REPORT TO: **CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 8 JUNE 2009**

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

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION**

REPORT NO: **283-2009**

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 have 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 25% by 2021 compared to 1996 levels during the am and pm peak periods. The report informs the Committee that the Council is on schedule to achieve this target by the year 2021 and 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 (RTRA) 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 to Public Transport, Smartbus, Cross City Direct, and other sustainable travel measures such as Travel Planning, Liftsharing and Travel Behaviour Change Marketing.

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.

c The Council has the ability to obtain data and monitor progress towards the Target.

4.4 Dundee is accessed by four major roads being the A90 from the West/North and A92 from the South and East with three out of the four 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 the control of Transport Scotland and therefore the Council's sustainable transport policies have limited affect on these roads. The area where the Council's polices 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.

4.6 The Council's Road Traffic Reduction Target

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.

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.

Table 1.0

	Year												
	1996	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Actual am Peak Growth	**100.0**	**101.0**	**103.0**	**104.9**	**102.6**	**101.7**	**103.5**	**104.3**	**108.3**	**106.4**	**105.3**	**104.9**	**101.3**
Actual pm Peak Growth	**100.0**	**101.0**	**102.0**	**105.0**	**101.8**	**103.7**	**105.2**	**106.7**	**109.2**	**109.1**	**108.0**	**107.9**	**106.4**
Dundee RTRA Target	100.0	101.0	102.0	103.0	104.0	105.0	106.0	107.0	108.0	109.0	110.0	111.0	112.0
24 hour AADT RTRA Traffic	100.0	100.7	102.5	106.1	102.5	103.6	105.5	106.1	108.1	108.8	107.7	108.7	106.0
Scotland Traffic Growth*	100.0	102.1	103.7	105.3	104.7	106.1	109.9	111.3	113.0	113.1	116.8	118.2	N/A

*Based on Scottish Transport Statistics 2008 (2008 statistics not available)

1996 = 100

4.7 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 Since this period there has been a reduction in traffic volumes within the greater city centre area and in 2008 there has been a recognisable drop in traffic during the peak periods particularly the am peak where traffic volumes have remained close to the base 100 level. When considering the 24 hour Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows in the RTRA area it can be seen that there has been a general increase in traffic within the RTRA area and in 2008 there has been an approximate 6% increase over the 1996 levels. It can also be seen that the 24 hour AADT levels of traffic peaked in 2004/2005 with an increase of about 8-9% above the 1996 base level, however similar to the peak period indices it can be seen that traffic has reduced from this high level.

4.10 In comparison traffic volumes in Scotland have been increasing at a higher rate than in the RTRA area with an increase of approximately 18% between 1996 and 2007 (2008 figures have yet to be published).

4.11 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 Bringing Confidence to Public Transport, Smartbus and Cross City Direct projects have all been implemented within the city. These projects 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 2004/2005 peak in the RTRA area with parking policies, high oil prices and the economic downturn being the other most likely factors.

4.12 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 now embarking on the Smarter Choices Smarter Places project that contains several elements that support sustainable modes that will assist in minimising/ reducing traffic growth within the city centre area.

5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. The major issues are set out below:

a Sustainability

The principle of minimising road traffic growth accords with the Council's sustainability policy, particularly the key principles of "Transport and Travel".

b Strategic Environmental Assessment

The monitoring of the RTRA does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) although the traffic information could be used in future SEA's that are undertaken by the Council.

c Anti-Poverty

It is not necessary to have access to a car to undertake daily business in the city of Dundee thus ensuring equal access to all for services.

d Equality Impact Assessment

There are no implications in relation to this report.

e Risk Management

The monitoring of Road Traffic Reduction Act targets ensures that the city of Dundee is managing the growth of traffic levels successfully and avoiding the damaging effects that congestion and pollution present.

