

# SDPA Bulletin – September 2010

The SDPA Bulletin is designed to keep members up-to-date on issues relating to the work of the SDPA where no decisions are currently required.

Bulletins are produced to accompany each meeting of the SDPA as well as being circulated between meetings where appropriate.

## 1 SDP area Population Projections

- 1.1 The February 2010 Bulletin reported the publication of the 2008-based population projection for Scotland. On 10 June 2010 the General Register Office for Scotland (GRO(S)) published projections for the strategic development plan (SDP) area, followed by 'variant' projections on 21 July 2010. The results of the new set of projections are summarised in Figure 1. This shows the total population of Aberdeen City and Shire SDP area increasing from 448,690 in 2008 to 511,630 in 2033, representing an increase of over 62,940 (14%). The population of Scotland is projected to increase by 7% over this period.

**Figure 1: Projected (principal) population of Aberdeen City and Shire (2008 based):2008-2033**

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2033
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire (SDP area)</b>	448,690	463,990	477,710	490,950	511,630
<b>Scotland</b>	5,168,500	5,189,094	5,211,403	5,232,601	5,544,410

Source: GRO(S) Population Projections for SDP Areas (2010)

- 1.2 Figure 2 below shows an increase in population in each of the three age-bands. The change in those over the age of retirement is particularly noteworthy.

**Figure 2: Projected (principal) changes in population by age bands (2008-2033)**

	Aberdeen City and Shire SDP area		Scotland
	No.	%	%
<b>0 – 15</b>	3,220	4%	-2%
<b>16 – retirement</b>	19,650	7%	2%
<b>Over retirement</b>	40,070	48%	31%
<b>Total</b>	62,940	14%	7%

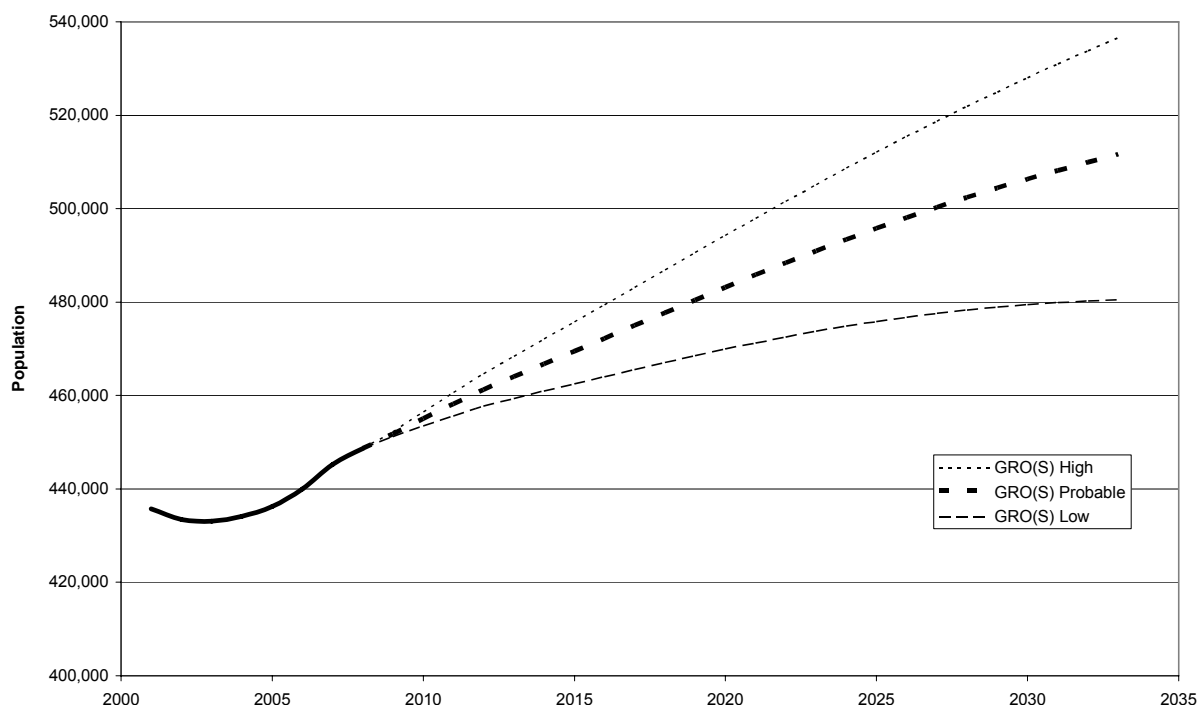
Source: GRO(S) Population Projections for SDP Areas (2010)

- 1.3 The data presented thus far is from the GRO(S) principal projections. These use assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration which are thought to be most likely to occur over the next 25 years. A number of 'variant' projections are also produced using high and low migration projections, and the same fertility and mortality assumptions as the principal projection.

1.4 Figure 3 shows the difference between the three projections. As can be observed there is a large difference between the growth of population over the period between the three scenarios. Figure 3 also shows the growth forecasts contained in the 2006-based forecasts prepared by the two councils for comparison.

**Figure 3: Comparison between GRO(S) population projections for the SDP area and Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Forecasts (2007)**

Aberdeen City & Shire	2031	Change (2006 – 2031)
GRO(S) (2008-based) – Low Migration	480,500	+31,810
GRO(S) (2008-based) – Principal Projection	511,630	+62,940
GRO(S) (2008-based) – High Migration	536,600	+87,910
Strategic Forecasts (2006-based) – Low Case	433,693	- 9,447
Strategic Forecasts (2006-based) – Probable	457,000	+ 8,716
Strategic Forecasts (2006-based) – High Case	482,000	+ 33,316



Source: GRO(S) Population Projections for SDP Areas (2010)

1.5 On the basis of the 2006-based Strategic Forecasts, the structure plan targets a population of 480,000 by 2030 and a longer-term aspiration of a population 500,000. The latest GRO(S) projections indicate that these might be achieved ahead of schedule if current trends continue.

1.6 The projections are produced for the four SDP areas in Scotland allowing simple comparison of future demographic change. Figure 4 outlines the principal projections for the SDP areas in terms of overall population change and change within age groups. As can be seen, Aberdeen City and Shire compares favourably in overall population growth, with the level of growth just behind the 17% suggested for the SESplan area. It is worth noting, however, that the projected increase within the population of pensionable age is by far the greatest of the Scottish city regions. Additionally, the 47% projected growth of

this age group takes into account the phased changes in retirement ages which slightly dampen the extent of the increase.

**Figure 4: Comparison projected (principal) population of Scotland's four SDP areas (2008 based):2008-2033**

	Total Population 2008	Population change 2008-2033	% Population change 2008-2033	Children (0-15 years)	Working ages	Pensionable ages
<b>Glasgow &amp; Clyde Valley</b>	1,752,950	1,180	≈ 0%	-9%	-4%	+23%
<b>Aberdeen City &amp; Shire</b>	448,690	62,940	+14%	+4%	+7%	+47%
<b>SESPlan</b>	1,213,910	209,580	+17%	+9%	+13%	+38%
<b>TAYPlan</b>	475,190	37,730	+8%	+2%	+2%	+28%

Source: GRO(S) Population Projections for SDP Areas (2010)

- 1.7 The GRO(S) population projections are one of a number of inputs which inform strategic planning in the area. They indicate what could happen on the basis of a number of assumptions and are trend-based. They are not policy-based forecasts of what the government expects to happen. The recently approved structure plan adopted a high-growth strategy and, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, provided a generous supply of land to accommodate that growth. This ensures the medium-term robustness of the plan and will enable any implications of these new projections to feed into the work being taken forward on the first strategic development plan.
- 1.8 The SDPA will work with both councils over the next year to explore the projections in more detail to inform the Main Issues Report for the strategic development plan in 2011. This will be further informed by a revision of the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Forecasts towards the end of 2010.

