any destination from the settlement? If a rural settlement has 3 or 4 destinations this may mean that only one or two services per day run to any individual destination - the policy is not clear as to what criteria apply</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>The minimum frequency levels are based on providing a service to the nearest town and/or transport interchange point.</p> <p>Section 4.3.1 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy has been revised in light of this comment, as follows</p> <p>The minimum service level targets for each settlement relate to the provision of a service from the settlement to the nearest town or to an interchange point providing transfer onto a mainline bus service.</p>
10.	Newtonhill, Muchalls & Cammachmore Community Council (continued on next page)	<p>There is no mention of the 3 strategic growth areas in Aberdeenshire along the main arterial routes (A90 and A96) into Aberdeen from the south, north and west. If development is allowed to grow unrestricted in these areas it will have serious consequences on the economic future of north-east Scotland. The Passenger Transport Strategy must include explicit objectives aimed at preventing the A90 and A96 from becoming clogged. Public transport must be a preferred alternative to using cars for those commuting on these routes and combined with an integrated roads policy can deliver dramatic improvements in the way people travel to and from work, or commute to retail centres. If the public transport network does not reach into the settlements and the employment centres, then it will fail, and if the buses are not timetabled to suit people's needs, they won't use them.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The Nestrans Bus Action Plan highlights the A90 south as a priority corridor, in line with the adopted Regional Transport Strategy, Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan, and modal shift is a specific objective of the Passenger Transport Strategy (Section 3.2.2 refers).</p> <p>As the A90 (north and south) and A96 corridors are highlighted as strategic growth areas in the Council's Local Transport Strategy, any development which comes on stream will fall within the Strategic Transport Fund requirements</p>

		<p>The communities of Newtonhill, Muchalls and Cammachmore have very few services within the villages and need transport to reach employment, medical services, secondary schools, railway stations, and shops other than supermarkets. The current public transport service is far from ideal and recent reductions in the timetable have stretched it almost to breaking point.</p>	<p>The level of service provision to these communities will be considered in the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review, and raised with commercial service providers on the A90 south corridor. In doing, cognisance will be given to the transport requirements of the new developments on that corridor.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
11.	Buchan Area Management Team	<p>Request for consideration to be given to improving the level of public transport provision for New Pitsligo, as it is considered that the current facilities are unfairly poor when compared with settlements of a similar size.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The level of service provision for New Pitsligo will be considered as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p>
12.	Buchan Area Management Team	<p>Request for improved co-ordination of public transport services with prisoner release times at H M Prison (Peterhead).</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>This matter is currently under consideration and discussions are ongoing with Stagecoach Bluebird and HMP Peterhead/Grampian.</p>
Subject Area 3: FLEXIBLE SERVICES			
13.	Individual	<p>DRT provides a taxi service at a considerable discount for residents who make a lifestyle choice to live in unsustainable locations. This incentivises a settlement pattern which encourages remoter living. Many services are now geared to being delivered rather than accessed from a point.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

14.	Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT UK – Scotland)	Request for greater use of community transport, linking into the mainline corridor services.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>The valuable role of community transport is acknowledged in the Council's draft Passenger Transport Strategy (Section 4.4 refers). In terms of service delivery the Strategy is not prescriptive, and aims to adopt the mode and means of service delivery, which provides a best value solution. As such, community transport options will be considered, where this is a viable option (Section 4.2.3 refers).</p> <p>"Community Transport is highlighted in the Draft Passenger Transport Strategy as a potential service delivery option for rural feeder services. Acknowledging the request, the Network Typology Table in Section 4.2 has been amended to include Community Transport as an alternative service delivery option for supported DRT services in towns."</p>
Subject Area 4: FARES AND TICKETING			
15.	Individual	It is Important that the Council helps wee bus companies with their ticket machines because it's a difficult thing to do. This isn't mentioned in the document. I hope Council will keep doing this.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>Policy 14.4 has been revised in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will, within the resources and powers at its disposal, undertake measures to support operators who wish to enter or remain in the local bus service market, including the provision of electronic ticket machine back-office support.</p>
16.	Individual	Incentivising public transport is an important element of the policy, but care would have to be taken that public subsidy is not applied unjustly through, for example, the provision of a DRT system AND a discount on the fare paid. Better, perhaps, to encourage commercial services (such as taxis) with a single subsidy.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

17.	Individual	Do disagree with taxpayer subsidy to 16-20 year olds.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Council's pilot of discount fares for under-21's (U21 Mega Discount Scheme), promoted in partnership with commercial bus operators, is aimed at assisting young people in entering the employment market, and is in line with local and national policies on economic development, whilst also linking to the issues around road safety for the same user group.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
18.	Individual	Suggestion that Aberdeenshire Council contributes its thoughts to the Scottish Government with regard to the introduction of the Saltire Card.	<p>Suggestion noted.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council is currently working in partnership with Transport Scotland on a "smart ticketing" project and will continue to liaise with the national transport agency.</p>
19.	Individual	Praise for the Council's electronic ticket machine back-office assistance to operators, as well as for its own requirements.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>Policy 14.4 has been revised in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will, within the resources and powers at its disposal, undertake measures to support operators who wish to enter or remain in the local bus service market, including the provision of electronic ticket machine back-office support.</p>
Subject Area 5: CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL			
20.	Individual	Roll out the 16-20 fares throughout the region.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Expansion of the U21 Mega Discount Scheme is currently under consideration, with a view to rolling out the scheme in Buchan in spring 2014.</p>

21.	Individual	I agree on the whole but would ask that you look at the Taxi Card option. If memory serves this pays for the first £5 of a Taxi fare. A Taxi from say, Inverbervie to Montrose one way costs £30! Any Taxi is a serious financial outlay although a Taxi is probably a transport choice of last resort.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Council's TaxiCard Scheme, including the level of discount offered, is reviewed on a periodic basis.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
22.	Individual	The automatic assumption around concessionary travel that the elderly cannot fund their travel is erroneous.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme for older and disabled people is operated by Transport Scotland (national transport agency for Scotland). The Council's policy to provide concessionary travel on scheduled community transport services seeks to provide consistency with the national scheme.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment</p>
Subject Area 6: SERVICE RELIABILITY AND PUNCTUALITY			
23.	Individual	<p>School transport - buses need to be more reliable and on time. There are too many inconsistencies at the [REDACTED] School.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>This is an operational complaint which has been subject to previous investigation by the Public Transport Unit and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