6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Local Transport Strategy - 2000

7.2 Scottish Transport Statistics 2008 Edition

7.3 Guidance on LTS and Road Traffic Reduction Reports

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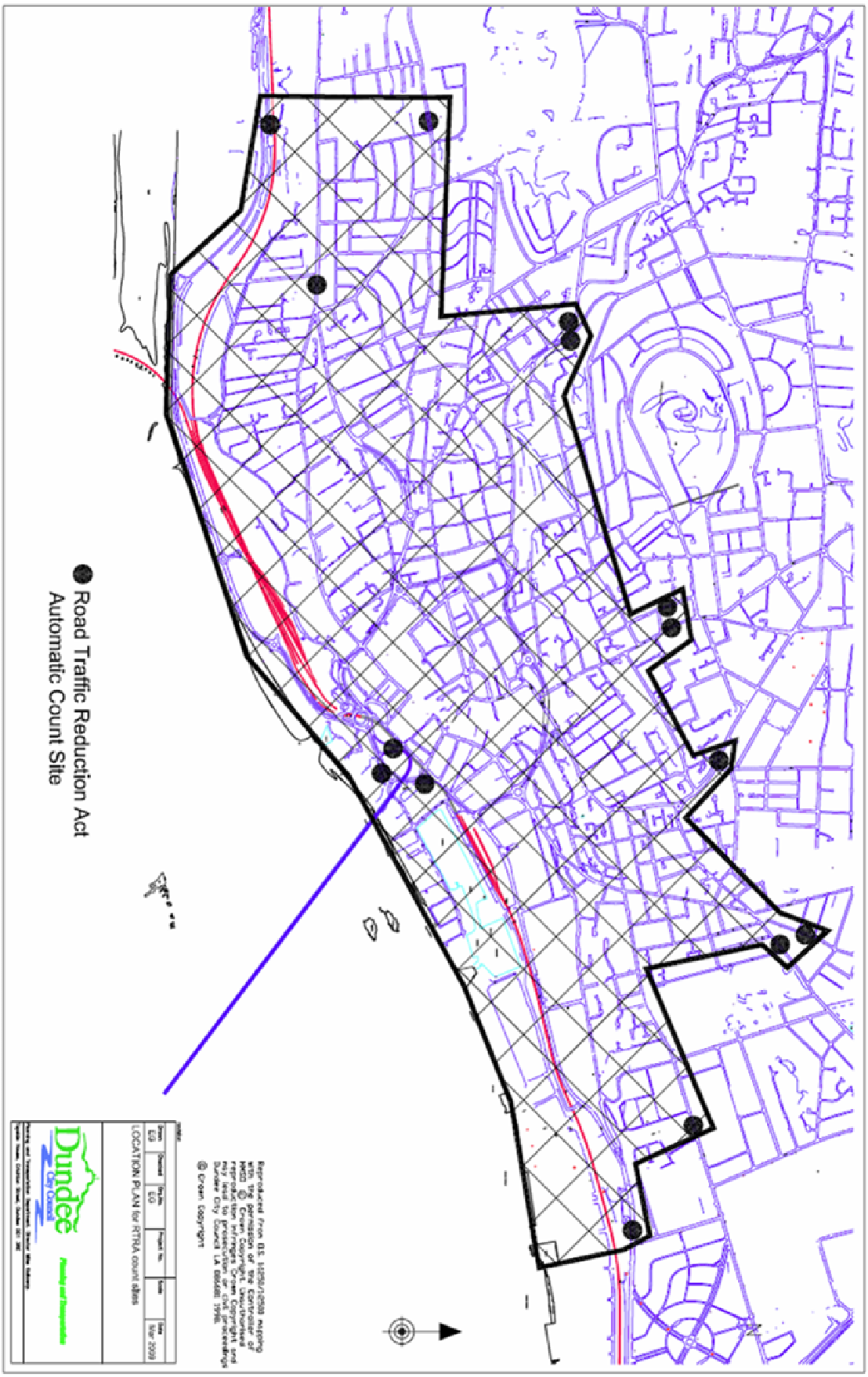
Appendix 1


