REPORT TO: **CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 22 AUGUST 2011**

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

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT**

REPORT NO: **364-2011**

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 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 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, 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.

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 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 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

	Year														
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
AM Peak	100	101	103	104.9	102.6	101.7	103.5	104.3	108.3	106.4	105.3	104.9	101.3	98	97.3
PM Peak	100	101	102	105	101.8	103.7	105.2	106.7	109.2	109.1	108	107.9	106.4	104.3	103.4
Dundee RTRA Target	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114
Traffic in Scotland	100.0	102.1	103.7	105.3	104.7	106.1	109.9	111.3	113.0	113.1	116.8	118.2	117.7	117.1	N/A
24hr RTRA	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	104.3	102.1

*Based on Scottish Transport Statistics 2009.(2010 statistics Not Available)

4.10 Since this period there has been a reduction in traffic volumes within the greater city centre area and in 2010 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 97.3. The 2010 PM peak remains higher than the 1996 base (100) with an index level of 103.4. When considering the 24 hour Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flows in the RTRA area it can be seen that there has been decrease in traffic over the last year and this has seen traffic levels fall back to virtually 1996 levels as the index is at 102.1 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 17% between 1996 and 2009 (2010 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 performance of the Scottish 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 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 2004/05 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 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.

There are no major issues.

6 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Director of Finance and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) 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

