

# Aberdeen Cycle Forum

## Minutes of Monthly Meeting

**Tuesday 27th August, 7:30pm at Belmont Cinema**

**Present:** Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin (Communications Secretary), Andy Redmond, Fiona McDonald, Liz Lindsey, Tally Yahya, Alex Jarvis, Ritchie Bryan, Raymond Christie, Francesco Sani, Nathan Gore, Ian Mitchell.

### **1. Introductions**

Lots of new faces at this meeting so we started with introductions, and a brief recap over some of ACF's history and recent activities. New attendees were very welcome and it was great to see them after a pretty quiet summer.

### **2. Consultations**

#### **1. SUMP**

This is the council's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP)

We submitted a fairly positive overall review of the SUMP draft. The council included our visualisation of King Street in the draft. Segregation was mentioned numerous times.

We were disappointed with the timescale - very long term. Many of the actions are also only to "investigate" rather than definite. It was also restricted to the city centre and so doesn't connect key landmarks in Aberdeen like Duthie Park, the beach, the University of Aberdeen.

#### **2. Deeside Way/Pittengullies Brae**

In this consultation the council was looking at options to improve a crossing on Deeside Way. One of the options is to build a bridge. The problem with the crossing is it's very steep, there are barriers which make it difficult for bikes, especially cargo bikes, to cross, and then it crosses a minor road. Our submission was fairly positive but we questioned the need for a bridge given the road is so quiet and perhaps the money would be better spent elsewhere. Raymond questions whether the bridge would be high enough? Francesco suggested bollards instead of barriers. People with disabilities should not be disadvantaged and nor should families using cargo bikes. Alex asked whether there's a pedestrian crossing on the road? Answer: no. Liz says it's better to spend the money at Milltimber which is still very confusing for people using Deeside Way since the AWPR was built. Fiona says there is a sign at the Milltimber crossing but most people can't see it.

#### **3. Murcar to Blackdog**

The proposal is for a shared use path next to the A90, on the east side.

This is being funded by the mitigation money that ACC were given by AWRP. Our main comment is the proximity of the path to a main road with fast-moving traffic. Cycling by Design (Transport Scotland design manual) says that on any road with fast traffic (>40 miles per hour) minimum separation should be 1.5m. On this stretch of road the speed limit is 70mph. We had made several other comments on details of the design, and the importance of connectivity.

#### **4. NESTRANS strategy document and National Transport Strategy**

Both of these consultations are currently open. On the NESTRANS 2040 strategy people can respond to specific transport modes - buses, trains etc and there's now a separate section for walking and cycling. We're not sure when this closes?

The National Transport Strategy closes on the 23rd October 2019.

Cycling UK have already issued a preliminary comment which was not very positive. |

Rachel will post link to these consultations on Twitter, Facebook, and our website.

- 5. Schoolhill.** In February we had responded to an informal consultation from ACC about re-design of the area outside the Art Gallery and Robert Gordon's School. We have grave concerns about the safety of the design, but these had been ignored and the road has recently reopened after widening of the pavement which has resulted in a pinch point which we still regard as a hazard to cyclists. We had also pointed out that the Council's own City Centre Masterplan showed this part of Schoolhill as being reduced to one-way traffic and the space freed up being used for 2-way segregated bike lanes. Neither of these things are part of the current scheme.

### **3. Cycling in Aberdeen**

Following on from the discussion on National and local strategies, there was a general discussion on some of the reasons why we are where we are with cycling uptake in Aberdeen. The rate of cycling in Aberdeen is not moving. Raymond says more people would cycle if there was infrastructure; people feel scared to cycle in traffic and don't do it.

Gavin says a student researcher did some research a few years ago and found that most people feel unsafe on the roads in Aberdeen - his infographic is available on the ACF website. This is why although we would generally support a bicycle hire scheme we feel there needs to be investment in infrastructure first. If a hire scheme is launched and fails or has poor uptake, there is a danger this will be used as 'evidence' that there is no demand for cycling.

Alex notes that there's different types of cycling - commuter cycling and leisure cycling and bicycle hire will appeal most to leisure or tourist cycling. Gavin believes ACC are putting their bike hire scheme idea out to tender.

