

**REPORT TO: CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 21 APRIL 2014**

**REPORT ON: MONITORING OF ROAD TRAFFIC REDUCTION ACT TARGETS**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT**

**REPORT NO: 152-2014**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the Council's progress towards Road Traffic Targets that has been set under the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the Council's progress towards the 2021 target which is to ensure that traffic does not increase in the city centre by more than 25% by 2021 compared to 1996 levels during the am and pm peak periods. The report informs the Committee that the Council is currently on schedule to be well within this target by the year 2021 but that officers will continue to monitor traffic levels within the city.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the Council related to this report.

## **4 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Over a number of years traffic growth has increased significantly throughout the United Kingdom. An increase in car use and road traffic directly contributes to climate change through green house gas emissions and can cause traffic congestion. Road Traffic also impacts on road safety, air quality and noise pollution which in turn are detrimental to the health and quality of life of individuals. Road traffic congestion is a cost to business due to unreliable and increased journey times and this can impact on their competitiveness.
- 4.2 The Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 places a duty on local authorities to set targets in their area. This Act came into force in 2000 and requires local authorities to set targets for reducing traffic levels or the rate of traffic growth and to draw up plans and implement measures to achieve the targets set. The Council over a number of years have implemented many measures that assist in reducing traffic growth such as the Bringing Confidence into Public Transport, Smartbus, Cross City Direct, Dundee Travel Active and other sustainable travel measures.
- 4.3 The Act and subsequent guidance allows local authorities to set appropriate targets that reflect local circumstances and the Council has chosen to limit traffic reduction targets to peak hour traffic within the city centre area. The Council has set the targets for the following reasons:
- a the Council's ability to influence the level and type of traffic is greatest in the central area;
  - b the target primarily addresses the traffic problems of Dundee, which in the main occur during the morning and evening peak travel times; and
  - c the Council has the ability to obtain data and monitor progress towards the Target.
- 4.4 Dundee is accessed by 4 major roads, being the A90 from the West/North and A92 from the South and East with 3 out of the 4 being Trunk Roads. A significant amount of traffic from these roads is generated external to Dundee and travels on Trunk Roads within the city. The Trunk Road network is under control of Transport Scotland and therefore the Council's sustainable transport policies have limited affect on these roads. The area where the

Council's policies have the most impact and influence is in the central Dundee area which incorporates the greater city centre (see Appendix 1).

- 4.5 The main area of congestion within Dundee is within the city centre with significant levels of vehicle queuing and delay during the morning and evening peak periods. Typically this congestion lasts for approximately 45 minutes in each of the peak periods. The traffic reduction targets have been set for weekday peaks between 08.00–09.00 and between 16.30–17.30.

#### The Councils Road Traffic Reduction Target

- 4.6 In 2000 the Council has set its target with regard to both National forecasts and local conditions. The Council's target for the central Dundee area is:

**To ensure traffic does not increase by more than 25% by 2021 compared to 1996 levels.**

- 4.7 The Council monitors progress towards this target by collecting traffic data from a number of permanent Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) sites that are located around the greater City Centre area and the location of these counters can be seen in Appendix 1. The Council also obtains traffic information from the Trunk Road authority as the A92 that passes through the city centre and is a key arterial road which is within the RTRA area.
- 4.8 The information obtained from these ATC sites provides a good indication on the traffic levels within the city centre area as all major approaches to the city have been monitored. The flows obtained from the ATC sites have been converted into traffic indices that can easily be compared with the overall RTRA targets that have been set by the Council. The base year for monitoring is 1996 and is set at a base of 100.
- 4.9 Table 1.0 gives monitoring of the RTRA sites during the AM and PM peaks and highlights that Traffic Growth remains within the RTRA target although in 2004 there were concerns that road traffic volumes were higher than this target. During this period traffic volumes were at 108.3 during the AM peak and 109.2 during the PM peak while the RTRA target was 108.0.