24.	Individual	<p>The policy does not articulate how bus services are to be made reliable and punctual. Reference to partnerships is edifying but not particularly useful. Para 4.6.4 provides no guidance as to how the Council will "work with and assist" other authorities in this matter. What influence is available?</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 6.1 sets out the Council's aspiration to "investigate the opportunities for implementing bus priority and other traffic management measures which assist the reliability and punctuality of local bus services." Under the <i>Quality Partnership for Public Transport</i>, the Council will seek consideration of such measures.</p> <p>As outlined in Section 4.6.4 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy, data and survey resources will be provided to the appropriate regulatory authorities if requested.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
Subject Area 7: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND COMMUNICATION			
25.	Individual	<p>Satisfaction surveys and associated costs should lie with the service provider with Council oversight. Area Transport Fora should be integrated into existing local planning partnership groups.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey, conducted in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, and funded by Nestrans, covers a wide range of issues which include various areas of Council Public Transport service delivery, and also allows benchmarking with other local authorities.</p> <p>Community Planning Partnership Groups are invited to attend the Council's Area Bus Forums and their views are taken into account in identifying travel needs.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

26.	Individual	No guidance is provided on what will be done or what sanction will be applied if a 90% satisfaction level is not maintained	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>Should the overall satisfaction level target of 90% not be met, the Council will seek to identify ways of improving satisfaction rates, working in partnership with operators.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
27.	Individual	<p>If we have a problem with school transport can we attend the Fora? Many parents at the [REDACTED] School are not satisfied with the current school bus transport routes. It takes several months to get issues progressed - too long when children still need to use the service on a week-day basis.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Area Bus Forums are focussed on Public Transport and are not intended to cover School or Social Work Transport issues, which can be raised directly with the Council.</p> <p>This is an operational complaint, which has been subject to previous investigation by the Public Transport Unit and ongoing monitoring. Eight complaints have been received in relation to school transport at this school since the start of the current academic year. Of these, five have been found to be out with the control of the operator while appropriate action has been taken in relation to the remaining three complaints.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
28.	Donside Community Council	Customer satisfaction requires to be carried out twice per year to determine on a timelier basis the levels of customer satisfaction. This would allow the Council to deal with dissatisfaction of service on a timelier basis than at present especially in rural areas.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Passengers are encouraged to provide feedback to the Council and bus operators at any time and Area Bus Forums are held on a six-monthly basis.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

29.	Individual	<p>As a parent of children, who have attended Primary school, using the [REDACTED] bus service, I feel that parents' views and concerns over safety and reliability are not listened to. We (parents) are not consulted when tenders for bus school contracts are being given and in the past concerns that have been sent to the Council have been "misplaced" because of an apparently inadequate filing system.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>This is an operational complaint of a nature which would be subject to investigation by the Public Transport Unit (PTU) and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Policy 15.1 commits the Council to monitor passenger transport service delivery, including School Transport, using appropriate performance indicators and to annually publish the results. There are proposals to implement dedicated contract monitoring resources to ensure School Transport contracts are operated in line with Contract Specification in a safe, reliable and responsible manner. The Council's Passenger Transport procurement is governed by EU Regulations, domestic legislation and the Council's Financial Regulations. In relation to the concerns raised by the respondent, the Council is required to tender in an open, fair and transparent manner which allows any transport provider within the EU who can meet the Council's minimum standards to tender for the contract.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
30.	Nestrans	<p>Welcomes the commitment to continue to conduct an annual satisfaction survey of Aberdeenshire bus users to ascertain their perceptions of various aspects of bus delivery. It should be noted that this annual Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey is conducted in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and is funded by Nestrans.</p>	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>Additional Section 4.7.6 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy to be inserted accordingly, as follows:</p> <p>In addition, The Council will undertake a Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey on an annual basis, in partnership with Aberdeen City Council and Nestrans, to gauge customer satisfaction with all aspects of fixed route bus service delivery.</p>

Subject Area 8: INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

31.	Individual	Paragraph 4.8.4 is a welcome statement of clear, direct and unambiguous intent let down by a commitment to "endeavour" to achieve the objective. An action programme should specify what marketing campaigns the Council intends to support in coming years.	Comment noted. It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.
32.	Individual	I agree on the whole but would like to see leaflets produced in large print for visually impaired people. Given the increasing average age of our population and therefore more people with reduced vision it seems a good idea especially under the Equality Act 2010.	Comment noted. As outlined in the Council's Bus Information Strategy, timetables are available in large print on request, and all timetable leaflets conform to Disability Discrimination Act (2005) guidelines. Consideration will be given to increasing awareness of this facility. It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.
33.	Individual	Council needs to move from a provider role to ensuring compliance by the private companies in providing the statutory information.	Comment noted. The Council's draft Passenger Transport Strategy is predicated on partnership working, as is the Council's Bus Information Strategy. It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.
34.	Individual	There is a need to improve people's awareness of the transport options available to them.	Agreed. Policies 8.1 to 8.5 refer. It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.

35.	Nestrans	Consideration to be given to making reference to the GetABout partnership, of which the Council is a partner and which has been used to carry out significant public transport promotion, particularly in relation to the pre-Christmas period.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>All opportunities to promote the increased use of passenger transport are considered in discussion with key officers in Aberdeen City Council, Nestrans, Stagecoach Bluebird, and First Aberdeen, on a regular basis, and the opportunity to utilise the GetABout partnership is just one option that is considered.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
Subject Area 9: INFRASTRUCTURE			
36.	Individual	Nothing is said about the Council's aspiration with regards to shelters not in its ownership. Is there a case for accepting ownership of such facilities in order to provide a consistent high level of service? "Exploring the possibilities for" park and choose facilities is not a policy and should be recast with a firm statement of intent	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>It is not practical for the Council to accept ownership of private shelter facilities where these do not conform to the Council's criteria for bus shelter provision and/or shelter specification.</p> <p>Policy 10.4 has been revised, in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will develop Park and Choose facilities, including the development of 'mini-interchange hubs' on mainline public transport corridors, to provide dedicated interchange opportunities with walking, cycling, private transport and/or feeder fixed route and DRT passenger transport services.</p>