## 2 SDP Area Household Projections

- 2.1 The GRO(S) published SDP area household projections in August 2010. These will be another key factor informing the future strategic development plan.
- 2.2 The number of households in Scotland is projected to increase from 2.3 million to 2.8 million between 2008 and 2033, an increase of 21 per cent. All SDP areas show projected increases during this period:
  - In Aberdeen City & Shire SDP area, by 27 per cent, from 203,000 to 257,000 households.
  - In Glasgow & Clyde Valley SDP area, by 14 per cent, from 794,000 to 909,000 households.
  - In SESplan SDP area, by 31 per cent, from 544,000 to 712,000 households.
  - In TAYplan SDP area, by 20 per cent, from 216,000 to 259,000 households.
- 2.3 The average household size is projected to decrease over the same period of time in all SDP areas. The decrease in the Aberdeen City & Shire SDP area is from 2.17 to 1.89 persons per household.

- 2.4 The number of households is projected to increase more rapidly than projected changes in population. This is due to projected changes in household structure with people more likely to live in smaller family groups in the future.
- 2.5 The number of households containing just one adult is projected to increase greatly between 2008 and 2033 in all SDP areas, ranging from 44 per cent increases in the Glasgow & Clyde Valley and TAYplan SDP areas to a 53 per cent increase in the Aberdeen City & Shire SDP area and a 58 per cent increase in SESplan SDP area. Other small households are also projected to increase in number. In contrast, the number of larger households (containing two or more adults with children and containing three or more adults) is projected to show a decrease in numbers in all SDP areas.
- 2.6 The following table shows a summary of the percentage changes in population and the number of households for SDP areas and the whole of Scotland over the projection period 2008-2033.

**Figure 5: Percentage change in population and number of households, for SDP areas and the whole of Scotland, 2008 to 2033**

	Aberdeen City & Shire	Glasgow & Clyde Valley	SESPlan	TAYPlan	Scotland
<b>Population</b>	14%	0%	17%	8%	7%
<b>Children (0-15)</b>	4%	-9%	9%	2%	-2%
<b>Working Age</b>	7%	-4%	13%	2%	2%
<b>Pensionable Age</b>	48%	23%	38%	28%	31%
<b>Households</b>	27%	14%	31%	20%	21%
<b>Household types</b>					
<b>1 adult</b>	53%	44%	58%	44%	49%
<b>1 adult, 1+ children</b>	44%	36%	64%	44%	46%
<b>2 adults</b>	35%	14%	31%	20%	23%
<b>2+ adults, 1+ children</b>	-20%	-35%	-15%	-23%	-27%
<b>3+ adults</b>	-30%	-32%	-8%	-18%	-27%

### 3 Housing Market Activity

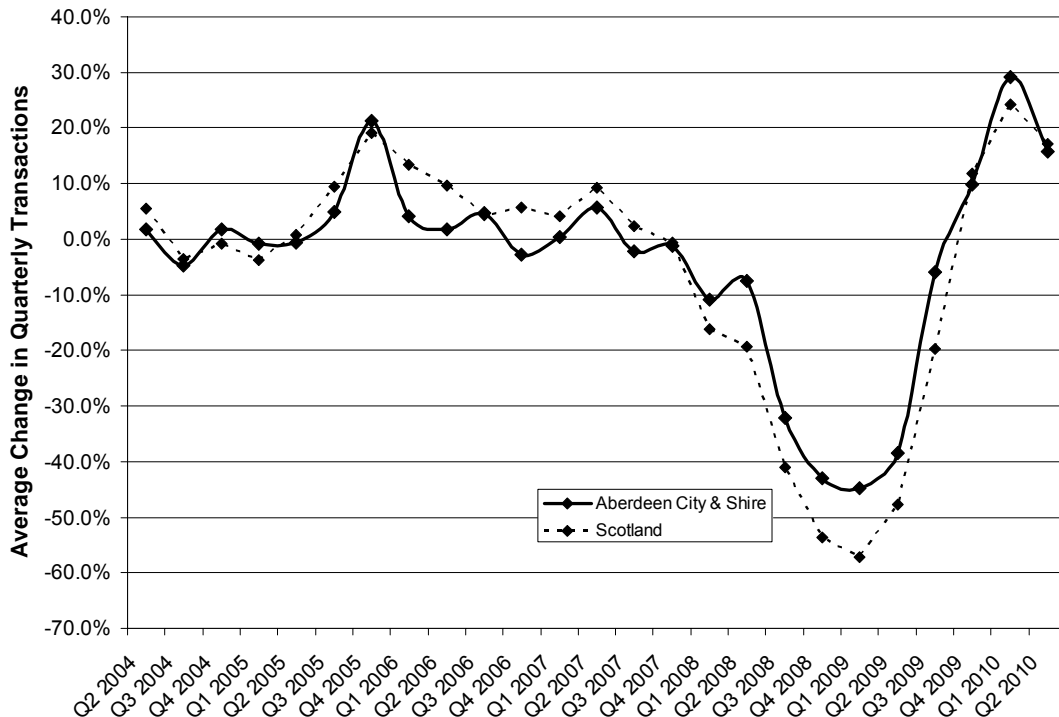
- 3.1 The purpose of this section of the bulletin is to provide an update on activity within the Aberdeen City and Shire housing market. This combines intelligence on housing market activity from various sources, including data from the Local Authority Housing Bulletin, the Aberdeen Solicitors Property Centre and the National House Building Council.

#### **Local Authority Housing Bulletin**

- 3.2 The Local Authority Housing Bulletin collates a range of time-series statistics on the volume of transaction and house prices by council area in Scotland. The bulletin is produced by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA), based on Registers Office for Scotland data, with the latest edition covering the period to end June 2010. In Q1 2010 there were 1,732 transactions in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire representing a 29% increase in year on year sales (Figure 6). The trend in 2010 saw a decline in the first quarter transactions and an increase in Q2 2010 to 2,208. These figures

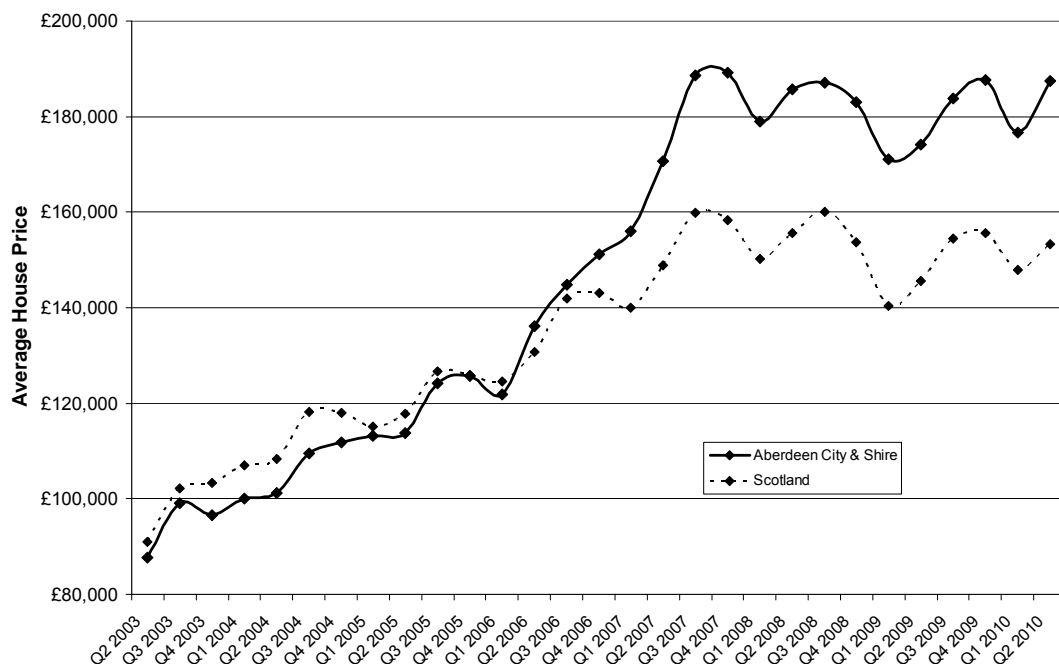
suggest that the region is following national trends in terms of transactions with the rest of Scotland experiencing similar change.

