

Agenda Item No

Report No 277/99

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE
ROADS COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 1999
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SUBJECT: LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGIES - PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT AND DIRECTOR OF ROADS

Abstract: This Report outlines the wide scope of Preliminary Guidelines issued by the Scottish Office on the preparation of Local Transport Strategies, summarises the current relevant policy context in Angus and indicates proposed arrangements for developing an interim strategy.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:-

1. note the terms of the preliminary guidance issued by the Scottish Office on preparing comprehensive Local Transport Strategies and Road Traffic Reduction Reports;
2. note the current policy context in Angus which provides a significant and substantive starting point for developing a Local Transport Strategy;
3. agree general arrangements as detailed in this Report for preparing an interim strategy for future consideration and agreement by the Council and subsequent submission to the Scottish Office.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Scottish Integrated Transport White Paper "Travel Choices for Scotland", published in July 1998, announced that the Government would be encouraging each local authority to develop a Local Transport Strategy, which will set out its plans and priorities for the development of an integrated transport policy within its area (Report 878/98 refers). Local authorities are also under a statutory obligation to report under the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 (Report 436/98 refers).
- 2.2 The Scottish Office have now issued Preliminary Guidance on Local Transport Strategies and the Road Traffic Reduction Act. The introduction of Local Transport Strategies is being implemented in two stages. Interim Strategies covering the period 2000/01 to 2002/03 should be submitted by 30 July 1999, and full strategies covering the period 2001/02 to 2003/04 by 31 July 2000. The preliminary guidance is intended to inform the preparation of interim strategies. Updated guidance will be issued by the Scottish Office in the autumn of 1999 to inform the preparation of full strategies in 2000, taking account of experience with the preparation of interim strategies.

- 2.3 It will not be obligatory for authorities to submit a Local Transport Strategy (though reports under the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 are required). However, the Government envisages local strategies fulfilling a crucial role in translating its new integrated transport strategy into action on the ground. For its part, the Government has indicated that it will attach significant importance to Local Transport Strategies in determining priorities for transport investment. In practice the Government would therefore expect most Scottish authorities to produce a Local Transport Strategy.
- 2.4 Copies of the Local Transport Strategies Preliminary Guidance document have been placed in the Members' Lounge.

3 SCOPE OF PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE

- 3.1 The Preliminary Guidance document is wide ranging in the scope of issues covered. The emphasis in the document is on summarising the Government's policy priorities on transport rather than providing detailed technical advice on how to address issues or provide answers. It is clear from the document that the Government intends that local transport strategies should be comprehensive in their coverage. At the same time the target timescales for preparing strategies are extremely short, including the submission of interim strategies by 30 July 1999.
- 3.2 The guidance suggests that interim strategies should enhance the government's integrated transport policy and show progress in delivering this on the ground; whilst identifying areas of uncertainty and what is being done to resolve them. Authorities are advised not to attempt to produce "polished" strategies in 1999 at the expense of proper debate and analysis; their work programmes should be geared to delivering robust final strategies in 2000.
- 3.3 A brief summary of the main points of the preliminary guidance is set out below for each of the seven Chapters of the document.

Chapter 1 : Objectives, Process and Timetable

- 3.4 This Chapter sets out the proposed timetable and process for the implementation of the new strategies and the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997. Main points include:-
- focus is on a local authority's plans for next three years set within a vision for integrated transport looking ahead 10 to 20 years;
 - strategies should be linked to the Development Plan (Structure and Local Plan) time horizons with short-term action programmes in longer-term context;
 - should cover all forms of transport and be designed to co-ordinate and improve local transport including measures to reduce social exclusion and to reduce environmental impact;
 - obligations under Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 should be considered and included in both interim and final strategies;
 - fundamental review of authority's transport strategies required to ensure strategies are searching and soundly based;

- two stage approach to implementation;
- context of Local Transport strategy in bidding for Public Transport Fund.

Chapter 2 : The Partnership Approach

3.5 Chapter 2 sets out the role of the various partner bodies in the process. Main points include:-

- role of National Transport Forum for Scotland and Regional Transport Partnerships (see also Report 276/99);
- relationship with National Roads Directorate, Transport Operators and Others;
- need to secure effective public participation and public involvement in preparing Local Transport Strategies including formal consultation with interested parties.

Chapter 3 : Addressing Diversity

3.6 Chapter 3 outlines the relevance of the Strategies to the diverse challenges facing different parts of Scotland including Cities; Larger Towns; Smaller Towns and Settlements; Rural and Remote Communities; Island Communities. The guidance on Smaller Towns and Settlements and Rural and Remote Communities is of most direct relevance to Angus and includes:-

- greater dependence on the car with public transport services vulnerable;
- accessibility is the main issue rather than congestion;
- peripherality and social exclusion significant issues;
- viability of accessible local services an issue;
- road traffic reduction unlikely to be a major issue.

