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28 May 2009

Aberdeen City Council
Planning and Infrastructure
Strategic Leadership
St Nicholas House
Broad Street, Aberdeen
AB10 1BW

RE: Berryden Corridor Proposals

Dear Sir /Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Berryden corridor proposals. The Aberdeen Cycle Forum discussed the proposals at its meeting on 26th May.

We are very disappointed with these proposals. New urban dual carriageways, especially in such a central location, are well past their sell by date as solutions to traffic congestion. By the time this gets built – if ever – we will be realising even more that it is the wrong solution. It is frustrating that outdated solutions are being brought forward. A city becomes what we want of it – if we want it dominated by traffic then this is precisely the type of project that will achieve that.

Specifically, we would make the following points:

1. The Local Transport Strategy has an objective 'to increase the share of travel of the most sustainable modes and to promote economic growth without associated traffic growth' (pg 27) and notes that a key conclusion from the consultation process was that 'we should aim to be less car dependent and move to a position where we can make more use of sustainable forms of transport' (pg 29). The Regional Transport Strategy similarly has an objective 'to reduce the proportion of journeys made by cars and especially single occupant cars'. We are not convinced that the proposals can demonstrate how they will meet these objectives. By allowing cars unrestricted use of all the additional road space, our view is that the proposals will actually undermine these objectives. There appears to be a serious lack of alignment between council strategy and council practice.
2. It is not clear to us how this proposal 'locks in' the benefits of the AWPR and other regional transport schemes, an aim of both the Regional and Local Transport Strategies. These benefits are supposed to include less pressure on the city road network and an opportunity to allocate road space to sustainable modes. This proposal completely fails in this respect.

3. The proposed shared cycle and footway crosses seven junctions and involves crossing from one side of the corridor to the other. Cyclists' progress along this will be tortuous. Any apparent safety gain will be offset by the additional risks facing cyclists as they have to negotiate a succession of side roads. It is not acceptable for cyclists to be shunted onto the pavement and onto such a poor facility. As we stated at the consultation workshops, the priority has to be a solution that creates safe and attractive cycling conditions on the carriageway.

4. The roundabout at the top of St Machar Drive is difficult to negotiate for cyclists yet is unavoidable for many cycle commuters. A cyclist was seriously injured on this roundabout just a few months ago. With the dual carriageway feeding onto this roundabout, the scheme will add to the risks that cyclists face and this is unacceptable.

5. The dual carriageway severs Ashgrove Road, allows only left turns off Belmont Road and is proposing to ban right turns from Belmont Rd onto Powis Terrace. Cyclists will be unable to cross the corridor at this point, severing a primary cycle route towards ARI in one direction and the university at Old Aberdeen in the other direction. At the consultation workshop, we advised that there should be better access across this corridor for cyclists; for example, between Rosemount and Old Aberdeen. These proposals have not only ignored this, they have made the situation worse.

We would wish to have the opportunity to discuss these matters with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Aberdeen Cycle Forum