GUIDANCE ON THE PREPARATION OF TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 2014

GUIDANCE ON THE PREPARATION OF TRANSPORT ASSESSMENTS

CONTENTS

1 Introduction
2 Requirement for a Transport Assessment
3 Scoping
4 Assessment for all modes of transport
5 Existing transport infrastructure
6 Accessibility
7 Existing traffic conditions
8 Traffic growth
9 Committed development
10 Safety
11 Traffic generation
12 Junction analysis
13 Roads hierarchy
14 Mitigation measures
15 Parking
16 Travel Plan & Monitoring
17 Submission of Transport Assessments
18 References

1 Introduction

1.1 The requirement for Transport Assessments is set out in *Scottish Planning Policy (para 286)* and further guidance is given in *Transport Assessment Guidance* produced by Transport Scotland. Additionally the Highland Council's *Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments* refer to Transport Assessments in section 2.2.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide additional guidance on particular aspects of the preparation of Transport Assessments. It is designed to augment and supplement but not replace the other guidance which is available.

2 Requirements for a Transport Assessment (TA)

2.1 A Transport Assessment (TA) will be required when a development has significant transport implications. Indicative criteria regarding transport impacts are given in paras. 3.10 – 3.21 and Table 3.1 of *Transport Assessment Guidance*. However as each situation must be judged on its merits the requirement for a TA should be agreed in advance with the Council.

2.2 For developments with lesser transport implications a Transport Statement (TS) may be required and this should be agreed with the Council. Agreement on the requirement for a TA or TS should be undertaken in good time prior to the submission of a planning application.

3 Scoping

3.1 Scoping is an essential part of the successful preparation of TAs involving the submission of a Scoping Report to the Council for agreement prior to further development of the TA. The contents of a Scoping Report are given in Table 3.2 of *Transport Assessment Guidance*. For schemes which impact on the trunk road network the scoping should also be agreed with Transport Scotland.

3.2 A TA is normally concerned with the transport impacts of development during the operational phase. However in certain circumstances it may also be necessary to consider the impact of construction traffic and this should be agreed with the Council. In the case of renewable energy projects the major impacts are during construction and full consideration should be given to the impact of construction traffic.

3.3 A TA should consider the transport impacts of development both on the existing transport network in the surrounding area external to the site and for large sites within the site boundary itself. This should include connectivity and integration between the proposed development and the surrounding areas.

4 Assessment for all modes of transport

In accordance with *Scottish Planning Policy* and *Transport Assessment Guidance* assessment for all modes of transport should be carried out. This includes walking, cycling, public transport, private cars and service vehicles.

5 Existing transport infrastructure

5.1 Existing transport infrastructure should be assessed to establish its suitability to support additional development. This will include footways, carriageways and provision for cyclists and public transport.

5.2 Existing infrastructure is often sub-standard by current standards and the TA should identify where this is the case and where it is proposed to undertake upgrading to support new development. However in some cases upgrading may not be possible for example due to land ownership issues or topography. In these cases a balanced judgement will be required on the suitability of sub-standard infrastructure to support additional development. The TA should identify all relevant issues relating to the standard of existing infrastructure and consider the implications of permitting the proposed development.

6 Accessibility

6.1 The TA should assess the accessibility of the site to existing and proposed facilities. For example in the case of residential development this will include schools, amenities and employment opportunities.

6.2 Measures should be proposed to provide safe and attractive routes to encourage walking and cycling between the proposed development and adjacent facilities.

7 Existing traffic conditions

7.1 The existing traffic conditions on the adjacent road network should be established by obtaining appropriate traffic data. This may include data which is available from existing sources such as permanent traffic counters or alternatively data obtained specifically for the project. Existing data which should not be more than 3 years old should be factored to reflect traffic growth since the data was collected. The growth factors to be used should be agreed with the Council.

7.2 In order to ensure that traffic conditions are broadly representative of year round conditions surveys should be carried out during a neutral month avoiding public and local holidays, school holidays and other abnormal traffic periods. The months of April, May, September and October are normally considered to be neutral months. If undertaking traffic surveys at other times of year is unavoidable then a seasonal adjustment factor should be agreed with the Council.

7.3 To establish link flows automatic traffic counts (ATC) will normally be undertaken and these should be for a minimum period of one week.

7.4 Classified turning counts as well as queue surveys may be required at junctions. These should normally cover both the am and pm peak periods which are typically 7.30 – 9.30 and 16.00 – 18.00 or as agreed with the Council. In addition for retail development the Saturday peak period should be considered and this will typically be within the period 12.00-18.00. Classified turning counts should be undertaken at 15-minute intervals while queuing surveys should be undertaken at 5-minute intervals. Turning counts based on one day's data should not be used in isolation and should be calibrated against queuing data and ATC data for a longer period.

8 Traffic growth

Data from traffic surveys shall be factored to reflect traffic growth to the assessment year of the development which is normally the year of opening. Traffic growth factors shall be agreed with the Council.

9 Committed development

Committed development in the vicinity of the site may have a traffic impact over and above that taken into account by traffic growth. Committed development is classed as development which has an extant planning consent or has been granted planning consent subject to legal agreement but which has not yet been occupied. The traffic impact of committed development should be added to the existing traffic conditions before considering the impact of the proposed new development.