Road Traffic Reduction Act
Automatic Count Site
Dundee City Council
LOCATION PLAN for RTRA count sites
Mar 2009
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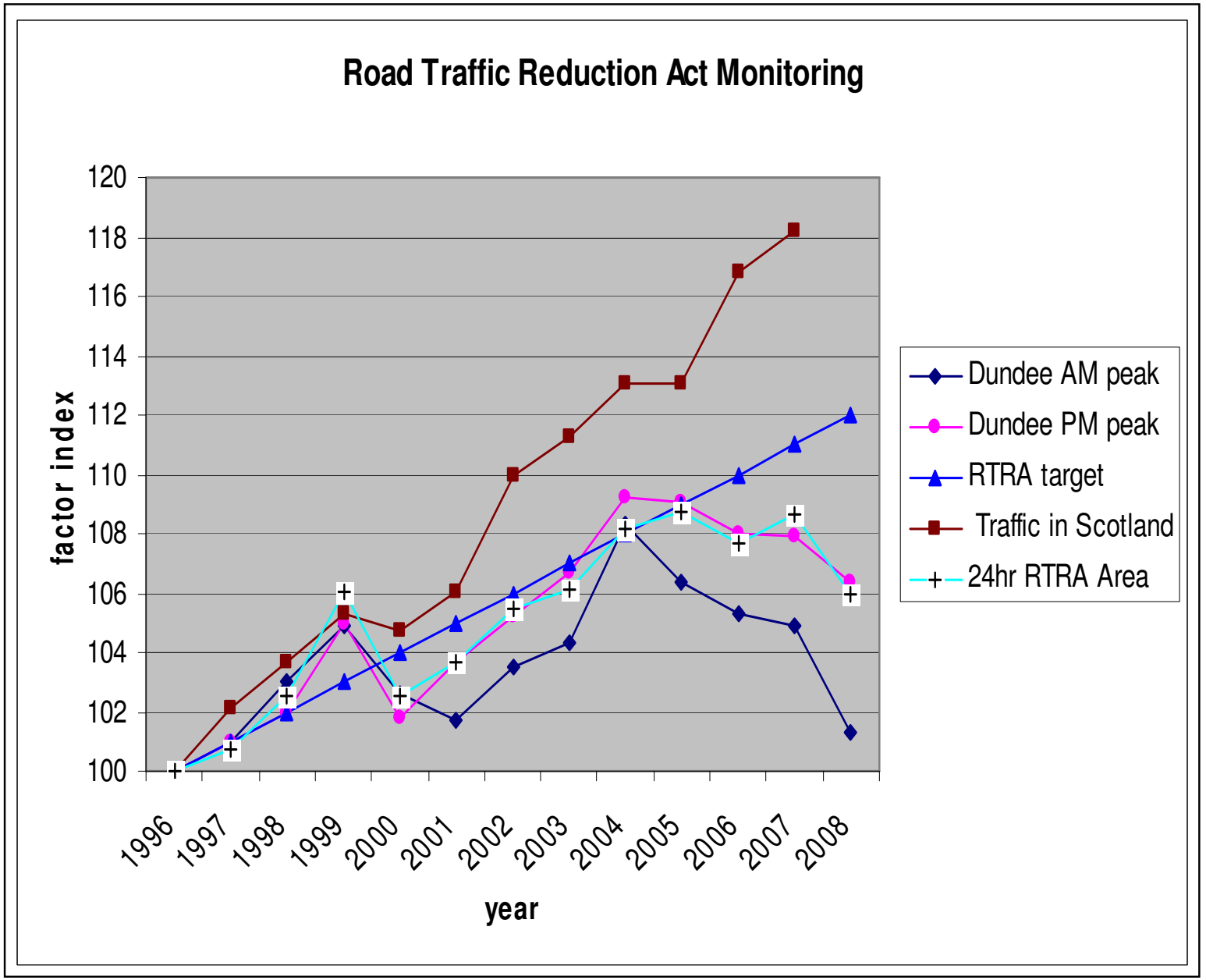
Road Traffic Reduction Act Monitoring
factor index
120
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year
Dundee AM peak
Dundee PM peak
RTRA target
Traffic in Scotland
24hr RTRA Area

Appendix 2