

## Supporting Statements

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

#### *Commitment*

Development of a Statement to outline aspirations for bus service development along the route, working alongside bus operators. Within this, consideration will be given to priority measures and opportunities for enhanced services associated with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR).

#### *Timescale*

Short-Medium (0-2 years)

#### *Context*


A Passenger Transport Strategy for Aberdeenshire was published in 2014. This sets out the Council's objectives for passenger transport services in the region including providing support for services that improve the quality of life for those without private means of travel, increasing the attractiveness and use of passenger transport services, and addressing perceived barriers to use.

Twice a year, the Council receives direct feedback on public transport operations on the A947 Corridor through our Area Bus Forums, which provide a means of understanding user needs and expectations. Added to this, the Council monitors an annual programme of bus satisfaction surveys undertaken across the region, including the A947, and will continue to engage directly with users as required. Specifically, to inform this Statement, surveys were undertaken in September 2016 with current bus users (and a snapshot of non-users) in Newmachar, Oldmeldrum, Turriff and Banff to understand current travel trends and opportunities for improvement. Building on this feedback, the Council will continue to work with public transport operators to implement measures to develop public transport services and encourage increased bus use along the corridor.

#### *Actions/Principles*

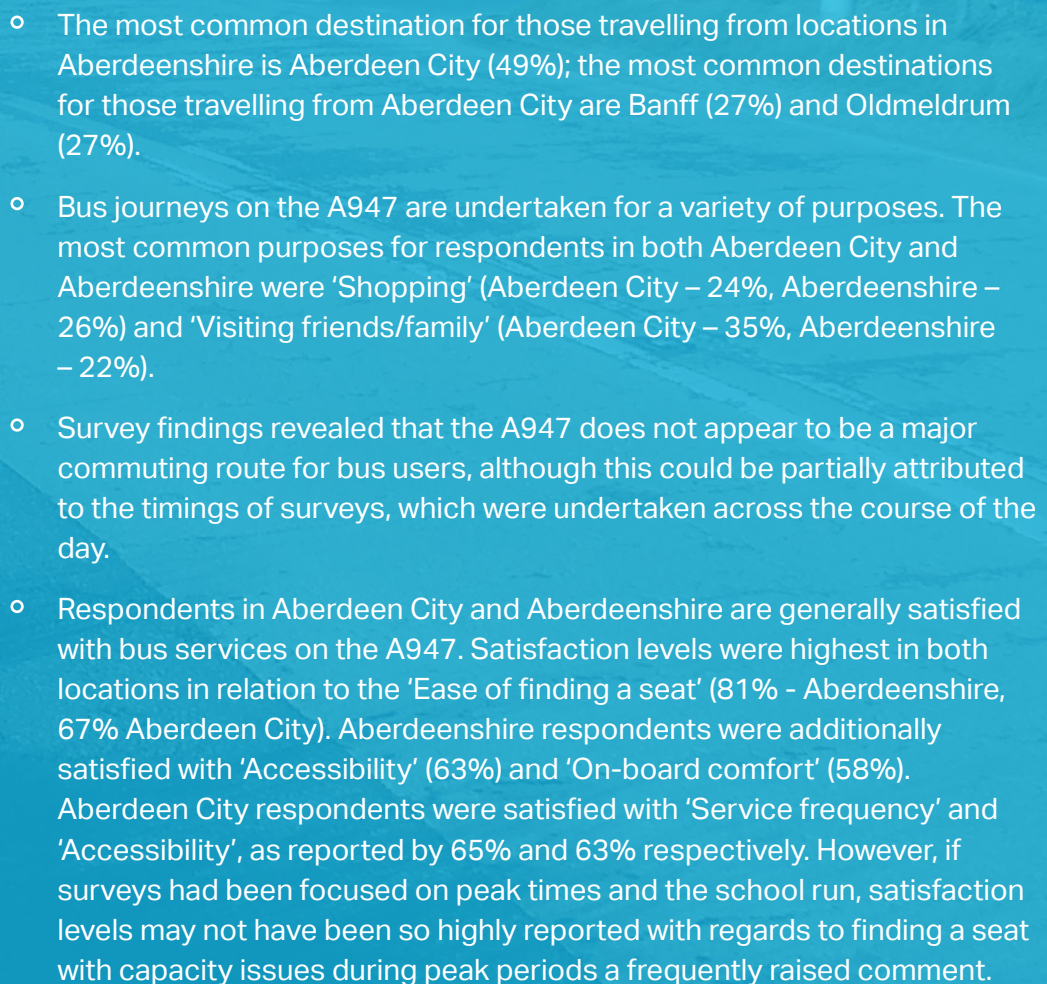
Going forward, the Council will seek to:

- Work with Aberdeen City Council to investigate opportunities to improve journey time reliability of cross-boundary services, to benefit bus users on the A947 Corridor.
- Work with bus operators to enhance service opportunities on the A947 route, and examine opportunities for the development of additional, new services afforded by the opening of the AWPR.

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- Support the implementation of public transport interchange hubs at Newmachar, Oldmeldrum and Fyvie, and work with bus operators to actively promote use of the interchanges.
  - Ensure, as a minimum, that all bus stops on the A947 are DDA compliant and provide for all weather protection.
  - Continue to disseminate public transport information to users and potential users through a range of channels, including timetable information at bus stops and online.
  - Explore with partners the feasibility of establishing a Statutory Quality Partnership (SQP) on the A947 Corridor to enhance service quality.
  - A programme of regular monitoring, consultation and surveys should be undertaken with A947 bus operators and users to examine ongoing problems and opportunities. Users will be consulted through the bi-annual Area Bus Forums as well as specific satisfaction surveys as appropriate.

### **A947 Bus Survey Results**

To inform future public transport improvements on the A947, in September 2016, surveys were carried out with bus users and non-bus users along the route. Approximately 140 bus user surveys and 40 non-bus user surveys were completed. The key survey findings were as follows:

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- The most common destination for those travelling from locations in Aberdeenshire is Aberdeen City (49%); the most common destinations for those travelling from Aberdeen City are Banff (27%) and Oldmeldrum (27%).
  - Bus journeys on the A947 are undertaken for a variety of purposes. The most common purposes for respondents in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire were 'Shopping' (Aberdeen City – 24%, Aberdeenshire – 26%) and 'Visiting friends/family' (Aberdeen City – 35%, Aberdeenshire – 22%).
  - Survey findings revealed that the A947 does not appear to be a major commuting route for bus users, although this could be partially attributed to the timings of surveys, which were undertaken across the course of the day.
  - Respondents in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire are generally satisfied with bus services on the A947. Satisfaction levels were highest in both locations in relation to the 'Ease of finding a seat' (81% - Aberdeenshire, 67% Aberdeen City). Aberdeenshire respondents were additionally satisfied with 'Accessibility' (63%) and 'On-board comfort' (58%). Aberdeen City respondents were satisfied with 'Service frequency' and 'Accessibility', as reported by 65% and 63% respectively. However, if surveys had been focused on peak times and the school run, satisfaction levels may not have been so highly reported with regards to finding a seat with capacity issues during peak periods a frequently raised comment.

- In terms of dissatisfaction, the top three issues reported were 'Service reliability' (30% - Aberdeenshire, 37% - Aberdeen City), 'Accessibility' (22% - Aberdeenshire, 24% - Aberdeen City), and 'On-board comfort' (20% - Aberdeenshire, 24% - Aberdeen City).
- With regards to potential improvements, the most commonly reported issues were 'Improved service reliability' (73% - Aberdeenshire, 61% - Aberdeen City), 'Improved service frequency' (48% - Aberdeenshire, 67% - Aberdeen City), and 'Reduction in journey time' (47% - Aberdeenshire, 63% - Aberdeen City).
- Amongst non-bus users, the greatest barriers to bus use were 'Convenience' (33%) and the preference to travel by car (30%).
- In terms of what could be done to encourage increased bus use, the greatest number of respondents (35%) indicated that nothing could be done to encourage them to use the bus more regularly.