**Figure 6: Year on year change in the volume of transactions**



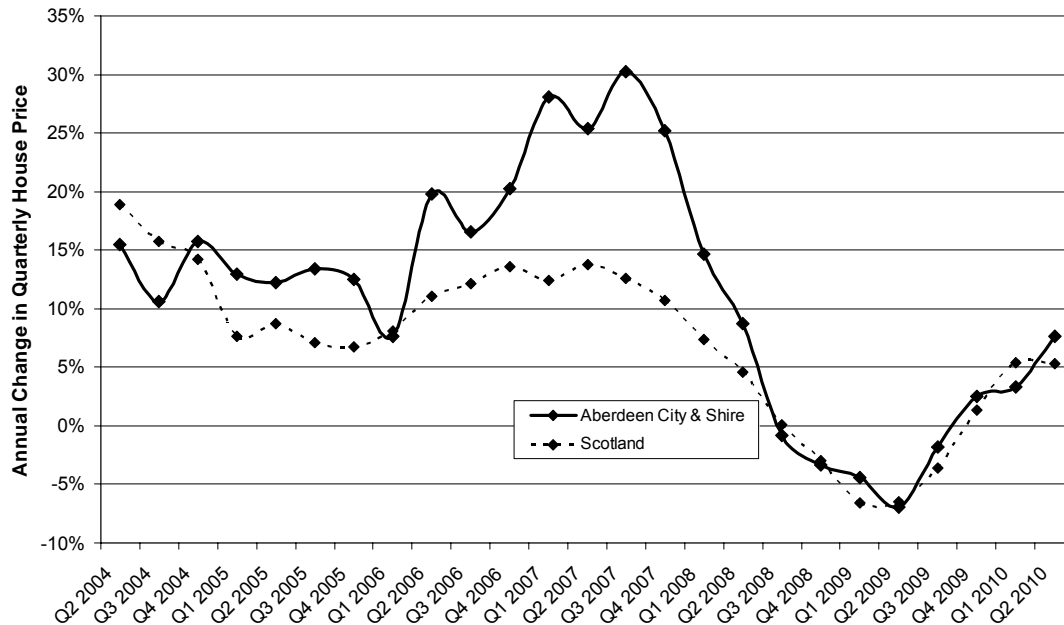
3.3 Figure 7 displays the average quarterly house price for sales in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire compared to national averages. It shows that the average house price in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire combined is £187,531 - well above the national average of £153,248. Furthermore, the data suggests that after a dip in Q1 2010 both the SDP area and nationally there is an upward trend with prices maintaining the level from the Q4 2009 level.

**Figure 7: Average quarterly house price trend**



3.4 Further information contained within the bulletin shows that the recovery in year on year change in quarterly house prices reported for both Aberdeen City and Shire and Scotland in Q4 2009 has continued with the SDP area above the national trend, where a slight decrease was recorded for Q2 2010 (Figure 8).

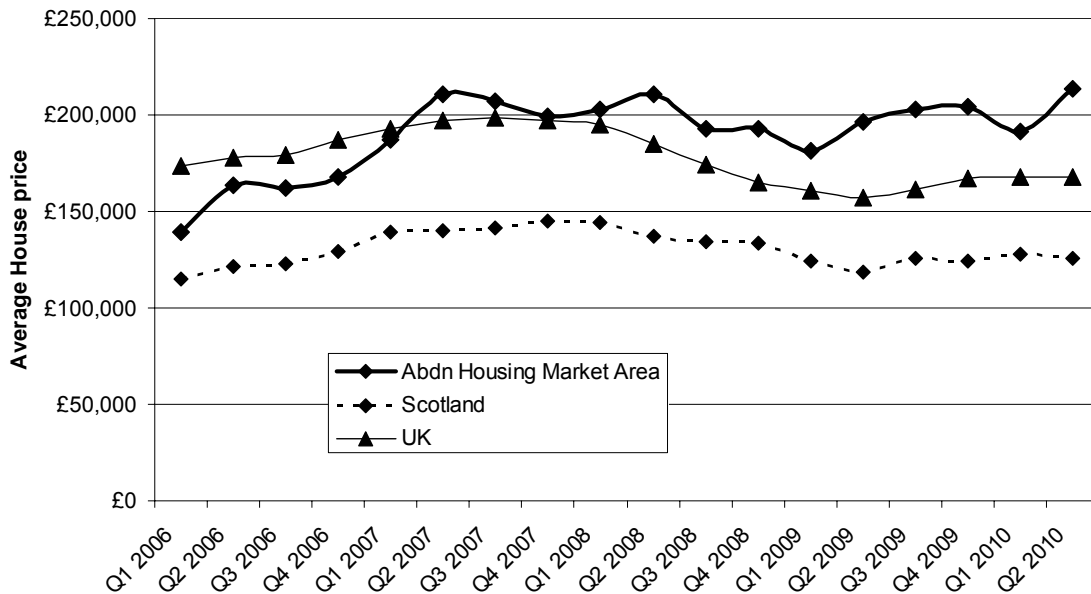
**Figure 8: Year on year change in house prices (Jan 2005-Jun 2010)**



### ASPC Housing Market Bulletin

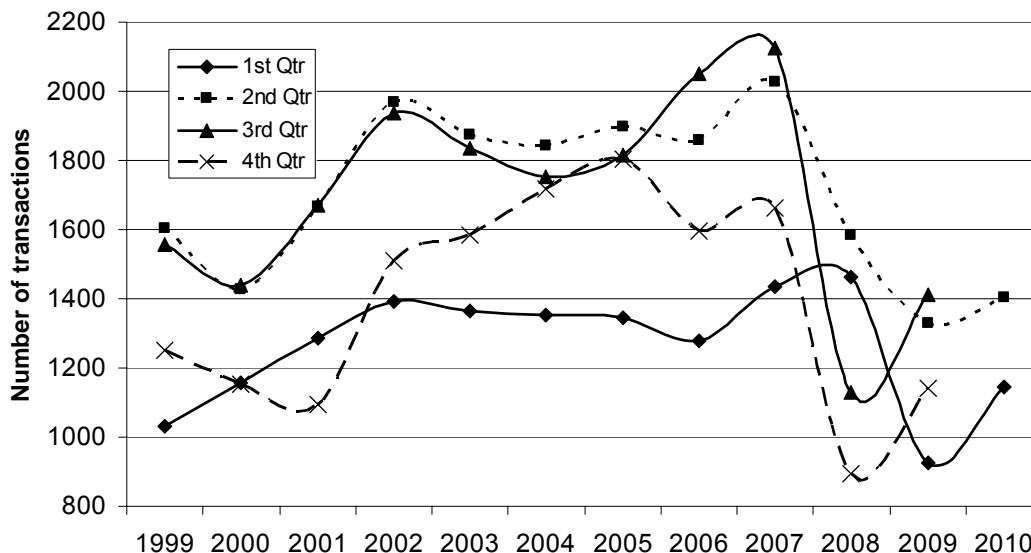
3.5 An additional source of information is produced by Aberdeen City Council who publish a housing market bulletin providing information based on the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) only. The bulletin is updated quarterly using data supplied by Aberdeen Solicitors' Property Centre. The national house price figures are taken from HBOS. This data shows a similar trend to that contained in the CHMA bulletin, with an increase in both the numbers of transactions and average house price. Figure 9 shows that within the AHMA the average house price during the second quarter of 2010 is £213,358, an increase on the previous quarter figure of £191,291. The AHMA average price is well above the Scottish and UK averages, and represents a record price, surpassing the previous peak reached during Q2 2007.