Subject Area 10: INTEGRATION

37.	Individual	Council needs to move from a provider role to ensuring compliance by the private companies in providing the statutory infrastructure and associated costs.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Council's draft Passenger Transport Strategy is predicated on partnership working. Operators are not statutorily required to provide public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
38.	Individual	Integration of passenger transport services should help increase their usage, as it improves journey planning from origin to destination.	<p>Agreed.</p>
39.	Kincardine and Mearns Area Management Team	Request for more references to rail, with regard to integration with bus services and integrated ticketing.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Whilst the planning and development of rail services is out-with the direct control of the Council, Section 4.10.4 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and draft Policy 10.2 both stress the important issue of bus services integrating with rail services, and Council officers work with their Nestrans colleagues to identify these issues and address them with the rail and bus companies.</p> <p>The Council's Fares and Ticketing Strategy includes an action to "encourage bus and rail operators to develop, and participate in, rail-bus "add-on" through tickets." PlusBus is available for rail passengers from Aberdeenshire travelling into Aberdeen.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

40.	Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT UK - Scotland)	Request for additional emphasis to be placed on land use and planning, linking into the effects on public transport.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The current development plans for the North East of Scotland have had significant input from the transport sector and the focus of much of the development is based along the key strategic transport corridors, so that the existing services can become more sustainable and any expanded services then become more viable more quickly. This also means that the travel choices for the population along those corridors become greater over time. The timing of this set of revised policies is such that they will influence the emerging Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan, the Main Issues Report of which has recently been published.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
Subject Area 11: SAFE SERVICES			
41.	Individual	<p>You need to do more to ensure that school buses are in good condition - non-working seatbelts and rear lights secured with tape are not safe. Many parents at the [REDACTED] School are concerned for the safety of their children when going to and from school. It however takes days or months to get anything changed.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>This is an operational complaint which has been subject to previous investigation by the Public Transport Unit (PTU) and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Policy 15.1 commits the Council to monitor passenger transport service delivery, including School Transport, using appropriate performance indicators and to annually publish the results. There are proposals to implement dedicated contract monitoring resources to ensure School Transport contracts are operated in line with Contract Specifications, in particular in a safe, reliable and responsible manner.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

42.	Individual	<p>So far, when parents have raised concerns over safety on the [REDACTED] buses, the concerns have been generally dismissed. Replies from the Council (from [REDACTED] in particular) have been curt and dismissive. On one occasion, [REDACTED] told the parent they were "wrong" about what had occurred because [REDACTED] had told [REDACTED] so.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>This is an operational complaint of a nature which would be subject to investigation by the Public Transport Unit and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
43.	Individual	<p>"Work with" does not go far enough for safety. Strict rules and rigorous enforcement of safety is required</p>	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency), Police Scotland, and the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland, are the enforcement agencies and statutory regulator with regard to vehicle safety.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
44.	Donside Community Council	<p>Policy does not include safe road conditions. As Aberdeenshire is particularly rural, winter travel conditions from rural or high altitude locations must be taken into account to satisfy passenger concerns.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The Council has robust adverse weather procedures for School and Social Work Transport services, and its Winter Maintenance Procedures include a "Primary Treatment Network" of 32 different gritting routes, followed by more minor roads, then by residential streets.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

Subject Area 12: SCHOOL TRANSPORT

45.	Individual	Regarding Policy 12.1, request for consideration to be given to reducing the minimum walking distance criteria in relation to the entitlement for free home-to-school transport for primary schoolchildren.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Reducing the above walk distance would have significant cost implications to the Council.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
46.	Individual	2 miles is a considerable distance for a 5 year old child to walk to school, especially in rural areas where there are no public footpaths, and usually fast cars on their way to work.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p>

47.	Individual	<p>The free transport for primary school kids who live out-with the 2 mile radius is not fair on people who live close to that 2 mile limit. Where there are no alternatives to public transport, walkways, street lights etc., there should be an appeal process or case by case basis consideration.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
48.	Individual	<p>There is no guidance on the maximum distance permissible to a PUDO location. There is no guidance as to what the criteria might be, that dictate whether an exception will be made to the 2-3km pickup radius, or whether this would be a "privilege" pickup.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>There is no specific Council policy relating to the maximum walking distance to/from a pupil Pick-Up/Drop-Off (PUDO) location for school transport, and therefore under policy the maximum walking distances for primary and secondary pupils equate to that under Policies 12.1 and 12.2 respectively.</p> <p>Internal guidance regarding walking distances to PUDOs will be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

49.	Individual	Children in rural areas where there is no pavement or street lighting should have free transport to & from school no matter how far they are from their allocated school.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
50.	Individual	ASN/Medical grounds should not automatically qualify for free transport – issues around mobility allowance and parental responsibility for access to transport (their own car/blue badge holders?). Same applies to pupils moving from in zone to out of zone schools – their choice.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.5 is to be revised, in light of comments received from the Banff and Buchan Area Committee, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will provide free home-to-school transport to pupils on educational and/or medical grounds, provided this has been authorised by the appropriate Head of Service based on objective assessment criteria.</p> <p>Out of Zone (OOZ) pupils do not automatically qualify for School Transport. Any OOZ transport provided is on a paid-for 'Privilege' basis where spare seats are available on an existing School Transport service and no additional costs are incurred by the Council.</p>

51.	Individual	<p>School pupils who have to travel out-with a 30 mph zone should not have to pay fares as they have to travel via roads with fast flowing traffic, which is extremely dangerous. Many parents with children in this category find it difficult to find the extra money needed for fares on top of the expense of providing money for lunch, when the child is too far from home to reasonably return at lunchtime. When there is more than one child in a family, the money required is excessive when fares are also required.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>The Council offers discounts on the price of Privilege School Transport where 3 or more children from a single family attend the same school and/or where pupils are entitled to free school meals.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
52.	Individual	<p>At present, privilege passes allocated to out of zone pupils are not allocated until the second or third week into the term. As a result, parents have to transport their pupils to the school until the seats are allocated, even though the school bus is going to school half empty, until Woodhill House see fit to send out bus passes. This is increasing the amount of traffic on the roads and at the school entrance at both start and end of the day, incurring additional costs to the parents and increasing carbon emissions. Some liaison should take place between the school and Woodhill House to speed up this process, as the school has an idea of how many pupils will be attending after summer holidays and how many available seats there are on the buses, thus enabling it to be sorted out before the start of term, as there are always plenty of seats left on the bus should there be any additional pupils starting.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Out of Zone (OOZ) Privilege School Transport passes are allocated at the earliest practicable opportunity following confirmation of in-zone pupil travel demands, with the aim of allocating all OOZ Privilege School Transport requests for which an available seat is identified by mid-September.</p>