Mike Galloway
Director of City Development

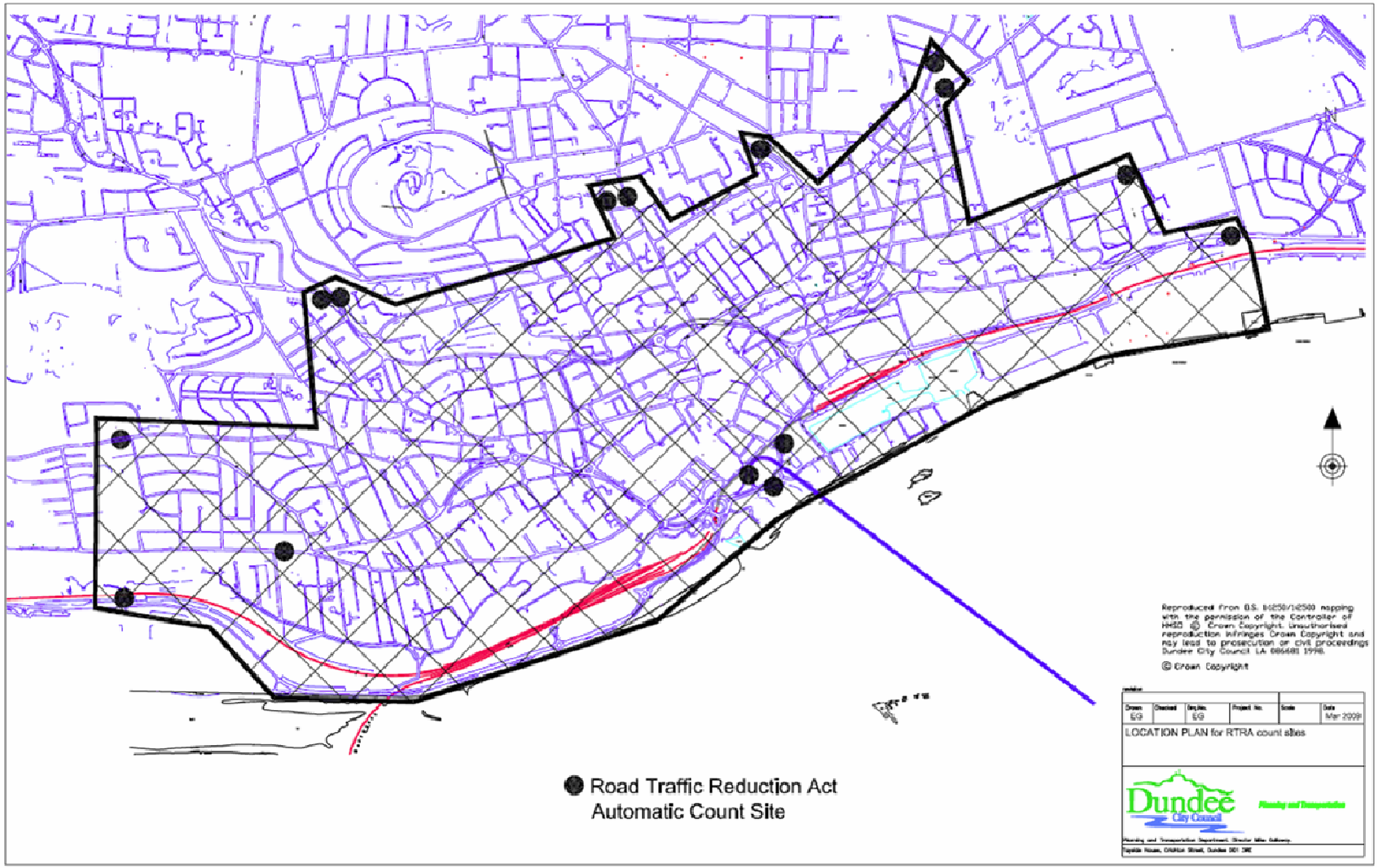
Neil Gellatly
Head of Transportation

NHG/EG/ET

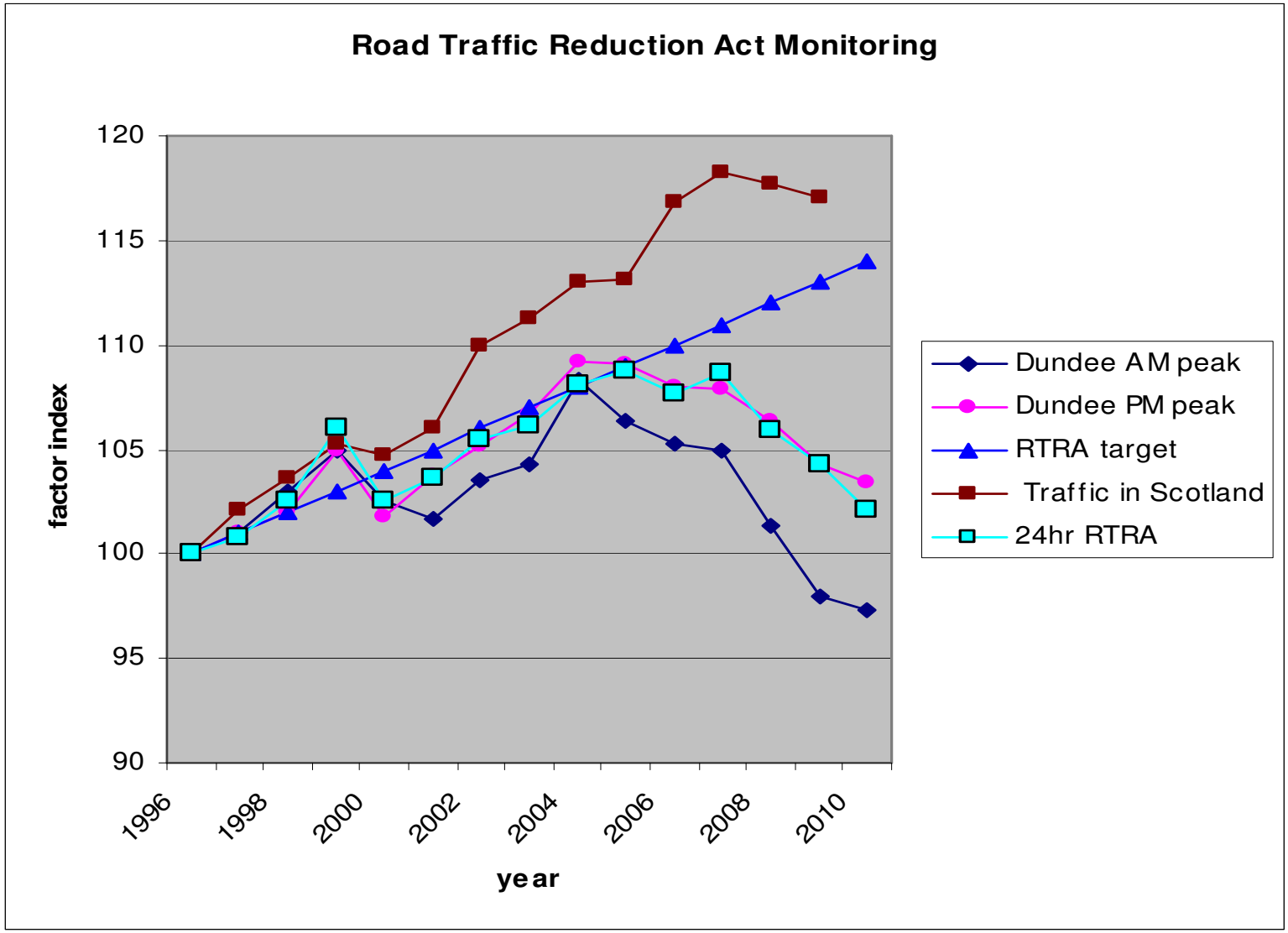
22 July 2011

Dundee City Council
Dundee House
Dundee

APPENDIX 1


Road Traffic Reduction Act
Automatic Count Site
LOCATION PLAN for RTRA count sites
Dundee City Council

APPENDIX 2


Road Traffic Reduction Act Monitoring
120
115
110
105
100
95
90
factor index
1996
1998
2000
2002
2004
2006
2008
2010
year
Dundee AM peak
Dundee PM peak
RTRA target
Traffic in Scotland
24hr RTRA