**Figure 9: Average House Price – Aberdeen HMA, Scotland and UK**



3.6 During the last six months there was a significant increase in the number of properties on the ASPC register, from 1,255 at the end of Q4 2009 to 1,430 at the end of Q1 2010 to 1,999 at the end of Q2. Furthermore, the AHMA has also seen an increase in the number of properties sold during this period, from 1,143 in Q4 2009 to 1,403 in Q2 2010. As can be observed in figure 10, each quarter displays distinct seasonal trends with different levels of sales. The number of sales in Q2 2010 has shown an increase on the same quarter in 2009, and represents the fourth consecutive quarterly increase.

**Figure 10: Number of Properties Sold per Quarter (Aberdeen HMA)**

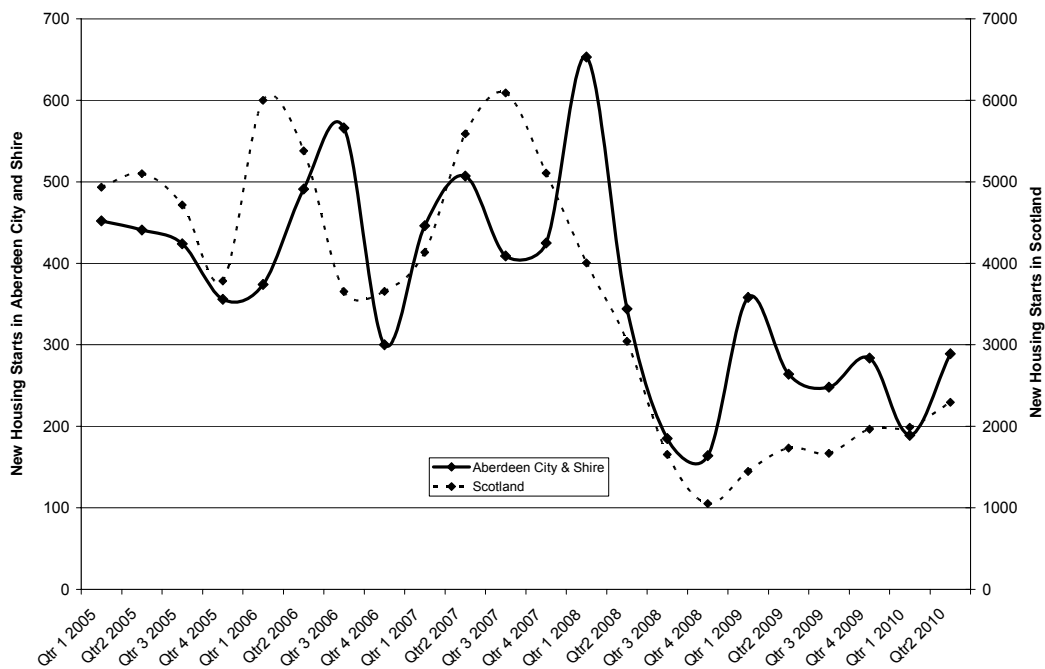


**New house building**

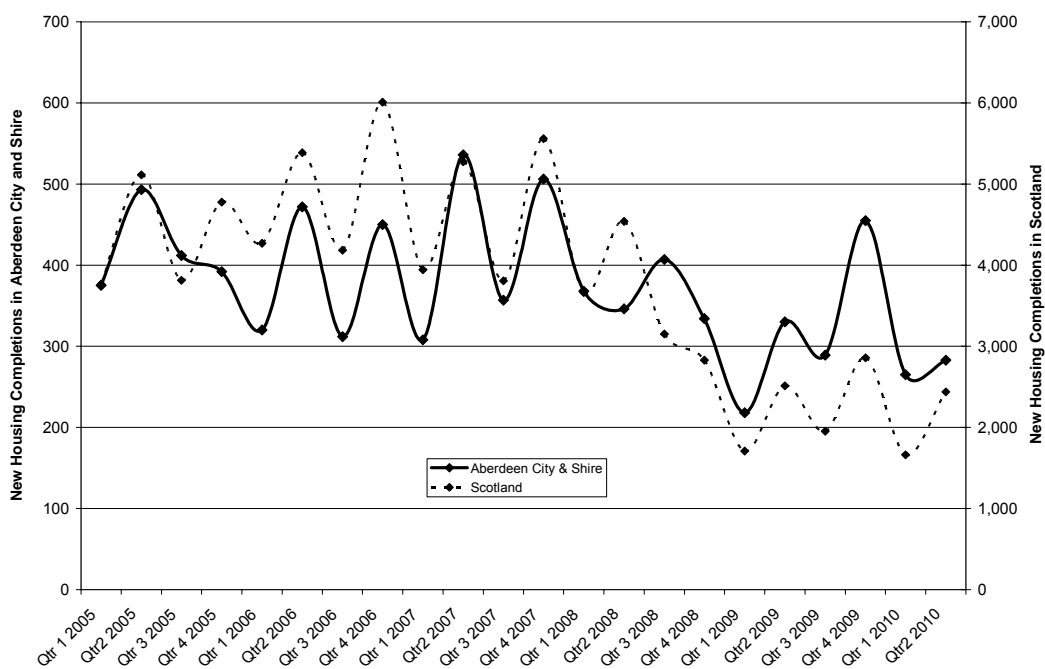
3.7 The National House Building Council (NHBC) produces statistics on UK new house-building derived from its 20,000 registered builders, who construct over 80% of the new homes built in the UK. As such, they represent a source of detailed, up-to-date information on new home construction and the house-building industry. Figures 11 and 12 below provide starts and completions data

for both Aberdeen City and Shire and Scotland as a whole. It can be seen from Figure 11 that, despite a dip in Qtr 1, new housing starts have been relatively stable for the past year, albeit at a level significantly below the longer-term average. New starts in Aberdeen City and Shire represented 12.6% of new house starts in Scotland in Qtr2 2010. Completions have rebounded after a drop in Q3 2009 following the national trend (figure 12), with Aberdeen City and Shire representing over 11.6% of new house completions in Scotland during Qtr2 2010. Aberdeen City and Shire has approximately 8.8% of the population and households in Scotland so it can be seen that, although starts and completions are at a lower level than before the recession, relative performance is quite good.

