



Press Release **14th August 2006**

For immediate release

JUNCTIONS ON ABERDEEN BYPASS WILL CAUSE TRAFFIC CHAOS

Junctions on the proposed new Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) are poorly designed and will not solve city traffic problems. Road Sense, the organisation seeking more sustainable solutions to Aberdeen's traffic problems pointed out today that many of the junctions between the bypass and existing roads will be conventional crossroads that will only create new traffic problems.

Detailed maps recently released by the AWPR team show how the proposed city bypass would merge with existing local roads with a series of crossroads controlled by traffic lights, which will reduce fast moving traffic from the bypass to a standstill. Such junctions are planned at Milltimber for traffic to and from the North Deeside Road and at Charleston for traffic to and from Wellington Road. The addition of traffic lights will inevitably result in long tailbacks into Peterculter, Wellington Road and the A90.

This is yet another potential flaw surrounding the troubled choice for the Aberdeen bypass, and comes hard on the heels of escalating costs which are well over the Scottish Executives recent cost estimate at £395 million.

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Tony Hawkins, a spokesperson for Road Sense, has described the junctions as being likely to create new traffic congestion rather than solve traffic problems in and around the City.

‘Concern over costs seems to have resulted in designs which will not provide any benefits. There are evidently major problems in merging the bypass with traffic from existing roads. Crossroads and traffic lights are proposed and, as a result, traffic congestion on routes into the City will get worse, not better.’

Roger Murray of Silverburn believes the proposals are the result of the bypass failing to follow a more sensible route, causing engineers difficulty in merging with local roads whilst attempting to keep costs to a minimum. ‘The result is a seriously flawed design which fails to deliver what the road has been publicly stated to deliver’.

A large roundabout is planned for the intersection of the AWPR with the Westhill Road. There is already significant congestion on this route at both the existing roundabouts. Adding another will simply aggravate the rush hour chaos.

Sheona Warnock of Invercrynoch is concerned that, despite the high cost and disruption to local communities caused by the proposed bypass, there will be few benefits for drivers. ‘Poor junction design means traffic along all the radial routes into the city will get worse. Far from trying to address Aberdeen’s traffic problems, the AWPR is merely an excuse to open up areas of the greenbelt for development.’

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Problems with the junctions are not the only difficulties arising from the proposed route. The maps now issued by the AWPR Team show that the by-pass is now very distant from the City. It is unlikely to reduce traffic congestion caused by the daily influx of traffic into Aberdeen. These difficulties raise major concerns over the design of the bypass and the original objectives of the AWPR Team of reducing congestion and improving safety. The crisis over escalating costs has caused the AWPR team to sacrifice safe and effective design in order to keep costs down.

Ends

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Detailed maps of the new by-pass are now available from the AWPR Team, showing the new junctions

The new £400 Million route for the Aberdeen By-Pass (the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route) was announced by Tavish Scott, the Transport Minister on December 1st, following a consultation on 5 other routes (which did not include the Tavish Scott route). The Tavish Scott route combines a road from the A90 at Charleston, splitting the community of Maryculter, with a separate 8 mile long fast link directly from Stonehaven, which goes through Netherley. The two routes merge south of the river Dee and the combined dual carriageway then passes over the Dee on a new bridge and then goes through the suburb of Milltimber, passing through a large number of houses, the

International School Aberdeen with more than 300 students and passing close to Kippie Lodge, a long established family orientated sports and country club.

The previously preferred route, through Murtle, had already been surveyed at a cost of £11M. The analyses from the AWPR team show that both the Murtle and Pitfodels routes, closer to Aberdeen, would be much cheaper to build and bring greater benefits in terms of distributing traffic around the City. The new Tavish Scott by-pass will now take traffic out as far as Peterculter.

The new route is longer, more expensive, further from Aberdeen and brings less benefit to the City than the other options, including the Murtle and Pitfodels routes. The route which has been selected affects many hundreds of families in several communities, including Charleston, Banchory Devenick, Blairs, Maryculter, Netherley, Peterculter and Silverburn. It is expected by the Scottish Executive to cost in the region of £395 Million, but independent estimates are that costs will escalate to £750 Million. The cost of the route is to be shared between the Scottish Executive, which will pay just over 80%, and the Councils of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. It is planned that road orders will be laid in December.