53.	Individual (continued on next page)	<p>Regarding para 4.12.4: While Section 42 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 sets out the maximum distances pupils can be expected to walk to school, Section 51 of the 1980 Act "does not itself set any distance beyond which transport should be provided, in recognition of the fact that each school transport journey is different". It further states: "Scottish Ministers appreciate that authorities have to make difficult decisions, and there will be instances where individual pupils residing just within measured boundaries would not normally be entitled to free transport, whereas those residing just out-with the boundaries would qualify. Ministers expect authorities to keep under review their criteria on this provision by introducing added flexibility and taking into consideration the increased volume of traffic on our roads, the availability of crossings, sufficient pavement and footpaths, subways, built-up and wooded areas, adequate street lighting etc". With this in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2 mile limit is not a realistic limit for a child aged 4-11 where roads have no pavements, are often icy in Winter and have 60 mph speed restrictions in places, as is the case in [REDACTED] and its surrounds, and walking to school for the majority of our children would be either dangerous or impossible. 	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The requirements placed upon the Council by Section 51 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 (as amended) in relation to providing assistance to pupils to get to school are based upon the 'walking distances' as prescribed within Section 42 of the Act (2 miles for under 8 years old, and 3 miles for pupils aged 8 years or older). The measurement is made using the nearest available route. There is no reference made to the standard of the walking route required but it must be a recognisable route.</p> <p>Further, the same section of the Act requires the Council to make such arrangements as they consider necessary to assist pupils to access educational establishments but is not prescriptive in the arrangements to be made or in defining when these are necessary when the distance to the educational establishment is less than the prescribed 'walking distances'.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
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- The current option to pay for privilege seats on a bus shared with children who live only slightly further along the same road, seems extremely unjust given we are all affected by the same lack of safe walking options and the fact that we were not aware of the restriction when we purchased our house.
- It seems that folk who live less than 2 miles from the school, who are unable to walk due to lack of suitable pathways, are having to bear the cost of transport provision for those who live over 2 miles away, and it should not be assumed that those who live less than 2 miles away have any greater disposable income than those who live more than 2 miles away. With rising fuel costs and council taxes, the cost of rural living is greater than ever for ALL families.
- If the Council has a duty to lay on free transport for families living over 2 miles from school, it will not cost any extra to offer the same free transport service to those who live 1.5 or 1 mile from the school, but it WILL make a massive difference to these families' disposable monthly incomes
- I urge the Council to follow the guidance of Section 51 of the 1980 Act and make free school transport accessible to ALL Primary aged children who do not have access to pathways, tracks or pavements and are therefore not in a position to walk safely to school, regardless of distance.

[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]

54.	Formartine Community Planning Partnership	Request for clarification regarding the term "home" in home to school transport, as many pupils walk some distance to access this (Policy 12.5 refers).	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The term 'home-to-school' is accepted terminology to differentiate pupil travel to/from school from other school transport, such as travel between establishments, to/from music centres, etc.</p>
55.	Individual	<p>I disagree with your policy of no free school transport for pupils who live within the 2 mile walking distance of their school. In areas around small villages the 2 mile radius lies well out-with the village limits. Most, if not all, will not have reasonable walking paths or pavements for children aged 4-11 years. For many the only alternative to paying for school transport is to walk along unlit, unpaved and unclassified roads with 60 mph speed restrictions. This would sometimes occur in treacherous conditions as experienced in Aberdeenshire. To have to pay for the same service as non paying pupils who live 2 to 300 metres further away but have the same unsafe walking or cycling route to school is unjust. I recommend the guidance of Section 51 of the 1980 Act to make free school transport accessible to ALL Primary aged children who do not have access to pathways, tracks or pavements and are therefore not in a position to walk safely to school, regardless of distance. This should occur especially where a school bus service already operates so incurs no extra expense.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

56.	Individual	<p>12.3 – 45 mins max travel for primary school kids & 60 mins (75 mins for connecting services) max for secondary school kids is way too long. The normal journey time for all trips to school should be 30 mins with a max of 45 mins. The excessive journey times currently experienced by pupils is demonstrated by a journey of 11 miles that takes 20 mins by car taking 75 mins by school transport; just within current guidelines but still totally unreasonable.</p> <p>12.7 – There should be a definition/guidance of what constitutes an unsafe route to school and a means of assessing a route for safety by a competent independent authority. Plus the responsible adult assumption/component should be reviewed and linked to ages of children. As it stands it looks like the Council is seeking to minimise its costs by imposing too onerous a condition on what constitutes an unsafe route. It is 1.3 miles from the local school, the route is not very busy but it is fast, there are no footpaths & it is unsafe for kids to travel on their own. It is also unnerving for adults who may also have the additional encumbrance of pre-school kids to take with them as well. Is it reasonable to ask such a parent to walk 30 mins to school and 30 minutes back twice a day?</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>At present the average maximum journey time for primary school pupils is 21 min and for secondary school pupils is 35 min.</p> <p>The current and proposed policy on travel times allows for the rural nature of Aberdeenshire, with considerable travel distances involved to certain schools, and the efficient use of School Transport vehicles. To reduce the maximum or average travel times would incur significant additional expenditure as additional vehicles would be required to maintain the service.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer.</p> <p>Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>All walking route safety assessments are undertaken by the Council's Road Safety Engineering Unit using robust assessment criteria.</p> <p>Parents have a duty of care to their children. This includes a responsibility to escort them to/from school and/or school transport pick-up/drop-off locations as required.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
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57.	Individual	<p>The "two-mile" criterion (4.12.5) in rural situations is completely impractical and not actually calculated out as stated. Our school is 2.5 miles away by walking, but the Transport Unit work it out as the "shortest" distance not "walking route". By road we are 2 miles away so are therefore classed as "in-zone". This route is along the B979 where there are no pavements so you cannot walk on this very busy road - it would be too dangerous. It doesn't affect many families in the Shire - would you consider changing this rule so that all rural children can travel free, even within 2 miles. I'd love to walk to school with my children, but it simply isn't safe - I would say these families qualify for 4.12.4. 4.12.9 - I would question "The Council places a high priority on school transport safety" - please monitor the state of buses on a much more regular basis on the [REDACTED] School route!</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The route measured is the shortest walk route from the pupil's home and the school gate, using the Council's GIS System following roads and/or recognized footpaths.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 The 2 mile minimum walk distance for primary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport is more generous than that required by statute and also reflects the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>Regarding 4.12.9, this is an operational complaint of a nature which would be subject to investigation by the PTU and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
Subject Area 13: SOCIAL WORK TRANSPORT			
58.	Individual	Nice clear the Council WILL provide....	Comment noted.