**Figure 11: NHBC Housing Starts Data (Qtr1 2005-Qtr2 2010)**



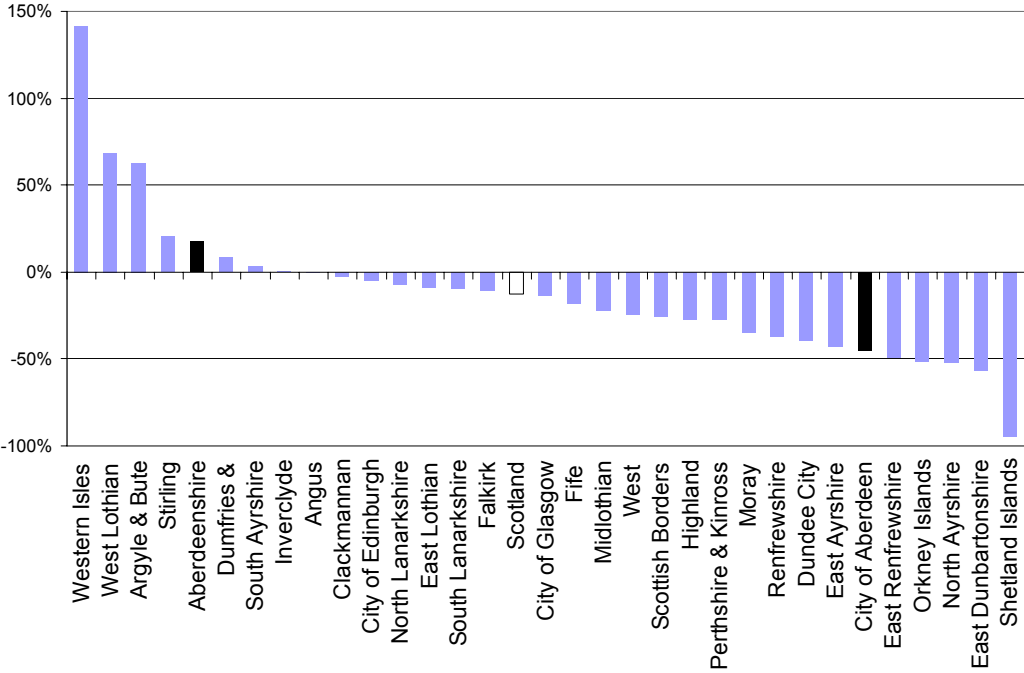
**Figure 12: NHBC Housing Completions Data (Qtr1 2005-Qtr2 2010)**





3.8 Figure 13 below shows the change in housing completions for Scotland and the 32 council areas. It can be seen that Scotland as a whole saw a 13% fall in completions over the past year and that the Western Isles, West Lothian, Argyle & Bute, Stirling, Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway, South Ayrshire and Inverclyde were the only areas to see a rise. Although completions in Aberdeenshire increased (17.4%), in Aberdeen City they fell by more than the Scottish average (-45.2%). Other areas of Scotland continued to see significant falls – over 50% in Orkney, North Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire and Shetland. It is thought that the current limited supply of greenfield housing land in Aberdeen has contributed significantly to the low rates of completions, due to funding challenges around flatted development.

**Figure 13: Annual Change in Housing Completions to Qtr2 2010**



**Key Messages**

3.9 A number of key messages can be drawn from the information presented above:

- a) Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire appear to be following the Scottish market in terms of house prices and transactions, with average prices appearing to be increasing at a faster rate;
- b) House prices are still significantly higher than those for Scotland or the UK as a whole; and
- c) Both new house starts and completions, while still below pre-recession levels, are holding up relatively well in a Scottish context, with new starts in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire accounting for 12.6% of national starts, and completions are 11.6% of the national figures.

## **4 Housing Need and Demand Assessment**

- 4.1 The Scottish Government requires that development plans and local housing strategies are informed by the preparation of a 'Housing Need and Demand Assessment' (HNDA).
- 4.2 The HNDA provides robust evidence on which to base planning and housing policy interventions. The assessment considers the operation and scope of current housing markets, identifying key drivers within the housing system to assess the future housing market and the housing needs of current and future residents.
- 4.3 Officers from both planning and housing services from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils, along with the SDP Team have been working on the preparation of a HNDA. This has been informed by a wider partnership which included housing associations, Homes for Scotland, mortgage lenders, the Aberdeen Solicitors Property Centre and other community planning partners.
- 4.4 The final HNDA was submitted to the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) for appraisal on 30 April 2010.
- 4.5 At the SDPA meeting of 18 June 2010 an update of the progress of the HNDA was presented to Members in the SDPA Bulletin. As was reported verbally to members, on 15 June 2010 the CHMA issued its appraisal, determining the Aberdeen City and Shire HNDA to be 'robust and credible'.
- 4.6 Scottish Planning Policy (2010) states that, where an assessment is considered 'robust and credible' by the Scottish Government (CHMA), the approach used will not normally be considered at the development plan examination. Instead, the examination will focus upon the proposed development plan and its relationship with the findings of the assessment.
- 4.7 The final report and appraisal can be downloaded from the SDPA website (<http://www.aberdeencityandshire-sdpa.gov.uk/AboutUs/HNDA.asp>) and an executive summary is presented in Appendix 1.
- 4.8 The HNDA highlights a need for around 700 new affordable homes each year across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to meet housing need, 550 in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area and 150 in the Rural Housing Market Area.
- 4.9 These findings have informed the two local development plans being produced by the councils at the current time.
- 4.10 An updated assessment will be prepared in early 2011 to inform the Main Issues Report for the strategic development plan and both local housing strategies.

## 5 Scotland's Zero Waste Plan

- 5.1 Members will recall that the SDPA responded to the Scottish Government's draft Zero Waste Plan and this was reported to its December 2009 meeting. The response outlined the need for mechanisms to exist for the articulation of a strategic vision for waste at a regional level and the importance of a robust evidence base to facilitate appropriate planning for waste at this level.
- 5.2 On 9 June 2010 the Scottish Government published 'Scotland's Zero Waste Plan'. The plan sets out the Scottish Government's vision for waste, outlining a nation where all waste is seen as a resource; is minimised; and used efficiently and the small amount of residuals being treated by processes such as energy for waste facilities. In order to achieve these new measures the plan sets out to:
- a) Ensure that the prevention and reuse of waste is central to all our actions and policies;
  - b) Ban landfill for specific waste types to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capturing the value from the waste resources;
  - c) Separate collections of specific waste types to increase reuse and recycling opportunities and contribute to renewable energy targets;
  - d) Outline two new targets to be applied to all waste: 70 per cent target recycled, and maximum 5 per cent sent to landfill, both by 2025;
  - e) Restrict inputs to all energy from waste facilities, in the past only applicable to municipal waste, to encourage waste prevention, reuse and recycling;
  - f) Encourage best practice from local authorities and the resource management sector;
  - g) Improve information on different waste sources; and
  - h) Create a new measure of the carbon impacts of waste to enable prioritisation of recycling to ensure the greatest environmental and climate change outcomes.
- 5.3 Although the Zero Waste Plan does not go into detail with regards to a regional or spatial focus of the targets, the key messages in the Zero Waste Plan are well aligned with the policy position on waste within the structure plan. Both documents emphasise the urgency and magnitude of the change required to achieve a suitable waste solution and highlight the need to manage waste with respect to the waste hierarchy and proximity principle. The structure plan highlights the need to manage waste as a 'resource' while the Zero Waste Plan further emphasises the environmental and economic opportunity that waste offers. The document states that planning is perfectly positioned to seize this opportunity and realise the potential waste management offers. The Zero Waste Plan considers a holistic approach to waste and a need to consider the mix of different streams of waste produced, in order to design a comprehensive approach to waste management.
- 5.4 The Zero Waste Plan details the contributions that the planning system and strategic development plans can make to facilitate the zero waste aims, primarily by taking a proactive approach to planning for waste management, integrating environmental, energy and economic benefits by identifying sufficient land to deal with all types of waste. The waste plan sets out the context for planning for future waste facilities from the Planning Act, Circular Series and Scottish Planning Policy. It reiterates the sentiment from Circular

1/2009 that '*waste management [is expected] to be a principal topic of strategic development plans (SDPs) and that they may be site specific especially where there are no realistic alternative sites*'. The Zero Waste Plan also quotes from Scottish Planning Policy that '*a strategic development plan (SDP) should reflect the requirement where neighbouring authorities work together to develop shared strategic waste infrastructure*'. The Zero Waste Plan then moves on to discuss the role of local development plans in facilitating and enabling the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of waste from all types of development. It acknowledges that planning is crucial to the delivery of the Zero Waste Plan at all stages of development, and in safeguarding and developing waste management sites.