Chapter 4 : Policy Linkages

3.7 Chapter 4 highlights important policy linkages including:-

- Land Use Planning where local transport strategies should flow from and be incorporated in Structure and Local Plans as appropriate including measures to reduce the need to travel, improve accessibility such as strategies for cycling and walking;
- environment policy including sustainability considerations such as climate change, Local Air Quality Management, Noise;
- a Sustainable Economy including reconciling business needs with environmental and social impacts of business related transport;
- social inclusion including scope to extend bus network; respond to travel needs of young, women, elderly; promote access for disabled people; reduce crime and fear of crime on public transport.

- 3.8 Section 4 of this Report discusses policy linkages in an Angus context and this is also further examined in Appendix 1 to this Report.

Chapter 5 : Format of Strategies

- 3.9 Chapter 5 sets out the suggested format for a Local Transport Strategy and provides advice on the five key elements identified as:-

- objectives, including a mix of aspirations and targets together with long and shorter term objectives;
- problems and opportunities, including an assessment of existing and future travel patterns and problems;
- long term strategy including justification for chosen strategy against other alternatives and priorities within the strategy taking account of role of Appraisal;
- implementation programme identifying both capital expenditure requirements and planned programme of revenue expenditure;
- Performance Indicators which can be used to assess whether the strategy is delivering the stated objectives.

Chapter 6 : Measures

- 3.10 Chapter 6 provides advice on the issues and objectives the Government expects Local Transport Strategies to address, and the principal policy measures to be considered in the preparation of strategies.

- 3.11 Local Transport Strategies are expected to help widen travel choices and measures are suggested for:-

- walking and pedestrianisation, including setting targets, implementing land use planning guidance, safety and security, road design and traffic management, potential for “clear zones”;
- cycling where authorities should draw on guidance in the National Cycling Strategy and produce a Local Cycling Strategy as part of the overall transport strategy;
- buses (which will be the subject of further more detailed guidance) including addressing support for socially desirable services; improvements to quality; needs of rural and urban areas; spending priorities; transport interchanges; passenger information; flexible ticketing;
- voluntary and community transport which are particularly important in rural areas;
- rail, including scope for maximising existing services; potential for developing park and ride facilities; potential for increasing frequency and capacity for new stations; options for encouraging freight onto rail;

- taxis and private hire vehicles including, role in rural transport; schemes for taxi sharing; priorities for road space;
 - mopeds and motorcycles including implications for safety, pollution, noise levels and efficient use of road space;
 - freight, including scope for partnerships, local distribution systems and potential for coastal shipping and inland waterways.
- 3.12 Measures identified in the Preliminary Guidance to encourage Better Integrated Transport include:-
- interchange improvements including more through-ticketing, better connections and co-ordination of services, wider availability of information and improved waiting facilities;
 - park and ride in appropriate circumstances as part of a package of traffic management measures;
 - public transport information improvements with the aim that accurate and up-to-date public transport information should be readily available about all services through a variety of media.
- 3.13 Priority to the maintenance of the Local Roads Network is encouraged this representing local authorities single largest transport asset. Measures discussed, include:-
- maintenance and bridge strengthening including associated responsibilities for footways, winter maintenance, street lighting, drainage and sweeping;
 - new schemes where Local Transport Strategies should review the rationale for major road schemes whether actively under preparation or at an earlier stage of consideration and including standard appraisal criteria;
- 3.14 A high priority remains Road Safety setting out how the authority plans to reduce the number and severity of road traffic casualties including targets and priorities for action.
- 3.15 Traffic management and Demand Restraint is to be considered for:-
- traffic management in urban areas to re-allocate road space and give greater priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
 - traffic management in the countryside including issues arising from excessive speed and use of unsuitable routes by through traffic;
 - road user charging and workplace parking levy, further details of which are to be announced;
 - working with retailers and leisure operators to reduce car dependency for access to schemes;

- parking including role in overall strategy; balance between short and long stay and level of charges; application of parking standards and use of parking powers.
- 3.16 Travel Awareness is identified as an important part of meeting the challenge including:-
- green transport plans including commuter plans, employee travel, freight logistics;
 - travel awareness initiatives and campaigns;
 - surveys of public attitudes to local transport options;
 - travel to school where an integrated strategy is required for reducing car use and improving children's safety on the journey to school.