Francesco asks whether there's a way to share images of examples of infrastructure and bike parking around Aberdeen and other cities? Rachel says images can be shared on Twitter and Facebook. Gavin mentioned a campaign previously run by ACF for examples of the worst infrastructure. Ian says Google Maps has a Google Guides where you add pins to locations and upload images. Ian will investigate this further.

Nathan says we need better driver education and signs on roundabouts. Raymond says the TV ads (about safe distance) are helping. Gavin says he saw temporary cardboard signs in Edinburgh that were wrapped around poles and sent an image of one to Joanna Murray. She said she'd pass it on. Andy says there are fewer close passes than before because of the police campaigns which are effective. Is there a cycling person in the police? Gavin noted that in the past we had had irregular meetings with the Council and Police jointly on the topic of road safety. These had briefly been reactivated following a fatality a few years ago. They had fallen by the wayside because they became too difficult to organise: there seemed to be a lack of commitment and/or resources from the other parties. Fiona will ask a contact about a good point of contact.

#### **4. Engagement with Council**

We previously tried to get the council to nominate a cycle champion. It used to be Ross Thompson. Our person of contact then became Ross Grant and now it's Sandra McDonald. Both Rachel and Gavin have separately had meetings with Sandra now. Sandra doesn't think a cycle champion would work because there are no councillors who are passionate about cycling. But she is willing to meet and engage with us and has already been helpful in following up on queries after the respective meetings.

Roads hierarchy - Post AWPR the council does not want through traffic in the city centre. AECOM have produced a report on roads hierarchy and spoke to ACF at a previous meeting to gather feedback.

Fiona says the speed limit on North Deeside Road has been reduced to 30mph. Is this part of the roads hierarchy? Possibly, although it was expected that the Roads Hierarchy report would be going to the Council before any of the main findings were implemented, and it was likely to be controversial

Gavin also asked Sandra about the Westhill cycle path petition which was submitted by the Forum several years ago and seems to have been forgotten. Sandra investigated and got in touch with officers who gave plans for the route but it seems the correct process for dealing with the petition has not been followed because they were meant to report back to the committee. The petitions committee no longer exists.

Sandra says she is willing to come to a future ACF meeting.

## **5. Events**

### **1. In Town Without my Car Day**

This is on the 15th September 10am-4pm. We will have a stall there and give out postcards, cycle maps ... anything else? We also need volunteers. Can anyone help on the day? Besides Gavin and Rachel, Liz can help.

### **2. Big Bike Revival - learn to cycle lessons**

We sometimes get requests from people who have never ridden a bike before and who want lessons. There seems to be a gap for adult beginner cycling lessons in Aberdeen and one of our members approached us along with Cycling UK to say there's funding to run some of these. We're planning to run two sessions on Saturday September 28th from 9 - 12. Adventure Aberdeen can provide bikes and a bikability officer while Nathan Gore has offered to be a volunteer bikability officer.

### **3. Pedal on Parliament 2020**

We're planning to close the roads for PoP in 2020 to attract more people to the event. Typically we get around 100 participants but this hasn't changed much in the five years we've been running it and this is largely because people are afraid to cycle in traffic. We need £2321.20 to close the roads. This is £850 for the traffic order and £1471.10 for traffic management. Cycling UK can provide £800 from a BBR grant for this. Rachel has applied. We need to apply for more grants for the rest.

Rachel to ask whether it costs more to close the roads for two hours. (Post-meeting note: have done this and the cost is the same). It was suggested that we - or a partner group - have a mini tour series for people to race around the circuit and we could charge for the races, to offset some of the costs

To raise the money we could approach businesses. Many companies have a corporate social responsibility budget for this kind of thing. Could also approach bike shops. We also have the option of crowd funding from our membership of circa 600.

Gavin to see whether other local groups would like to get involved.

Could do pollution monitoring on day of PoP to see the effect of traffic ban on pollution levels.

## **6. Any Other Business**

### **1. Best of Cycling Awards**

An idea was proposed whereby we could run an awards program where people can nominate best employer, best school, best business, best restaurant, best cycling business etc for an award.

## **2. Hazelhead Academy eco group**

Fiona is involved in getting improvements for school children to cycle to school. They are fund-raising for lighting, pot hole fixing, and painting lines/signs on safe routes. If anyone has any suggestions please let Fiona know.

## **7. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 24th September, and again we will aim to use the Belmont as a venue.