- 5.5 A revised Planning Advice Note 63 (PAN 63: Planning for Waste) will be prepared by the Scottish Government over the coming months.
- 5.6 Both the details in the plan, the forthcoming revision to PAN 63 and enhanced data from SEPA on all waste streams will play an important role in the SDPA's development of strategic supplementary planning guidance.
- 5.7 The SDPA is working with CoSLA, SEPA, Zero Waste Scotland and the Scottish Government to take forward the implications of the Zero Waste Plan to inform the strategic supplementary planning guidance for waste (identified as an action in the structure plan and action programme) and the main issues report.

## **6 Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route**

- 6.1 In the June 2010 Bulletin it was reported that a legal challenge had been lodged against the decision of the Scottish Ministers to approve the construction of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. It is now understood that three legal challenges were made to the Court of Session, one from Road Sense and two from private individuals. The court gave permission for the challenges to be served on Scottish Ministers who have since responded to those challenges. Until such time as it is clear if and how the litigants wish to proceed it is too early to clearly identify the potential impacts on the completion of the project.
- 6.2 Transport Scotland has recently re-emphasised that Ministers are totally committed to delivering the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and to the project being completed as soon as possible. However, they also recognise that they have no alternative but to wait for the outcome of the appeals before substantial progress can be made on this much needed scheme.

## **7 Local Development Plan Progress**

- 7.1 Significant progress has been made by both councils on their local development plans since the last meeting of the SDPA.
- 7.2 Aberdeen City Council agreed a Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan on 18 August 2010. In addition to the proposed plan itself, supplementary guidance has also been published – either policy or area-based. The plan is accompanied by a Proposed Action Programme, an Environmental Report

(including Habitats Regulations Appraisal), an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment and Technical Appendices. Consultation is expected to start on 24 September 2010, with responses required by Friday 17 December 2010.

- 7.3 Aberdeenshire Council agreed the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development for consultation on 24 June 2010. In addition to the proposed plan itself, supplementary guidance has also been published – either policy-based (50) or area-based (6). The plan is accompanied by a Proposed Action Programme, an Environmental Report, Habitats Regulations Appraisal and Multi-Equality Impact Assessment. Consultation commenced on 9 July 2010 and the closing date for responses is Friday 1 October 2010.
- 7.4 The two local development plans are identified in the structure plan as one of the main ways to put the plan into practice. In addition, the need to make quick progress with the preparation of these plans was also highlighted. The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan came into force on 17 August 2009 and it is to the credit of both councils and, in particular their local development plan teams, that they have both progressed to the proposed plan stage within a year and a day of that date.
- 7.5 Both councils anticipate examinations of their plans during 2011 and adoption in late 2011 or early 2012.

## **8 Inquiry into the relationship between transport and land use planning**

- 8.1 In the June 2010 Bulletin it was reported that officers from the SDPA and Nestrans had submitted evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee investigation into the relationship between transport and land use planning.
- 8.2 The Committee published its report on 2 July 2010 which can be accessed from the Scottish Parliament's website (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/ticc/reports-10/trr10-07.htm>).
- 8.3 The findings of the report emphasis the Committee's view that there is a need to improve integration between transport and land use planning and to improve the understanding of each others disciplines among professionals.
- 8.4 Of particular relevance to the work of the SDPA, the Committee noted that –
- “Strategic Development Planning Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships both have a strategic role to play in relation to transport and land use planning in their geographic areas and that it makes sense for these strategic roles to be as joined up as possible. The Committee does not, however, believe that it would be necessary at this stage for the bodies to be merged, as each has its own separate and distinct role”.*
- 8.5 They further recommended that -

*“the Scottish Government [should] develop a strategy to encourage Strategic Development Planning Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships to work together more closely”.*

- 8.6 The evidence presented to the Committee by the SDPA and Nestrans focused on these very issues and it is welcomed that the Committee recognise the value of the approach being taken in Aberdeen City and Shire.

## **9 Cumulative Transport Appraisal**

- 9.1 In November 2009, the SDPA in partnership with Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Transport Scotland, commissioned MVA to undertake a transport appraisal of the emerging Local Development Plans for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The study used ASAM4 (the Aberdeen Sub Area Model) to consider the cumulative strategic transport impacts associated with the scale and distribution of development proposals.
- 9.2 The use of ASAM has enabled, for the first time, a strategic overview of the impact of the proposals being outlined in the Local Development Plans to be taken. In the past, work has been done to look at the local impacts of developments and this work will still be carried out by developers and the Local Authorities. This study however, focuses on the overall strategic and cumulative impacts of all development on the network as a whole.
- 9.3 The results of this work were reported to the Nestrans Board on 25 August and the full study report prepared by MVA is available on the secure area of the Nestrans website.

### **Background**

- 9.4 The study reflected the vision of the finalised Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan, which aims to substantially increase the population and economic activity within the North East. The emerging Local Development Plans of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire sought to identify potential sites for development which would accommodate this level of growth identified in the Structure Plan. It was recognised in the early stages of this work that a full understanding of the impact of this level of development on the transport network would be vital.
- 9.5 The ASAM4 modelling process applies a range of transport infrastructure and planning and development information to calculate and forecast future levels of traffic and travel. Anticipated changes in demographics and car ownership are also input to ASAM4 as part of the process to forecast changes in traffic and public transport trip making.
- 9.6 A number of scenarios were tested using ASAM4 to show the impact of the full Structure Plan allowance and a medium growth requirement allocation. Details of the options tested and the base case scenarios are provided below:
- **2010 Present Day Scenario** – representing current traffic and travel conditions;
  - **Scenario 0 – 2023 Scenario with committed infrastructure only** – representing traffic and travel conditions with several

transport schemes in place but with no overall change in region-wide traffic / travel levels from the present day;

- **Scenario 1 – High Growth – 2023 Scenario with committed infrastructure & development** – representing the full growth aspirations of the Structure Plan. This tests the highest level of development permitted; and
- **Scenario 2 – Medium Growth – 2023 Scenario with committed infrastructure & development** – representing the forecast levels of housing and employment land required to meet the needs of the likely projected growth in the region. This provided a test case against which to test the high growth scenario.

9.7 The committed and proposed transport schemes included in Scenario 0 were assumed to be in place in Scenarios 1 and 2 as well. These included:

- Strategic rail (2008) – improved Edinburgh-Aberdeen, Aberdeen-Inverurie and Aberdeen-Inverness services;
- Laurencekirk rail station & rail service changes;
- Grade separation on the A90 at Findon;
- A956 dual carriageway update;
- Union Street pedestrianisation and traffic management schemes;
- An A96-to-Aberdeen Airport Link Road;
- A90 Balmedie-Tipperty dualling;
- Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route;
- Proposed new Park & Ride sites and associated bus services;
- Haudagain Roundabout Improvements; and
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Don Crossing.

#### **Predicted impact of Development Plans: Present Day to 2023 Horizon (Scenario 0 to Scenario 1)**

9.8 The following headline transport indicators demonstrate the impact of the introduction of the full Structure Plan development (high growth) scenario compared to Present Day 2010 day traffic and travel conditions.

- +20% rise in daily car trips;
- +10% rise in daily public transport trips;
- +30% rise in annual vehicle kilometres;
- +15% rise in annual carbon emissions (tail pipe); and
- Small decrease in region-wide time lost due to congestion per kilometre travelled.

9.9 The study also identifies how the development plan is predicted to impact on the operation of key areas of the road and public transport network including the A90 south, A956, Bridge of Dee, A944, Lang Stracht, Haudagain, 3rd Don Crossing, Bridge of Don, A96 and A947. The results show that at some

locations, congestion levels are anticipated to be in excess of present day conditions, including sections of the A90 South corridor, A96 corridor and A944 corridors.

- 9.10 To combat or mitigate the identified impacts associated with the Development Plan, a series of potential road and public transport interventions were identified that have the potential to mitigate the traffic impacts associated with the LDPs at strategic locations across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.
- 9.11 This package of high level options represents the scope and scale of intervention that may be required to accommodate Development Plans and is detailed in the tables below. They aim to mitigate the potential congestion impacts and improve the level of public transport accessibility at new developments.