59.	Individual	Transport costs should be reclaimed from recipients of mobility allowance – it's what it's for.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>There are currently no proposals to amend the Council's Social Work Charging and Allowances policy, which covers all social work services (Bulletin report to Housing and Social Work Committee, 28 March 2013, refers).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
60.	Individual	<p>There are grey areas of need, whereby some people may not be assessed as requiring a service, or may have a short period of illness that restricts mobility. Having a Social Work Assessment may exclude many people who need a service. Transport should not require a physical assessment as this forces many people into the SW/Council system. Be more innovative with transport provision and stop restricting services means testing. Example - if 6 people live in a remote area without any means of transport they all should be able to access the service that may be collecting the one person for adult services or day care. Technology and electronic ticketing will remove the need for cash transactions. Also community services and groups such as lunch clubs could time their provision around the available transport.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Assessments are undertaken to ensure appropriate services are provided to Social Work service users, including appropriate transport provision, and can be reviewed if the service users circumstances change on a temporary or permanent basis.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

61.	Aberdeenshire Council Social Work Service - Adult Day Services)	<p>4.12.12 – request the following amendment – delete "social work day care and adult learning centres' and replace with 'adult day services'</p> <p>4.12.13 – Delete the word 'free' at the start of this sentence</p> <p>13.1 – Delete the word 'free' in the first line.</p>	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.12.12 and 4.12.13 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy have been revised, in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>4.12.12 The Council operates a number of scheduled passenger transport services providing access to Adult and Older People’s Day Services. Transport is also provided on a ‘call out’ basis for social work service users as and when required. All transport services provided for social work service users will be commissioned as an integral component of the relevant Social Work Joint Commissioning Strategy.</p> <p>4.12.13 Home-to-day service transport will be provided to Adult Day Service users where: the distance involved is too long to walk independently without support; the service user is unable to access public transport; and, the service user has no or insufficient state benefits to support the cost of the transport required.</p> <p>Policy 13.1 has been revised in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will provide home-to-day services transport for users of Adult Day Services where: the distance involved is too long to walk independently without support; the service user is unable to access public transport; and, the service user has no or insufficient state benefits to support the cost of the transport required.</p>
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62.	Kincardine and Mearns Area Management Team	Regarding Policy 13.1, suggestion that the word "free" be removed, bringing it into line with Policies 13.2 and 13.3.	<p>Agreed</p> <p>Policy 13.1 has been revised in light of this comment, as follows:</p> <p>The Council will provide home-to-day services transport for users of Adult Day Services where: the distance involved is too long to walk independently without support; the service user is unable to access public transport; and, the service user has no or insufficient state benefits to support the cost of the transport required.</p>
Subject Area 14: SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROCUREMENT			
63.	Individual	Operational matters ember within Local Planning Partnership Groups and dissolve Area Transport Fora. £22m on supported services an unacceptable burden on your council taxpayers. The unstated cost of providing bus stops and hubs (bus stations) is wholly unacceptable – would you provide the land and building, at our expense, for Tesco?	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The majority of the £22 million expenditure is incurred in providing School Transport, which is a statutory obligation.</p> <p>Passenger Transport infrastructure Capital costs vary from year to year, with facilities provided for the benefit of Aberdeenshire residents.</p> <p>The Council's draft Passenger Transport Strategy is predicated on partnership working. Operators are not statutorily required to provide public transport infrastructure.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
64.	Nestrans	Consideration to be given to links to other organisations, for example, the Health Service, when considering vehicle availability, utilisation and efficiency.	<p>Agreed. Policy 10.8 refers.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

65.	Formartine Community Planning Partnership	Request for network improvements which offer a better service to the community and allow access to health & social care appointments.	<p>Comment Noted.</p> <p>The forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review will endeavour to take such improvements into consideration.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
66.	Individual	5.1.11 – I do not think that all of our school bus transport routes are delivered in a professional, safe and reliable way.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Policy 15.1 commits the Council to monitor passenger transport service delivery, including School Transport, using appropriate performance indicators and to annually publish the results. There are proposals to implement a dedicated contract monitoring resources to ensure School Transport contracts are operated in line with Contract Specification in a safe, reliable and responsible manner.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
67.	Donside Community Council	Section 5.1.6 Delete the words "whenever practicable". Local community involvement in their service provision is required to ensure it meets their needs. If these words remain, it is an open invitation for the Council to impose its service provision on the community without necessarily meeting their needs. It is not difficult to involve local community representatives at the planning stage to ensure their voices are heard.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>It is the intention to engage with local communities, but in certain circumstances, for example in the case of the need to secure services on an emergency basis, this may not be practicable.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

68.	Nestrans	Reference to be made to the fact that transport has been identified as one of five priorities for Aberdeenshire's Community Planning Partnership and that the delivery of policies in this strategy directly links to outcomes identified in the Single Outcome Agreement.	<p>Agreed.</p> <p>Amend Section 1.1 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy to make reference to the key role that transport plays across Community Planning Partnerships and the Single Outcome Agreement.</p> <p>Text to be added to Section 1.1 is as follows:</p> <p>The Council's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) with the Scottish Government, 2013 - 2023, identifies five local priorities including Transport with another two priorities having direct links to transport provision: Older People and Community Care, and Supporting Communities and Volunteering. These were identified by the Community Planning Partnership having undertaken a strategic assessment and priority-setting exercise. The delivery of the Passenger Transport Strategy will facilitate the delivery of medium and long term outcomes highlighted in the SOA.</p>
Subject Area 15: PERFORMANCE MONITORING			
69.	Individual	Satisfaction should also be reported to the Committee.	<p>Agreed. Policy 15.1 refers.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
70.	Individual	Too detailed (and therefore too costly) - prioritise youth top three, compel providers to provide their evaluation and Council focus on the outcomes/compliance.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Operators are required to provide monitoring data to the Council, at no cost to the authority.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