Chapter 7 : Resources and Policy Tools

- 3.17 The final chapter of the Preliminary Guidance document summarises the resources and tools available to assist local authorities in developing their strategies. It includes comments on:-
- resources, including additional sources of funding such as the Public Transport Fund; funding for Rail Schemes; the Rural Transport Funding Package;
 - costs of strategy preparation including the need to commit more resources to consultation/partnership working;
 - traffic data, including existing data and traffic information collected by the Scottish Office;
 - traffic modelling, including requirements of the Road Traffic Reduction Act and reference to the Central Scotland Transport Model.

4 DISCUSSION

Reviewing Existing Policy Background

- 4.1 The Preliminary Guidance recognises that the introduction of formal Local Transport Strategies does not mean that authorities will need necessarily to develop strategies from scratch. In Angus the current relevant policy context is summarised in Appendix 1 to this Report and includes:-
- the Council's Key Themes and Corporate Priorities;
 - the Tayside Structure Plan 1993;
 - the Angus Local Plan;
 - the Council's Public Transport Policy Statement;
 - interim Roads Policies adopted by the Council;
 - the Council's Environment Strategy;
 - the Rural Strategy adopted by the Council;
 - local Air Quality Management.

- 4.2 The Scottish Office indicate that the proposals in the Preliminary Guidance document are consistent with the report of the Community Planning Working Group, which set out a framework for developing local partnerships between local authorities and other key agencies in the public sector and beyond to promote the well-being of the communities they serve. Progress to date in preparing the Angus Community Plan highlights several areas in which the development of aims and proposals will also help inform the Local Transport Strategy process, including sustainability, environment, the economy, accessibility, social inclusion and community safety.
- 4.3 An early stage in the preparation of the Angus Local Transport Strategy will therefore be to review elements of the Council's existing and emerging transport strategies as encompassed in 4.1 and 4.2 above. This should ensure and demonstrate that a co-ordinated and integrated approach is developed which takes full account of and is consistent with the Government's transport objectives as set out in the White Paper and further detailed in the Preliminary Guidance document. It should also serve to clarify and confirm significant inputs to several major elements of the Local Transport Strategy, including the analysis of problems and opportunities, and the setting of a vision and objectives. This is further discussed in the following two sections on General Aims and Working Arrangements for Strategy Preparation.

General Aims and Objectives for an Angus Local Transport Strategy

- 4.4 Accessibility is a key issue in Angus as recognised in several of the related strategy documents in 4.1 and 4.2 above. This is highlighted by the geography of Angus, encompassing a network of towns and villages set in a diverse countryside, and links with other areas. Although the main towns in Angus provide opportunities to reduce the need to travel long distances, for many people and particularly those who live in rural areas, travel is a necessary part of daily life. For some purposes travel outwith Angus is necessary from both the towns and countryside. In rural areas of Angus, especially the remoter areas, there has been a long term decline in the availability of local services both public and private increasing the need to travel.
- 4.5 Arising from the above a broad overarching aim which can be drawn from the various existing documents summarised in 4.1 and discussed in Appendix 1 to this Report is:-
- to maintain and improve accessibility for all sectors of the Angus community in the most environmentally friendly way.
- 4.6 In addition to ensuring that transport infrastructure adequately supports business and residents needs, this aim requires that transport policies are fully aligned with other social, economic and environmental policies of the Council. Broad objectives to be developed for the Local Transport Strategy in support of this aim should address the need:-
- to promote integration between transport, land use, social and economic policies aimed at reducing the need for travel;
 - to improve the convenience and efficiency of transport services for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses;
 - to minimise the effect of transport movements on the environment;
 - to minimise the number of accidents associated with the transport network.

Working Arrangements for Strategy Preparation

- 4.7 Report 878/98 recognised the need to involve several departments of the Council in the preparation of a Local Transport Strategy. This has been reinforced by the terms of the Preliminary Guidance document which confirms that:-
- strategies should cover all forms of transport and extend across a wide range of local authority activities and responsibilities;
 - local authorities will need to work closely with transport operators;
 - effective public involvement should be demonstrated.
- 4.8 In order to best address these requirements and progress preparation of a draft Interim Strategy it is suggested that:-
- an Officer Working Group, chaired by the Department of Planning & Transport, be formed with representation from the Departments of Roads, Education, Environmental & Consumer Protection, and Social Work, together with the Chief Executive's Department;
 - the need for specialist consultancy advice be kept under review, including the appointment of consultants as appropriate.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Preparation of a Local Transport Strategy for Angus is a new burden and will require the commitment of significant staff resources mainly from the Planning & Transport Department and Roads Department but also including several other departments. In addition there may be requirements arising from the Road Traffic Reduction Act (Report 436/98 refers) and for specialist consultancy advice. At this initial stage it is suggested that the Committees note the position subject to progress on the preparation of a draft interim Local Transport Strategy.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Law & Administration, Director of Education, Director of Environmental & Consumer Protection and Director of Social Work have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Publication of Preliminary Guidance on Local Transport Strategies is one of the key follow-up documents to the Integrated Transport White Paper. The guidance issued is extensive in scope and demanding in terms of timescales for submission of initially interim strategies followed by finalised strategies.