**Figure 14: Public Transport Interventions**

Option/Test	Potential Intervention
<b>A: Bus Frequency Improvements</b>	
A. Improved frequency of basic services accessing new developments	One step improvement to services assumed to access new developments (ie 20 minute to 15 minute frequency etc). 10 minute frequency associated with major developments (ie Whitestripes, Craibstone area, Home Farm, Countesswells, Elsick & Loirston).
<b>B: Additional Bus Services</b>	
B1. Orbital Bus Service (North West-South East)	New orbital bus service operating from Kirkhill to Stonehaven via Anderson Drive & Altens.  Proposed route includes, Kirkhill, Aberdeen Airport, A96 Park & Ride, Craibstone area, Auchmill Road, ARI, Woodhill House, Garthdee, Kincorth, Altens, Loirston, A90 South Park & Ride, Portlethen, Elsick, Newtonhill & Stonehaven.  Assumed frequency every 20 minutes.
B2. Orbital Bus Service (North East-South East)	New orbital bus service operating from Ellon to Stonehaven via Anderson Drive & Altens.  Proposed route includes, Ellon, Balmedie, Blackdog, Murcar, Dubford, Whitestripes, ARI, Woodhill House, Garthdee, Kincorth, Altens, Loirston, A90 South Park & Ride, Portlethen, Elsick, Newtonhill & Stonehaven.  Assumed frequency every 20 minutes.
B3. Orbital Bus Service (North East-South West)	New orbital bus service operating from Ellon, to Peterculter via Murcar & Aberdeen Airport.  Proposed route includes, Ellon Balmedie, Blackdog, Murcar, Dubford, Whitestripes, Stoneywood, Dyce, Aberdeen Airport, Kirkhill, A96 Park & Ride, Craibstone area, Kingwells, Home Farm, Kingswells Park & Ride, Countesswells, Bielside, Oldfold & Peterculter.  Assumed frequency every 20 minutes.
B4. Orbital Bus Service (West-North West)	New orbital bus service operating from Westhill to Aberdeen Airport via Kingswells.  Proposed route: Westhill, Kingswells Park & Ride, Home Farm, Kingswells, Craibstone area, A96 Park & Ride, Airport & Kirkhill.  Assumed frequency every 20 minutes.
<b>C: Kintore Rail Station</b>	
C. Station at Kintore	New rail station at Kintore – associated rail services, feeder bus services and car parking capacity to be confirmed.
<b>Bus Priority Measures – Not included within appraisal</b>	
Bus priority measures	Develop a series of bus priority measures to ensure services accessing new development areas are not significantly affected by congestion

**Figure 15: Road-Based Interventions**

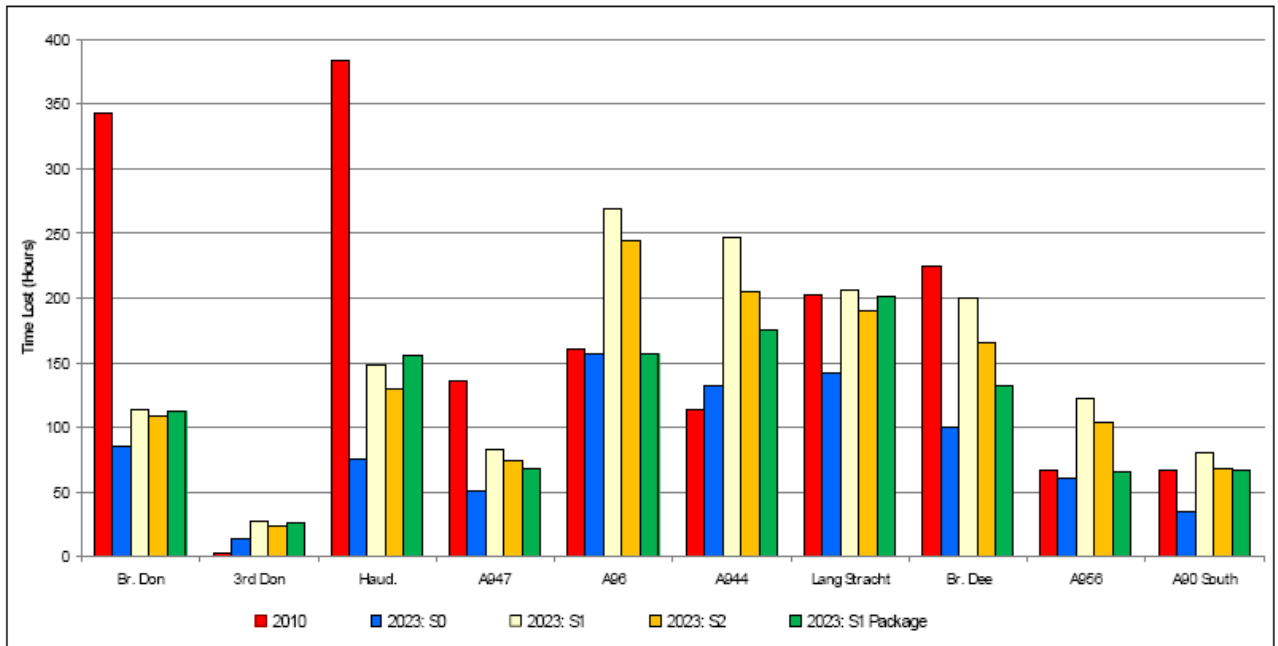
Option/Corridor	Potential Road Intervention
<b>North Aberdeen</b>	
1. Parkway, Persley Bridge & Parkhill Improvements	Junction improvements along the Parkway and additional capacity at Persley Bridge to Haudagain Roundabout. Upgrade sections of B997 Scotstown Road and capacity improvements through Parkhill into North end of Dyce Drive using appropriate design standards to accommodate forecast traffic volumes.
<b>A96 Corridor</b>	
2. Capacity improvements & Upgrade Kingswells North Junction	Capacity improvements at A96/Dyce Drive/Craibstone access junction.  Upgrade route between Bucksburn and AWPR Kingswells North junction using appropriate design standards to accommodate forecast traffic volumes.  Upgrade Kingswells North junction with South facing slips.
<b>A944 Corridor</b>	
3. Upgrade A944 junctions & additional links from developments  Improve access to A93 Corridor	Upgrade junctions at A944/B9119 on approach to Westhill & A944 Kingswells Roundabout.  Second access point from Home Farm to Kingswells bypass and from Countesswells to B9119.  Safety / limited capacity improvements along Countesswells Road, Baillieswells Road & access to Cults from Countesswells.
<b>A956/A90 Corridor</b>	
4. Junction capacity Improvements  Link from Loirston to A90  New Fastlink junction accessing Elswick  River Dee Link	Additional capacity and signal control at Souterhead roundabout.  Local distributor connecting Loirston development with A90.  Additional Fastlink interchange connecting Elswick with AWPR. Upgrade interchange at Newtonhill using appropriate design standards to accommodate forecasted traffic volumes.  New bridge connecting A90 South to South Anderson Drive area.

9.12 It should be noted that the potential interventions identified above have not been fully considered in terms of detailed engineering design and the access arrangements from development to the local road network. Environmental assessments detailing the potential constraints associated with each intervention have also not been considered through this piece of work. Further work would be required to better understand the feasibility of design and impact of the options identified through this study.

9.13 The figure below describes the predicted change in total time lost due to congestion for cars and goods vehicles (at a set of key locations) with the combined package of road and public transport interventions, in place (2023 S1 package as described in the tables above) as well as the predicted impact of the medium growth scenario, the do minimum and base scenarios. This analysis measures the time 'lost' between travelling in free flow conditions

across the network compared to conditions in an average hour in the peak periods.