Table 1.0

Date	AM Peak	PM Peak	Dundee RTRA Target	Traffic in Scotland	24hr RTRA
1996	100	100	100	100	100
1997	101	101	101	102.1	100.7
1998	103	102	102	103.7	102.5
1999	104.9	105	103	105.3	106.1
2000	102.6	101.8	104	104.7	102.5
2001	101.7	103.7	105	106.1	103.6
2002	103.5	105.2	106	109.9	105.5
2003	104.3	106.7	107	111.3	106.1
2004	108.3	109.2	108	113	108.1
2005	106.4	109.1	109	113.1	108.8
2006	105.3	108	110	116.8	107.7
2007	104.9	107.9	111	118.2	108.7

Date	AM Peak	PM Peak	Dundee RTRA Target	Traffic in Scotland	24hr RTRA
2008	101.3	106.4	112	117.7	106
2009	98	104.3	113	117.1	104.3
2010	97.3	103.4	114	115.1	102.1
2011	97.2	100	115	114.9	100.4
2012	96.2	100	116	115.3	97.2
2013	99.2	101.4	117	N/A	99.4

\*Based on Scottish Transport Statistics 2013 (2013 statistics not available).

- 4.10 Since this period there has been a reduction in traffic volumes within the greater city centre area and in 2013 there has been a recognisable drop in traffic during the peak periods particularly the AM peak where traffic volumes have dropped below the base 100 (1996) level at 99.2. The 2013 PM peak remains higher than the 1996 base (100) with an index level of 101.4. When considering the 24 hour Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows in the RTRA area it can be seen that there has been increase in traffic over the last year and this has seen traffic getting close to 1996 levels as the index is 99.4 compared to the 100 set in 1996. It can also be seen that the 24hr AADT levels of traffic peaked in 2004 / 2005 with an increase of about 8 - 9% above the 1996 base level, however as stated above it can be seen that traffic has reduced significantly from this high level.
- 4.11 In comparison traffic volumes in Scotland have been increasing at a higher rate than in RTRA area with an increase of approximately 15% between 1996 and 2012 (2013 figures have yet to be published). However, in recent years traffic levels in Scotland have been reducing from an 2007 peak. Again this reflects the 'sluggish' economy in recent times.
- 4.12 It is likely that the Council's sustainable policies and measures have had an impact in reducing traffic from the high levels experienced in 2004/2005 as the sustainable and active travel policies have introduced a step change in Public Transport which would have encouraged a mode shift away from the Car. It is acknowledged that there could be additional reasons that traffic volumes have reduced from the 2004/05 peak in the RTRA area with parking policies, high oil prices and the economic downturn being the other most likely factors. The continued drop in traffic levels in the last few years is likely to be connected to the performance of the economy as traffic levels and economic growth are inextricably linked. Once economic output improves it is likely traffic levels and congestion will increase putting further pressure on the transport network.
- 4.13 It is important that the Council remains focused and very proactive in promoting more sustainable transport modes to assist in reducing the Road Traffic growth. The Council is continuing to support these modes and realises that active travel is a key ingredient to enhancing the health of residents and visitors to Dundee. The Council is still implementing the Smarter Choices Smarter Places project that contains several elements that support sustainable modes that will assist in reducing traffic growth within the city centre area.

## 5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

## 5.2 Sustainability

Road Traffic Growth is a significant concern given its impact to traffic congestion, climate change, air quality and noise. The Council has introduced measures to reduce traffic growth and continues to do so which supports sustainable policies.