- 7.2 This Report identifies and comments on a raft of existing policy documents in Angus which help set the framework for preparation of a Local Transport Strategy submission. In order to progress this important area of work, arrangements are suggested for an inter-departmental Officer Working Group and for consideration of specialist consultancy advice if required.
- 7.3 The Government has indicated it would welcome comments on the advice contained in the document and has set the same timescale for responses as for the submission of interim strategies, namely 30 July 1999. In practice the preparation of views on the preliminary guidance will therefore be undertaken in parallel with the formulation of an interim strategy. Progress on this will be reported to future meetings of the Committees.

NOTE

The following background paper, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) was relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report:-

- Travel Choices for Scotland : Local Transport Strategies Preliminary Guidance - published by Scottish office Development Department, February 1999.

AA/CGR/KW
1 March 1999

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APPENDIX 1

POLICY LINKAGES - ANGUS POLICY CONTEXT

To be effective Local Transport Strategies need to capture the linkages to related policy areas. In Angus the analysis of problems and opportunities, and identification of relevant objectives in the Local Transport Strategy should draw on and integrate various aims and priorities already agreed by the Council in relation to a range of documents as summarised below:-

Key Themes and Corporate Priorities

The Strategic Planning approach adopted by Angus Council encompasses several Key Themes and Corporate Priorities which help to set a broad context for the preparation of the Angus Local Transport Strategy including:-

- to aim to provide excellent public services, maximising the use of available resources to meet local needs;
- to improve economic prosperity in Angus;
- to improve the environment and the quality of life in Angus, with an emphasis on sustainability;
- to promote equal opportunities/reduce inequalities in Angus;
- to develop partnerships.

Development Plan

The Development Plan (Structure and Local Plans) provides the means for examining the relationships between transport and land use planning, for promoting their integration and co-ordination, and for ensuring that they contribute to strategies to reduce the need to travel. It provides a statutory framework within which competing demands for land use can be evaluated in relation to the objectives of sustainable transport policy. The Angus Local Transport Strategy should take account of this framework in developing locally an integrated approach to planning for transport, land use and the environment.

The Tayside Structure Plan 1993 approved by the Secretary of State in 1997 is the current Structure Plan covering Angus (as well as Dundee and Perth and Kinross). The Structure Plan Development Strategy emphasises the links between employment and communications infrastructure. Strategic aims for transport and communications are:-

- to reduce the effects of Tayside's peripherality from the major European and U.K. markets;
- to utilise transport infrastructure to promote economic development and improve living conditions;
- to ensure that transport policy contributes to addressing issues of sustainability.

In translating these aims into specific actions the following measures in the Structure Plan are considered to be particular priorities in Angus:-

- improvements to road links to both Arbroath and Carnoustie;
- enhanced sea links with Europe;
- reducing the need to travel particularly by car for longer distance journeys between home and workplace;
- restraining further growth in the use of private transport where public transport can meet a greater part of future travel demand;
- further developing provision for cycling and walking as important transport modes particularly for local trips, the safety and attractiveness of which need to be enhanced;
- the needs of pedestrians which should have priority over vehicles within residential and shopping areas.

Within the broader strategic policy framework provided in the Structure Plan the Angus Local Plan further guides development and changes in land use in the way that can best serve the needs of communities throughout Angus. In addressing land use and accessibility issues arising from transport and communication needs in Angus, the Local Plan seeks to:-

- promote projects which improve road safety, encourage economic development and improve living and environmental conditions;
- promote, support and facilitate the operation of public transport recognising the environmental and social benefits arising;
- encourage the provision of facilities for cyclists, pedestrians and people with mobility problems;
- support measures which make the best commercial and recreational use of harbours at Montrose and Arbroath;
- encourage the development of passenger and rail freight facilities and opportunities, including the electrification of the east coast rail line through Angus from Aberdeen to Edinburgh;
- facilitate telecommunications development whilst ensuring that the effect on the environment is minimised.

