



**19 The Meadows
Milltimber
Aberdeen
AB13 0JT**

21st October 2007

**Alison Hughes
Transport Scotland
Trunk Roads Infrastructure and Professional Services Directorate
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow
G4 0HF**

Dear Madam,

CBMCC Objections to Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route Road Orders

I write on behalf of the Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council (CBMCC). I refer to my previous letter of 8th February 2007 and note your response of 10th September 2007.

We understand that the objections already made continue to stand. We believe that your letter of response does not adequately address the issues raised and requires more detailed discussion and debate. We envisage that this will take place during the recently announced public enquiry. Nevertheless we wish to highlight a number of issues that have emerged from your response and during the course of the AWPR public exhibitions earlier this month:

- We remain highly sceptical about the current cost estimates. We understand that £20 million has been spent on developing the route up to March 2007. The relocation cost for the international school is now estimated at £60 million with a further £50 million needed for other compensations. We would appreciate confirmation of these figures. The Secretary of State for Transport indicated in a response on 13th June 2006 that the average cost of building a mile of dual carriageway is £16.2 million. This would put the road construction cost alone at £453 million for the AWPR. A government commissioned report has revealed that the costs of the A628 Mottram to Tintwistle Bypass have more than doubled since the scheme was initially approved. The scheme had been approved at £90 million in April 2003 but the government has now revealed that four years later the cost estimate is £184 million. This leads us to believe that the real cost of building the AWPR will be closer to £600 million as projected by Patrick Harvie (Green Party) in the recent Scottish Parliamentary debate. Potentially the costs could be even greater if one takes into account the escalation factor of other major construction projects planned for the next few years, such as extensive new housing schemes, London crossrail, the development of the site for the Olympics and, nearer to home, a new bridge over the Forth. These cost escalations together with the need for extensive public borrowing, in whatever form it takes, will probably result in an overall project cost closer to £1bn.

We therefore believe that it is misleading and disingenuous to continue to represent the cost estimate in a range of £295-395 million, a range that was arrived at without any detailed engineering design and analysis. It appears that the stance of Transport Scotland is that no further cost estimates will be published until tender submissions have been received and that the final costs will only be known on contract completion. This does not allow for a proper, open and transparent debate about the cost/benefits of the road. It is essential that a revised set of cost estimates is made available as soon as possible and certainly in advance of the public enquiry.

- We are surprised that the traffic modelling figures are presented on the basis of an accumulation of the effects of the AWPR and other MTS measures combined. It is not possible from the figures to assess the impact of the AWPR in isolation. For this reason it is not a fair comparison and prevents a proper analysis of the value of the incremental investment in the AWPR.

It would be more honest and provide a greater insight if the percentage reductions at locations in and around Aberdeen City were presented on a comparative, incremental basis, for each of the MTS elements. At the very least the impact of the AWPR should be separated from all the other MTS measures. It would enable a better understanding of the relative benefits of the other MTS measures compared to those of the AWPR. This is particularly important as we and many others have serious doubts about whether all the MTS measures will be implemented, given the likely cost escalations highlighted above.

There will be insufficient funds to finance all infrastructure transport projects for the North East of Scotland unless there are significant reductions in other council services or a sharp rise in local taxation. In the context of the presentations at the recent public exhibitions we believe that the projected percentage reductions in congestion across the city are very misleading. All the MTS measures will not be implemented by the time the road is due to be completed in 2012/2013. Indeed they may never be implemented.

- At a more local level there have been repeated errors and inconsistencies in the traffic modelling figures for the Milltimber Brae junction. There still remains a degree of confusion surrounding the forecasted reductions in congestion, as highlighted during the recent AWPR public exhibitions. The figures for Malcolm Road have changed again. On travel through Peterculter the former Transport Minister stated in a letter dated 6th June 2006 that there would be 1,000 more vehicles per day. In earlier AWPR exhibitions the figures indicated that there would be a 46% increase in traffic, equivalent to an additional 4,500 vehicles per day. In the recent public exhibitions no figure was presented at all. It must be concluded that Transport Scotland are only interested in providing figures that give a positive spin on the road, not a balanced picture of its impact.

CBMCC also did not receive a response to a request for clarification of anomalies in the AWPR traffic model output, in an email sent on 28th March 2007 to John Wilson, Assistant Managing Agent (Engineering), AWPR Strategic Leadership. Detailed below are relevant extracts from that email, adapted where necessary, to which we seek your urgent response.

- Why was AADT information missed off Figure 4.7c with entries simply left as "tbc"? Why are the figures now shown on Figure 4.7c different from the ones shown previously?
- Would you confirm that some of the figures shown for the A944 on Figure 4.7b were incorrect?
- How did these errors and missing data on Figures 4.7a-c arise?

- How was the public expected to provide proper responses to the consultation when the data supplied was in error?
- Why have you not provided sufficient data, e.g. directional flows at peak periods together with junction capacities on the radial routes, in order that the public can properly analyse the results of the traffic model and compare those results against previous studies, e.g. the Oscar Faber report published in 1998?
- Has induced traffic been included in the traffic model? If not, why not? If so, what percentages does this contribute to the total?
- There are a number of central Aberdeen developments being considered as part of the 'Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan', including Union Square with 1,750 car-parking spaces and four others with new car-parking. What would the effect of these be on the traffic flow numbers? Wouldn't the Eastern bypass tunnel option appear even more favourable if taking these additional developments into consideration?
- Was high, low or historic growth used in computing traffic flows from surveyed flows?
- What allowance was made for MTS impacts in computing the traffic figures?
- What is the explanation for the difference between the stated 15,300 vpd on the A93 at Milltimber in July 2006 and the current vpd? Similarly for other differences: A947 to A96; A944 to A93; A93 to Cleanhill; King Street; B979?
- Finally, when will the missing Figure 56.1 be made available?
- I would suggest that a response via a workshop or similar to the above points and points raised by others is an essential prerequisite in order that the public can start to have confidence in the numbers emanating from the traffic model.

We would welcome the opportunity for representatives of Transport Scotland to meet with the Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council to discuss all the above issues in more detail. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 22nd November but we could organise an extraordinary meeting if the date is not suitable.

Yours faithfully,

Alistair Annand

**Alistair Annand
Secretary**

On behalf of Cults, Bieldside and Milltimber Community Council

Copy to:

Nicol Stephen MSP
Councillor Marie Boulton
Councillor Aileen Malone
Councillor Alan Milne