## 6 **CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

## 7 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Local Transport Strategy – 2000.

7.2 Committee Report 283-2009 - Monitoring of Road Traffic Reduction Act Targets.

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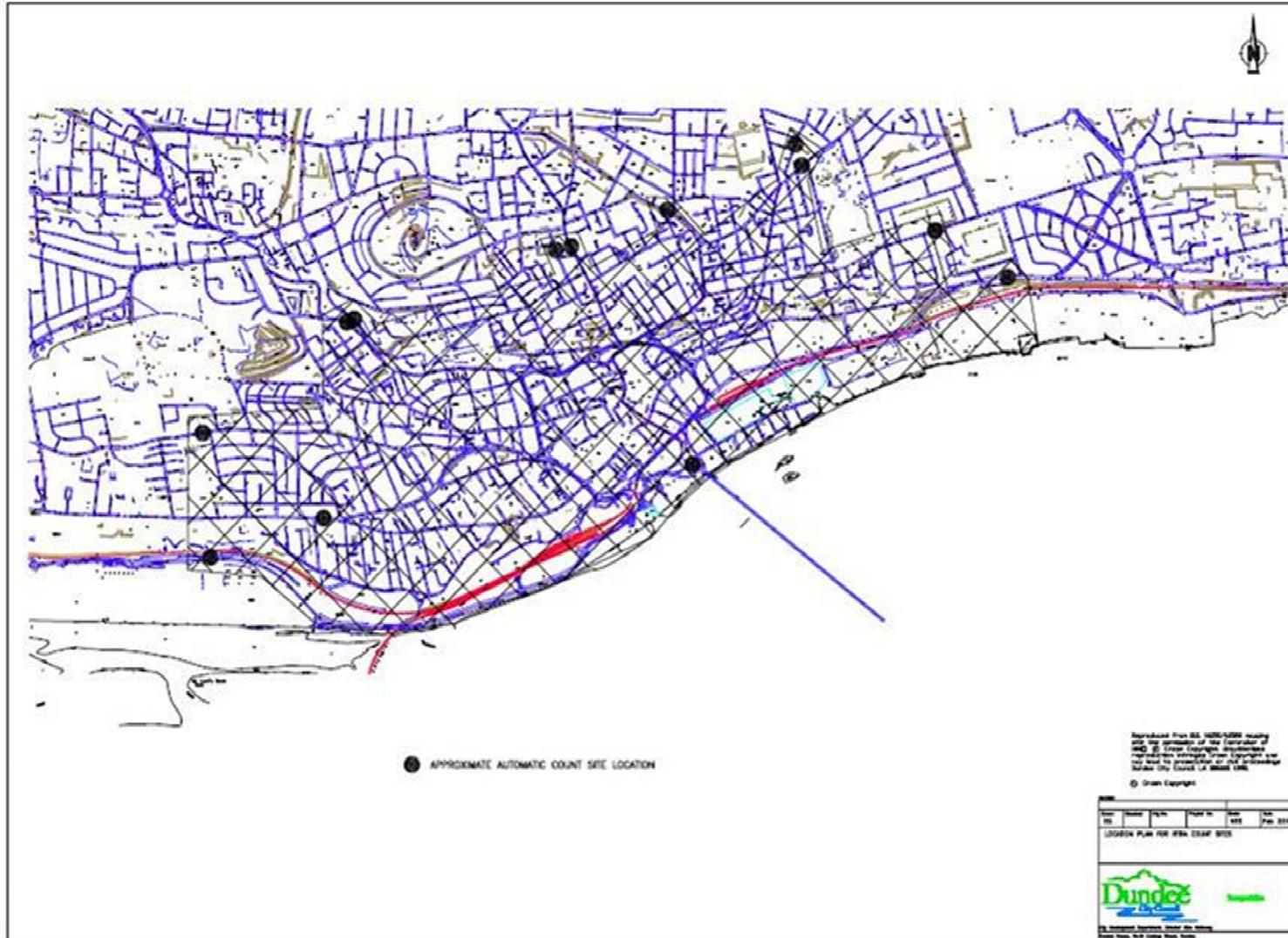
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NHG/EG/KM

9 April 2014

Dundee City Council  
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Dundee

APPENDIX 1



## APPENDIX 2

