



CYCLE FORUM

MINUTE

Tuesday, 30th March 2004, Committee Room 5, Town House.

Present:

Jeremy Rushton, Friends of the Earth (Chair)
 Derek Williams, CTC
 Jackie Wilkins, CTC
 Louise Napier, Aberdeen City Council
 Warren Murphy, Aberdeen City Council
 Kris Howard, CTC
 Sonia Element, BP
 Dave Tulett, Marine Lab

Apologies:

Dave Lindsey, CTC, Right to Ride Officer
 Gregor McAbery, Environmental Forum
 Helen Keron, BP
 Helen Adamson, Shell
 Saville Gunn, Aberdeen Wheelers

Item	Action By
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>JR Chairing. Apologies from Dave Lindsey, Gregor McAbery, Helen Keron, Helen Adamson and Saville Gunn.</p>	
<p>2. Minute of last meeting (24/02/04) & Matters Arising</p> <p>No corrections to the minute.</p> <p>WPR Meeting</p> <p>DT spoke about the WPR Meeting with the Management Team and the Consultants, Babbie (minute of WPR meeting attached to Cycle Forum minute – Appendix A). He raised the point with them that junction design was critical; large gyratories are not practical or safe for cyclists. DT suggested contacting York CTC to find out who was involved in designing the bypass there. They could then be used as evidence of best practice. DT also spoke about the reluctance of the Management Team to put in pedestrian and cycle facilities across the bridges at the Rivers Dee and Don, as well as links alongside the WPR. The Forum thought that it would be worth lobbying further up to try and secure these facilities. WM suggested contacting Ian Kernohan at the Scottish Executive who is Head of Transport Policy in the North and North East. As well as Chief Road Engineer, John Howison, who is responsible for Trunk Roads Design and Construction. It was also decided that the same introductory letter should go to MSP Nicol Stephen. WPR Management Team to be copied in to all correspondence. DT to draw up a letter and circulate to the rest of the Forum.</p> <p>NESTRANS Money</p> <p>DW had a response from the Scottish Executive regarding his letter to Nichol Stephen concerning the NESTRANS money. It stated that it was up to NESTRANS and the Council how they spend the money. The Forum felt that it was time to arrange a meeting with Cllr Yuill. JW to organise and a group of Forum members will brief him on the Forum and how he wants to work with the Cycle Forum.</p> <p>Cycle Map</p> <p>LN explained that there were a couple of issues that may affect the production of the map. The</p>	<p>DT</p> <p>DT</p> <p>JW</p>

<p>Senior Technical Officer, Andrew Shaw, that had been helping LN with the map had died suddenly and although his colleagues were trying to catch up with Andy's workload everyone was in shock and it would mean a delay in the production of the map.</p> <p>Secondly, Joanna Beveridge who was the key holder of the PTF money for the Cycle Map has been promoted to Principal Engineer for delivering the pedestrianisation of Union St and associated road building projects. It was thought this would also effect the map – as a replacement was not yet in place – but LN to set up meeting with Roads to sort out who is the main contact – but also get something in writing regarding their commitment to funding the map. JW also explained that there were still some gaps on the map. JR and SE to have a look and see if they can fill in gaps. LN to send out maps.</p> <p>DW updated the Forum on funding: £1000 – Shell £1000 – BP £500 – Marine Lab £500 – Communities Scotland.</p> <p>The Edinburgh Bike Coop has also decided to pay for a box ad – they are currently finding out how much they paid for the ad on the Edinburgh Spokes Map. LN to contact other cycling/ health organisations regarding box ads as well once it was known how much the Coop were prepared to pay.</p> <p>It was thought that a key delivery schedule should be drawn up to see dates for when maps, etc. have to go to the printers and when proofs have to be returned. Meetings would also have to be arranged in between proofs so that the Forum could have a look. LN/ JW to draw up schedule.</p> <p>DT also brought up the issue of a web address. He thought that the Cycle Forum should register an email address now – and even if the site contained very little it could go on the map as a contact point. There was a suggestion that the CTC's website could be used. JW/ DW to speak to Sheila Rusbridge regarding linking up.</p>	<p>LN</p> <p>JR, SE LN</p> <p>LN</p> <p>LN/ JW</p> <p>JW/ DW</p>
<p>3. Bike Week (12th June – 20th June)</p> <p>LN explained that she had phoned the Bike Shops and asked whether they had committed to anything for Bike Week and whether they would like to join up and do a Dr Bike at schools. Alpine Bikes were already doing something in May/ June with schools that they might be able to link up – but they were short-staffed at the moment. The Edinburgh Bike Co-op could not commit to anything in Aberdeen without going through Edinburgh. Foundry bikes had not organised anything yet but were quite interested. The other bike shops could not commit to anything either. The Forum felt that Foundry Bikes, since they had shown the most interest, should be asked first and that a couple of cycle-friendly schools – Charleston Primary and Old Machar Academy – should be targeted. LN to organise. How to get the press involved was discussed. It was thought that the Evening Express had a 'School Shout' every Tuesday and Thursday – and the Dr Bike days should be on the Monday and Wednesday to take advantage of this.</p> <p>For the Chief Executive's Challenge the Forum thought advanced publicity would be needed and a press release should go out a few weeks ahead – perhaps working with the Chamber of Commerce. It was thought the Chief Executives Challenge should be set for Tuesday, 15th June. WM also discussed contacting David Ewen from the Evening Express and thought it would be worth the Forum's while to get him involved by seeing how he thought it would be best to get coverage for Bike Week.</p> <p>DW suggested a Bike Breakfast on the Friday as well.</p>	<p>LN</p>
<p>4. Cycle Parking</p> <p>Item deferred until next meeting.</p>	
<p>5. Forum Logo</p> <p>The Forum formally accepted the logo. It will now appear on any correspondence the Forum sends out.</p>	