71.	Individual	Aberdeenshire Council has expressed a commitment to reviewing School Transport Policy. However, in reality, this is a very difficult matter to raise with the Council. Please state where the evidence of performance monitoring for this particular stakeholder group can be reviewed.	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 7.4 will commit the Council to annually undertake and publish the results of a School Transport customer satisfaction survey.</p> <p>Policy 15.1 commits the Council to monitor passenger transport service delivery, including School Transport, using appropriate performance indicators and to annually publish the results. There are proposals to implement a dedicated contract monitoring resources to ensure School Transport contracts are operated in line with Contract Specification in a safe, reliable and responsible manner.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
72.	Individual	Your draft policy on performance monitoring is fine but how strictly is the performance of contractors actually monitored?	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The service delivery performance of all contractors is monitored, within available resources, by means of programmed monitoring and spot checks, and the analysis of electronic data.</p> <p>In the case of school transport services, additional staff monitoring resource will commit to this area of service delivery.</p>
Subject Area 16: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS			
73	Individual	This is the first time I have seen this - thank you for bringing it to my attention via email. I think it's great that Aberdeenshire Council are beings so proactive.	Comment acknowledged.

74.	Individual	<p>I did not get any sense of what is to be achieved from the policies - what measures success? I note you are not adhering to the National Standards for Community Engagement in the way in which you are conducting this consultation</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Through the setting of the agreed policy framework it will then be possible to bring forward a number of options for a revised network of services that will deliver the wider strategic objectives of the Council and comply with the adopted policies.</p> <p>The consultation exercise has adhered to Aberdeenshire Council's agreed Consultation Standards and was agreed by the relevant management team and Committees of the Council.</p>
75.	Individual	<p>Utilising the despatch centre for community transport groups and linking with volunteer co-ordinators may improve local services and provide cross border cover e.g. community transport in Rhynie may have volunteers that could support Strathdon. 10.7 – It would be useful to allow community groups to have access to more AC minibuses especially at weekends and evenings</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The Council's Transport Despatch centre is focussed on providing a trip booking facility for Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) customers. However, the Council will also endeavour to assist community transport groups through ongoing liaison and administration of the Aberdeenshire Community Transport Forum.</p> <p>Council minibuses are made available to community groups whenever practicable. As part of the review of service delivery, 'in-house' passenger transport vehicle utilisation will be considered and any opportunities to maximise utilisation, including operation by community groups, will be investigated.</p>

76.	Individual	<p>Allocation of school transport should be sorted out before the school returns after the summer holidays, so that all pupils whether entitled to free transport or paying for privilege passes are aware of whether they have a place on the bus before they return to school. The uncertainty causes stress and as privilege passes are not issued until the second or third week back at school, parents have to transport their children to school themselves, thus increasing the traffic on the roads, increasing carbon emissions, increasing the traffic at the school, and reducing the safety of the children at the entrance to school. As there is a cut off date for applying for privilege passes, this could all be sorted out well in advance of the school going back.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>During the summer period, In-Zone Privilege School Transport passes are allocated and issued alongside 'Entitled' School Transport passes. All In-Zone Privilege and Entitled School Transport passes applied for in good time are dispatched in advance of the schools returning in August.</p> <p>Out of Zone (OOZ) Privilege School Transport passes are allocated at the earliest practicable opportunity following confirmation of in-zone pupil travel demands, with the aim of allocating all OOZ Privilege School Transport requests for which an available seat is identified by mid-September.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
77.	Individual	<p>I am really concerned that school transport comes so far down the priority list. These children are our future and should not be excluded from free fares. The 2 and 3 mile rules are ridiculous. Change it to children who have to travel from out-with a 30 mph zone. To my mind this makes more sense.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>It is assumed this comment refers to Paragraph 4.3.5 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy document, which refers to travel by non-entitled pupils on supported local bus and DRT services and is not related to dedicated School Transport services.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 and 12.2 refer. The respective 2 and 3 mile minimum walk distances for primary and secondary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport are more generous than that required by statute, and also reflect the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

78.	Individual	<p>The service between Aberdeen and Stonehaven has deteriorated i.e. Less frequent than previously. The No. 7 is now hourly and the X7 runs at the same time. The X6 and X7 do provide a half hourly service between Aberdeen and Stonehaven but not into Portlethen and Newtonhill.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The recent revisions, to these commercially operated bus services, is acknowledged. The overall level of service on the corridor will be considered in the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p>
79.	Individual	<p>I have been a very vocal critic of the reduced service Aberdeen-Balmedie-Aberdeen since the withdrawal of Fraserburgh and Peterhead services including Balmedie on their route. At first the last bus from Aberdeen was 22:00 and there were gaps in the schedule early evening, I have to say there have been slight improvements over time and this is welcomed e.g. last bus from Aberdeen is now 22:40 and Nightbird bus now goes through Balmedie at the weekend, also some of the evening gaps have been addressed but not enough. The last bus time is still a major problem though, and it is incredible that a place the size of Balmedie cannot have a more reasonable last bus exit time from Aberdeen of approx 23:15-23:30, giving customers/passengers the chance to attend Cinema, Theatre, AECC, Dine out etc without having to rush for the last bus or wait 3 hours for the first Nightbird. Note in this 3 hour period there are departures at 23:05 (68), 23:40 (61) and 00:15 (N62), all excellent departure times but do not go near Balmedie and will not stop to let you off the bus NEAR Balmedie.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The level of service to/from Balmedie will be considered as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p>

80.	Individual	<p>Buses fit for purpose. Not rattling, screeching buses currently in use. Easily accessible, comfortable for hour long journeys, Heating in winter not in summer, Clean inside, bells easily accessible so one does not have to stand by driver and possibly end up on the floor as the driver stops abruptly, drivers who allow elderly, disabled passengers to be seated before lurching off from bus stops. Smoother driving.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The quality of vehicles deployed on supported local bus services will be considered as part of the forthcoming Council Passenger Transport Procurement Review.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
81.	Individual	<p>It will be almost impossible for the public to be weaned off using their cars. The buses don't go where the public want/need at the times that they want/need. Whilst it may be relatively easy to get about on radial routes there are few services that cross East to West. More effort needs to be put into integrating all the forms of transport.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to opening up School transport to paying members of the public & allowing pupils to take different school bus to normal (providing spaces are available) to a friend's, or other, place, not just the designated drop off point. Where there is a suitable public service allowing pupils to use that, rather than the school bus, may make the take up of after school activities more possible.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Where there is known public demand, School Transport services are operated as joint Local Bus/School Transport Services and therefore are available for public use. There is no proposal to amend this practice.</p> <p>Where seats are available, pupils can apply for a paid-for privilege place on a School Transport service to a location other than the pupil's home. Similarly, where Local Bus and DRT services are available, pupils may use these to travel to locations other than their home or use them to access after school activities.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