**Figure 16: Time lost due to congestion in key areas**



Total time lost (hours) in average peak hour across each section of the network

9.14 In terms of congestion, this graph shows that:

- Current day congestion, shown in the first column, is most significant at the Bridge of Don and Haudagain roundabout but other locations also suffer from high levels of congestion.
- At most locations, the introduction of the range of already proposed transport interventions, including the 3<sup>rd</sup> Don crossing and AWPR, significantly reduces congestion at key points on the road network. This is shown as 2023:S0 in the graph above and is the present day situation plus these transport interventions, with no growth from the development plans.
- The introduction of the full Structure Plan allowance for housing and employment erodes the benefit achieved through the already proposed transport interventions. In this scenario (2023: S1) congestion increases, at some locations, beyond current day levels of congestion, including the A96, A944, A956 and A90 south.
- Scenario 2 (2023: S2) is the medium growth structure plan scenario and shows a similar increase in congestion across the network, albeit not quite to the same extent as the high growth scenario.
- The implementation of the proposed package of transport interventions (2023 S1 Package), in general, is shown to bring congestion levels back down to 2010 levels or better at many locations.
- The Bridge of Don, 3<sup>rd</sup> Don and Haudagain areas receive a significant improvement in congestion levels in S0 because many of the already proposed transport interventions focus on this corridor. These locations see a slight increase in congestion as a result of development and the

package of transport interventions however this is still significantly below current day levels.

9.15 Across the network as a whole, the results show that a package of measures of the scope and scale identified through this work is forecast to generate the following benefits when compared against the high growth development plan scenario (i.e. comparing S1 to S1 Package):

- 20%-25% increase in the level of public transport accessibility between key locations;
- +2% rise in daily public transport trips;
- +6% to 7% rise in daily public transport trips to / from new development areas;
- +1% increase in public transport mode share to / from new development areas;
- 8.5% reduction in total level of congestion; and
- Congestion per vehicle km would fall to 21% of time travelled (down from 27% in 2010).

9.16 The range of road and public transport interventions which comprise the package have also been shown to mitigate the main congestion hotspots that were identified.

9.17 This work has therefore identified that a package of transport measures of the scope and scale identified in the study has a significant impact on the Development Plan scenario, reducing peak period congestion by 8.5% across the whole area, with greater impacts locally. The range of interventions which comprise the package have also been shown to mitigate the main congestion hotspots which have been identified. These congestion benefits will vary by location and depend heavily on the feasibility of interventions and as such, the conceptual proposals tested through this study would need to be developed further within the context of the Scottish Transport Appraisal guidance. This would include establishing the full value for money associated with the different interventions identified.

9.18 The report also shows the relationship between the significant road infrastructure proposals tested and the major development locations. This provides an initial means of attributing the use of these investments to individual developments and hence a mechanism to establish some broad principles relating to financial contributions from developers for the delivery of such improvements. It should not be used as a direct link to the contribution that will be required from developments towards new infrastructure.

### **Conclusions**

9.19 The evidence presented in the report enables a more informed view to be taken with regard to the potential cumulative, cross boundary effects of the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council Local Development Plans and the likely scale of intervention required to mitigate these impacts. The following conclusions can be made from the work that has been undertaken:

1. The scale of development proposed in the Structure Plan, both the high growth allowance and the medium growth requirement scenarios, will have a significant impact on the transport network of the region, particularly in areas approaching and within the city.
2. There are a number of transport interventions already being delivered or in the pipeline, that have been shown will have a significant benefit on the transport network.
3. However, there will be areas across the network which will still cause major concerns with this scale of development in place.
4. A package of transport interventions has been shown to mitigate these impacts and further work will be required to bring these forward.

### **Next steps**

- 9.20 Aberdeenshire Council have now published their proposed plan and Aberdeen City Council are due to publish theirs in September 2010. Both make reference to the work done and have used the results of this study to inform the proposed plan.
- 9.21 Both Councils will use the results of the study together with further discussions amongst the partners to inform the development of supplementary guidance on strategic transport infrastructure and developer contributions.
- 9.22 Further work will be required between the partners to identify how developer contributions are applied to strategic infrastructure and at what point such interventions will likely be required.

## **10 SDPA Website Statistics (October 2009 – June 2010)**

- 10.1 The third of the rolling quarterly summaries of web statistics is set out in Figure 17 below. Comparable data has been available since October 2009 when new website monitoring arrangements were put in place.

**Figure 17: Website Summary Statistics**

	<b>Q3 (2009/10)</b>	<b>Q4 (2009/10)</b>	<b>Q1 (2010/11)</b>
<b>Unique Visitors</b>	1,066	1,118	1,036
<b>New Visitors</b>	1,066 (100%)	996 (58%)	891 (55%)
<b>Unique Visits</b>	1,717	1,766	1,619
<b>Average number of visits</b>	1.60	1.55	1.56
<b>Average time spent at site</b>	3:24 minutes	2:39 minutes	2:53 minutes
<b>Total Page Views</b>	7,681	6,952	6,517
<b>Unique page views</b>	4,786	4,686	4,427
<b>Average pages viewed</b>	4.5	3.9	4.0
<b>Direct / Referral / Search</b>	34 / 30 / 39	26 / 28 / 46	30 / 29 / 41
<b>Document Downloads</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A

- 10.2 In total 1,118 unique people visited the SDPA site during the last quarter of 2009/10, with 1,036 during the next 3 months (Q1 2010/11). The level of 'new' visitors was at a fairly constant level of 58% in Q4 2009/2010 and 55% in the first quarter of 2010/11.

10.3 1,619 visits to the SDPA website were recorded during Q1 2010/11, with each spending an average of 2:53 minutes and visiting an average of 4 pages. 30% of visitors accessed the site using previous bookmarks (or directly typing in the address), 41% used a search engine (e.g. Google, Bing, BT-yahoo) and 29% were referred via a link from another websites. Top referrals were from both Aberdeen City Council (10%) and Aberdeenshire Council (11%) web addresses, highlighting the close relationship between the work of the local authorities and the work of the SDPA. The newly introduced 'Publications' page received 7% of page views during the last three month period.

## **11 National Design Awards**

11.1 The Aberdeen City and Shire Structure Plan 2009 recognises that to achieve its vision requires the highest standards of urban and rural design, targeting national recognition for the quality of development in the area.

11.2 Two recent awards have been announced covering the UK and Scotland respectively, both of which included winning entries from the north east.

### **RIBA Awards 2010**

11.3 The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) announced the winners of their 2010 Awards in May 2010. RIBA Awards are given for buildings that have high architectural standards and make a substantial contribution to the environment. (<http://www.architecture.com/Awards/RIBAAwards/Winners2010/Winners2010.aspx>)

11.4 RIBA Awards for architectural excellence were presented to 93 UK Buildings, including two in the north east.

11.5 The Aberdeen Regional Sports Facility (Aberdeen) by Reiach and Hall Architects and "House on the Hill" (St Cyrus, Aberdeenshire) by Paterson Architects were 2 of the 8 successful Scottish buildings announced as winners.

### **Scottish Home Awards 2010**

11.6 The Scottish Home Awards, now in their third year, recognise excellence in the Scottish housebuilding industry. The awards for 2010 were announced on 17 June 2010 (<http://www.kdmedia.co.uk/homeAwards/>).

11.7 JAMstudio, based near Inverurie, were joint winners in the 'Conversion of the Year' category with the conversion of a derelict mill building in Torphins ("Little Maldron Mill"). The architectural consultancy were also shortlisted for the same project in the 'Architectural Excellence Award' category.

11.8 Stewart Milne Homes were shortlisted in two categories – 'Apartment of the Year' ("Ythan View", Ellon) and 'House of the Year' ("Noblewood", Portlethen).