10 Safety

10.1 The safety of the existing network should be investigated by reference to accident statistics for at least the previous three year period.

10.2 Proposed changes to existing road layouts and new road layouts may require safety audit and requirements for this shall be agreed with the Council.

11 Traffic generation

11.1 Traffic generation of proposed development is normally assessed using the TRICS database. The database contains a large amount of data gathered from surveys of travel patterns from developments throughout the UK and Ireland and relates to journeys made by motor vehicles and by other modes.

11.2 The TRICS database should be used in accordance with the *TRICS User Guide.* As explained in the User Guide obtaining representative data for a proposed development is dependent on the following:

- Selection of appropriate criteria for the site in question.
- Selection of a sufficient number of sites in order to avoid unrepresentative data distorting the overall result.

Depending on the total number of sites available in the database for a particular type of development it can be difficult to satisfy both criteria completely. The User Guide makes it clear that trip rates are consistent across wide geographical areas providing other criteria are selected correctly.

11.3 In order to demonstrate the suitability of the selection criteria adopted the following aspects should be fully explained and justified within the main text of the TA.

- Land use and trip rate selection criteria
- Primary filtering criteria
- Secondary filtering criteria

Where the filtering criteria results in the selection of a small number of sites the criteria may need to be adjusted and a revised selection made in order to include additional sites. This may result in modified results. Where this is done both sets of results should be presented in the TA for comparison purposes.

11.4 Due to the sensitivity of the data to the selection criteria adopted within TRICS consideration should be given to presenting a range of trip rates which reflects the uncertainty inherent in traffic forecasting. In addition it should be apparent in the TA whether the data used relates to the mean results or the 85th percentile.

11.5 Mean/median cross testing should be undertaken in accordance with the *TRICS User Guide* and the results reported in the TA.

11.7 The output from the TRICS selection process should be included in the TA as an appendix.

11.8 The TRICS database now contains multi-modal information for many sites. In addition census data is also available which contains information about modal split of journeys to work and education which can be useful. If it is proposed to use a mix of TRICS data and census data this should be justified and where possible both sets of data presented for comparison purposes.

12 Junction analysis

12.1 The existing junctions to be analysed should be agreed with the Council as part of the scoping. In addition for large developments proposed new junctions may also require analysis.

12.2 The level of development traffic will impact on existing and new junctions. In situations where a range of traffic generation has been considered as noted in 11.3 and 11.4 above it will be necessary to establish the sensitivity of the junction analysis to the assumptions made regarding development traffic. In some cases more onerous assumptions regarding traffic generation will lead to a junction becoming overloaded. In borderline cases the reasons for reaching a conclusion regarding the suitability of a junction to accommodate the development traffic shall be fully explained in the TA.

13 Roads hierarchy

Proposals for larger developments should identify a roads hierarchy in order to provide suitable routes for through traffic, public transport, service vehicles and identify quieter residential streets.

14 Mitigation measures

The TA should identify all measures required to enable the transport infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development. These should include but will not necessarily be limited to the following:

- Improvements to the existing roads infrastructure including junction improvements and road widening.
- Measures to promote walking and cycling both within the site and in the surrounding area.
- Provision of pedestrian crossings and cycle routes.
- Provision of bus shelters and contributions to enhanced bus services.
- Measures to improve road safety.
- Contributions to larger schemes for infrastructure improvement being promoted by the Council.

15 Parking

The provision of appropriate and adequate parking both on-site and off-site is an essential component of good development. Parking should be provided in accordance with national and Council standards and as agreed with the Council. Provision should be made for general parking, disabled parking, cycle parking and when required for coach parking. The TA should identify the parking strategy adopted for the development.

16 Travel Plan & Monitoring

The TA should contain, as a minimum, a travel plan framework in accordance with the requirements of the *Transport Assessment Guidance.* The Travel Plan framework should contain proposed Mode Share Targets (MSTs) along with a statement of how these will be

monitored once the development is complete. For large traffic generating developments annual monitoring over a 3-year period post opening will be required.

17 Submission of Transport Assessment

For applications for which a TA is required the relevant document should be submitted along with the planning application and other supporting information. The transport aspects of an application cannot be considered in advance of receipt of the relevant documentation and therefore late submission could result in delay to the consideration of the application.

18 References

Scottish Planning Policy Scottish Government, June 2014

http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00453827.pdf

Transport Assessment Guidance Transport Scotland, 2012

http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/private/documents/tsc-basic-pages/Planning_Reform_-_DPMTAG_-_Development_Management__DPMTAG_Ref_17_-_Transport_Assessment_Guidance_FINAL_-_June_2012.pdf

Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments Highland Council, May 2013

http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/527/road_guidelines_for_new_developments

TRICS User Guide

http://www.trics.org/websystem/doc/TRGOODPR2013.pdf

National Roads Development Guide (para 3.2) SCOTS, 2014

http://localapps.pkc.gov.uk/internet/flashmag/councils/nationalroadsguide/roadsfeb2014.pdf

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Volume 12. Traffic Appraisal of Road Schemes

http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol12/index.htm