82.	Individual	In general, there requires to be a cultural shift in the Council's mode, from being a provider of transport to non-entitled individuals (out-of-zone; mobility allowance holders; blue badge and access to private car) and heavy subsidiser of private transport companies (their responsibility to fund their infrastructure etc- not for us to generate their profits), to a culture of compliance and advice.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
83.	Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT UK - Scotland)	Compliments the Council on an "excellent piece of work", as "it sets out the duties, obligations and outcomes in a common sense manner is an excellent example of collaborative working between the local authority and its bus operators, without the need for any formal/statutory arrangements".	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p>
84.	Individual	I realise this is a huge subject that involves thousands of people and very complex transport issues. It would however be great if we could see much faster progress on school transport issues without the need for our local councillors to contact the Chief Executive! Parents are simply looking for a safe and reliable service - nothing more. It feels as if someone from our school needs to be employed on a part-time basis to monitor the bus service we receive to keep things on track. I'm sure most of your policies are absolutely fine, they just need better enforcing. The strategy seems as if it's been written for transport experts not the public and this is a long survey to fill out!	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 15.1 commits the Council to monitor passenger transport service delivery, including School Transport, using appropriate performance indicators and to publish the results on an annual basis. In addition, there are proposals to implement dedicated contract monitoring resources to ensure School Transport contracts are operated in line with Contract Specifications in a safe, reliable and responsible manner.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

85.	Individual	<p>I comment as a visually impaired person with a mild hearing loss. These are typical problems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of the vehicle as a bus and then reading the bus number in time for it to stop. 2. Boarding the vehicle safely. 3. Purchasing a ticket or using my Travel Card is very difficult when the bus has the clear plastic screen in front of the driver - finding the hole to put the ticket through and onto the machine is difficult. 4. Ticket purchased - using limited vision to find a seat - finding a stanchion to hold onto when seat found. 5. Identifying the correct stop to alight. Especially during winter when no landmarks can be seen or when bus windows are covered in thick grime. 6. Descending safely from the bus. 7. Have your drivers come and talk to visually impaired or hearing impaired groups. 8. On holiday in Boston (USA) transport links have a visual and audible display naming the next stop - would that be an idea for our buses? 9. Drivers given Sensory Awareness Training? 	<p>Comments acknowledged and will be raised with relevant operators.</p> <p>The Council is endeavouring to assist users, including those with disabilities, and has independently, or in partnership with operators, introduced a number of initiatives, including audio-visual announcements on vehicles operating on the Deeside corridor and audio bus service departure announcements at a number of key interchange points.</p> <p>Disabled groups are invited to attend the Council's Area Bus Forums, at which their members have raised such matters with local bus operators. Comments received by Council officers in this regard, are also passed to, and discussed with, local bus operators. The Council's procurement exercise in 2014/2015 will specify Disability Discrimination Act compliant vehicles on all local bus service contracts.</p> <p>Stagecoach provide <i>Journey Assistance Cards</i> to help people with hearing, sight, mobility, or speech, problems get the help they need when using buses. The <i>Card</i> lets a bus driver know of the passenger's disability, so they can provide the appropriate assistance. Disability Awareness training is standard for all Stagecoach Bluebird drivers.</p> <p>Social work, partner organisations and service users are looking at developing service user led training for transport providers and other infrastructure service providers to increase their awareness of disabilities and to improve equality of access to services. This opportunity will be brought to the attention of the relevant operators, who will be actively encouraged to participate in, and support, the programme.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
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86.	Formartine Community Planning Partnership	The issue of the impact of Welfare Reform on public transport provision was raised, such as needing to travel daily to sign on at job centres.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>In reviewing the Passenger Transport network, local travel needs will be taken into account.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
87.	Donside Community Council	<p>Priority appears to be given to main transport corridors to the detriment of rural communities. For example the transport provision for the Donside corridor from Alford to Aberdeen was reduced due to funding being transferred to another area. Whilst we agree with the principle "use it or lose it", potential public transport users will continue to use alternative modes of transport until reliability of passenger service and punctuality is vastly improved particularly in rural Donside. Communication by the Council to communities on their actions to improve reliability and punctuality is sadly lacking. Bus forums every six months do not meet transport users expectations on communication. Council should also look more favourably on quality of service rather than on price where legislation allows before awarding contracts. Targets should be set on problem routes and operators should be made to adhere to a "3 strikes and you're out" mind set,</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Bus services on the "main transport corridors" are predominantly operated on a commercial basis. The level of service on the Donside corridor will be considered as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p> <p>Whilst Area Bus Forums are only held every six months, comments and concerns can be raised directly with the Public Transport Unit and/or local bus operators, at any time.</p> <p>The quality of service will be considered as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Procurement Review, prior to the next major Passenger Transport procurement exercise in 2015.</p> <p>Regarding contract compliance, the Council operates a Penalty Points System (Policy 15.2 refers), which will also be subject to review.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

88.	Formartine Community Planning Partnership	The impact of changing timetables on those with learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder or mental health issues was raised; as such people rely on and require routine.	<p>Comment acknowledged.</p> <p>The Council continues to lobby commercial bus operators to minimise the frequency of service revisions.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
89.	Transport Operator	When tendering school transport contracts, the Council currently award on 'lowest cost' basis at present. We would like this award policy reviewed and we feel that quality should be taken into consideration. Emissions also play a vital role and the Council should consider this as a way forward to provide newer, safer and more compliant vehicles for the carbon footprint. Some other Councils, like Moray Council, do award on 60/40 in favour of quality before cost. Safety is absolutely paramount and things like maintenance records, OCRS scores (for PCV operators), taxi/private hire pass and failure rates should also be taken into consideration. When tendering larger sized PCV size buses and coaches, the Council currently allows a non PCV operator to undertake a single contract with several vehicles 9 i.e., 3 x 8 seat minibuses instead of one single 24 seat). This also increases traffic and pollution in towns and schools bus bays where space is already tight.	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 14.5. In the case of all Passenger Transport Service contracts including School Transport and Social Work Transport, minimum quality standards are included in all service specifications. Consideration will be given to the option of adopting quality and cost criteria in contract award of School Transport and Social Work Transport services, as is currently the case with Local Bus and DRT services, as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Procurement Review.</p> <p>The Council is committed to the UK Climate Change Act 2008 and Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and the subjects of emission standards and sustainable development will be reflected in the forthcoming Passenger Transport Procurement and Network Reviews.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
90.	Formartine Community Planning Partnership	Request for consideration to be given to the relationship between the draft strategy and the Older People's Charter.	<p>Comment noted. The draft Passenger Transport Strategy objectives and policies are compatible with the draft Older People's Charter.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