Public Transport Policy Statement

Angus Council's Public Transport Policy Statement sets out the Council's general policies on public transport services within Angus. The Policy Statement provides a framework across a wide range of functions relating to meeting public transport requirements in Angus based on the following objectives:-

- to seek to halt the decline and accentuate the role of public transport services, particularly as a means of stemming rural depopulation and supporting the provision of other services and employment opportunities;
- to maximise the economic, environmental and social benefits from expenditure on public transport within the limits of the available resources;
- to develop the role of public transport within the community, providing mobility for those without access to cars, as an attractive alternative to those with access to cars and contributing to addressing issues of sustainability;
- to seek the provision of socially necessary public transport services not provided commercially, commensurate with the demand for such services and the cost of provision;
- to have particular regard to the needs of the elderly and disabled in the provision of transport services;
- to ensure that the public are kept informed of the public transport services available;
- to ensure the best value for money from the total expenditure on passenger transport, taking into account the full range of the Council's responsibilities.

Roads Policies

Interim Roads Policies adopted by Angus Council define the Council's priorities, standards and aims and the way in which the Council chooses to exercise its discretionary powers across a range of policy areas, including:-

- Road Maintenance priorities, including winter maintenance;
- Street Lighting requirements and standards;
- Road Safety issues including accident reduction measures;
- Road Network and Traffic Management measures;
- Pedestrian Crossing facilities and needs;
- Car Parking and Lorry Parking provision;
- Roads Standards and Design;
- Bus Priority measures;
- Harbour maintenance and development, particularly Arbroath Harbour;
- Obstructions on Public Roads.

The Interim Roads Policies are supplemented by further specific policies such as the Council's Policy for Cyclists in Angus:-

- Angus Council is committed to improving the provision and conditions for cyclists and will give particular attention to the needs of commuters, shoppers, children, leisure cyclists and tourists. Specific consideration will be given to the needs of cyclists when preparing the Local Plan, Environmental Strategies, Road Safety Plans, Road Standards, when considering new developments, when maintaining roads, building new roads and when introducing traffic management schemes, and when considering leisure and tourist facilities. Further, in consultation with appropriate cycling interests and subject to the

resources available, a programme of measures to meet cycling needs in Angus will be undertaken.

Environment Strategy

Angus Council's Environment Strategy outlines the Council's intentions for addressing environmental and sustainability issues. The Council will integrate sustainability into Council Strategies, policies, programmes and activities and by the year 2000 will develop an Angus Local Agenda 21 programme to promote sustainability at the local level. The Environment Strategy proposes actions in relation to:-

- Education and Awareness Raising;
- Pollution;
- Waste;
- Purchasing;
- Natural Environment;
- Built Environment;
- Transport;
- Energy.

Among the objectives guiding the development of an action plan the Environment Strategy seeks to:-

- reduce local pollution of air, land, water and to reduce the incidence of noise and light pollution;
- minimise pollution from Council buildings, vehicles and equipment and from Council working practices;
- encourage a sustainable managed approach to public access to the natural environment;
- encourage design in new or regeneration developments which will improve access for the disabled and create an environment free from the fear of crime;
- maintain and enhance the public transport network;
- encourage walking and cycling as alternatives to the car;
- review the Council's business transport use;
- reduce the Council's use of energy in buildings, transport and equipment.

Rural Strategy

The Rural Strategy adopted by Angus Council highlights various measures necessary to maintain viable communities which lie at the centre of rural concerns in Angus. The costs of providing both public and consumer services is generally greater in rural areas and this has led to pressures to centralise provision raising problems of accessibility particularly where rural public transport networks are often operating at a nominal level. A key aim of the Rural Strategy is therefore to:-

- support and develop approaches to rural public transport provision in Angus which address locally identified needs and demands recognising the higher degree of car dependence in rural areas.

Air Quality Management Strategy

The Environment Act 1995 required the Government to develop a U.K. National Air Quality Strategy the primary purpose of which is to reduce the levels of eight major pollutants by 2005. At the core of the Strategy is a new duty and responsibility for local authorities to carry out regular reviews and assessments of air quality within their areas, and where air quality objectives are unlikely to be met by 2005, to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). In such cases, local authorities will have a duty to prepare an action plan for improving air quality in the designated areas.

The dominant source of the eight major pollutants is road traffic. The Government has issued guidance to local authorities on Local Air Quality Strategies and Action Plans, Air Quality and Traffic Management, Air Quality and Land Use Planning, and reviewing Air Quality.

Air Quality does not currently pose any particular problems in Angus and is not expected to require the designation of any Air Quality Management Areas to achieve air quality standards or objectives. Nevertheless Angus Council is conducting an appropriate assessment and review of air quality in accordance with Government guidance and advice.