91.	Tactran	<p>Noting paragraph 1.2.2 Tactran would be pleased to work with Aberdeenshire and Angus Councils on cross-boundary issues. There is a need to consider specifically the Brechin - Laurencekirk corridor as it provides access to Stracathro Hospital and noting the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan designation of the Aberdeen – Laurencekirk Strategic Growth Area. Tactran's RTS Delivery Plan includes a project to provide a multi-modal interchange on the A90 at Brechin incorporating a park & ride facility for linking into coach services. This would serve demands northwards to Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen and south to Dundee.</p>	<p>Comments acknowledged.</p> <p>Cross boundary linkages with Angus and Perth & Kinross to be considered as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p>
92.	Individual	<p>This is an opportunity for Aberdeenshire Council to get it right for the people and communities who live and work here. Failure to do so puts those with limited or no access at even more of a disadvantage. Perhaps more use would be made of public transport (i.e. buses) if they ran to schedule; were cost efficient and fit for purpose; included access to remote and rural areas; were more widely publicised and advertised; ran in accordance with a working day; and in general supported people to live and work in the area, as well as allowing access to essential services such as medical centres; dentists offices; town centres; sheltered housing etc.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

93.	Individual	<p>Aberdeenshire Council Transport Services inform me that my family lives 1.9 miles from [REDACTED] School. My children have to walk .5 miles to the road end to meet the school transport which is a 'privilege' afforded to them by Aberdeenshire Council. My heart is in my throat every morning as I watch my young children cross the road to the school bus with cars overtaking the bus on one side and cars approaching at speed from around a blind corner on our side. It is an accident waiting to happen. I have 3 children. When all 3 were at primary school, the cost of 'privilege' transport was prohibitive. I was restricted in my employment opportunities due to having to transport my children to school and home each day. We live off the [REDACTED] Road. It beggars belief how my 5 year old daughter was expected to walk that route daily, especially in the dark! Our school spent a long time on a School Travel Plan, children are encouraged to walk or ride bicycles when it is safe to do so. The only route available to my family is the [REDACTED] Road - 60 mph, outer limits, a twisty, winding, steep road with no street lighting. This is a route used by large lorries connecting with the [REDACTED] Road, and the villages of Aboyne, Alford, Tarland and Torphins. Yet when this has been raised with Aberdeenshire Council, we feel like we are hitting a brick wall.</p> <p><i>[COMMENT REDACTED AS CONTAINED IDENTIFIABLE PERSONAL INFORMATION]</i></p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Policy 12.1 and 12.2 refer. The respective 2 and 3 mile minimum walk distances for primary and secondary school pupils to qualify for 'entitled' (free) school transport are more generous than that required by statute, and also reflect the approach taken by other local authorities.</p> <p>The Council offers discounts on the price of Privilege School Transport where 3 or more children from a single family attend the same school and/or where pupils are entitled to free school meals.</p> <p>As noted in response to Ref.48, internal guidance regarding walking distances to Pick-Up/Drop-Off (PUDO) locations will be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p> <p>The Council's Road Safety Engineering Unit (RSEU) undertakes a safety assessment of any PUDO locations where safety concerns are raised. These PUDO assessments are undertaken using rigorous assessment criteria.</p> <p>Policy 12.7 and Policy 12.8 refer. Aberdeenshire Council places emphasis on school transport safety. The provision of transport on a paid for 'privilege' and/or fare paying basis is considered to offer a safe alternative to walking for pupils who live less than the minimum walking distance from the school (see Policies 12.1 and 12.2).</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
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94.	Individual	<p>It is imperative that this is fit for purpose. People living in rural areas, and in some urban areas, are without access to private transport, and fit under the heading of 'excluded'. Transport structures need to be robust and visibly promote 'inclusion'. The disadvantaged should not be even more disadvantaged - where the Council has previously saved millions from its annual budget, more investment into integrated public transport systems that are fit for purpose could have been made a priority and benefitted from some investment.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Issues of social inclusion require to be taken into account as part of the forthcoming Passenger Transport Network Review.</p> <p>As outlined in Section 3.2.2 (first bullet point refers) of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy, the importance of this issue is acknowledged.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
95.	Mearns Community Council	<p>The transport system seems to be set up for the benefit of pensioners and school children. Others seldom use it.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>The draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies are aimed at all age groups. This includes those without private means of travel and, in turn, by increasing the attractiveness of passenger transport in partnership with providers, it is intended to encourage modal shift.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>
96.	Mearns Community Council	<p>There is a lack of integration with other transport systems e.g. trains.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Whilst the planning and development of rail services is out-with the direct control of the Council, Section 4.10.4 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and draft Policy 10.2 both stress the important issue of bus services integrating with rail services, and Council officers work with their Nestrans colleagues to identify these issues and address them with the rail and bus companies.</p> <p>It is not proposed to change the draft Passenger Transport Strategy and Policies in light of this comment.</p>

97.	Mearns Community Council	Dial a bus was not successful.	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>Section 4.2 of the draft Passenger Transport Strategy advises that local circumstances will be taken into account when considering the type of service to be used in the provision of passenger transport services.</p> <p>It is presumed that the comment relates to the unsuccessful Laurencekirk A2B dial-a-bus service which was introduced at the time of the reopening of Laurencekirk rail station to provide door-to-door transport to connect with trains.</p> <p>It should be noted that Mearns A2B dial-a-bus (formerly known as 65 Special) is a popular service that has provided shopping trips to Montrose and Portlethen for over 20 years.</p>
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