<p>6. Dyce Drive</p> <p>JR had not had time to consider the issue properly. But he did think that he would write a report into the cycle facilities being put in on Dyce Drive. He would include measures that could have been put in and what needs remedial action. He thought he would include examples of how these sorts of facilities could be put in well. He would also include how things could be done in the future. It would be intended as constructive criticism to see how the situation could be improved so that these facilities do not go in without consultation. JR to look at further and consult with Forum on response.</p>	JR
<p>7. AOB</p> <p>WM raised the idea of the Forum going to bike events. He specifically spoke about Green City Fun Day (29th May) and asked whether the Forum would like a stall and stand. The Forum agreed it was a good idea but that ideas for making the stand interactive would have to be thought up – especially as the cycle maps would not be available until June.</p> <p>The Forum have also been invited to two Eco-Challenge events as well – 23rd May in Torry and the 5th June in Dyce. It was thought these should also be attended as they could help raise the profile of the Forum. As time was short any ideas to be communicated by email.</p> <p>DW discussed the Forum’s response to the Council’s consultation on its ‘Draft Air Quality Action Plan’. It was thought that in general the Forum supported the plan – but that cycling could make a significant contribution to achieving improved air quality in the city centre and that this had not been recognised (see Appendix B for Forum response).</p> <p>JR brought up the idea of having a Bike Conference at some point in the future. The Forum felt that this was a good idea – and something that ought to be promoted at a later date. It was thought that it would require a great deal of organisation as well to get the proper speakers, etc.</p>	
<p>8. Next meeting</p> <p>The next Cycle Forum meeting will be on 27th April, 7.30p.m. in Committee Room 4 in the Town House.</p>	

Appendix A

Present

John Wilson - *Assistant Managing Agent (Engineering)*
David Lindsey – *Cycling and Touring Club, Aberdeen City (Volunteer)*
David Tulett – *Aberdeen Cycle Forum (Aberdeen City)*
Angela Jones – *Environmental Scientist, Bابتie Group*
Marilyn Gardner – *Travel Plans Co-ordinator for Cycling and Walking, Aberdeenshire Council*
Colin Miller – *Countryside Access Strategy Access Officer, Aberdeenshire Council*
Mark Hagger - *Cycling and Touring Club, Aberdeenshire (Volunteer)*
Louise Napier – *Transportation Strategy Planner, Aberdeen City Council*
David Campbell – *Highways Team Leader, Bابتie Group*

Copies

AWPR Managing Agent (Derrick Murray)
Julia Wallis (Bابتie Group)
Lucy McLay (Bابتie Group)
Andrew Mackay (Bابتie Group)
Glasgow file

Action

1 Purpose of Meeting

JW explained that the purpose of the meeting is to seek preliminary views regarding access issues so that, where appropriate, these can be taken into consideration in the design process.

2 Key Players

- Scottish Executive (81% funding)
- Aberdeen City Council (9.5% funding)
- Aberdeenshire Council (9.5% funding)

3 Contractual Arrangements

Managing Agent

On behalf of the Scottish Executive the Managing Agent (MA) team comprises the following:

- Derrick Murray (Managing Agent)
- John Wilson (Assistant Managing Agent - Engineering)
- Cliff Buchan (Land and Finance)
- Administrative Assistant

It is anticipated that the MA team will grow as the project progresses.

Design Services Consultant

Bابتie Group has been commissioned as the Design Services Consultant for the AWPR. Bابتie Group will be taking the design forward to delivery based upon the 'design and build' approach.

4 AWPR Programme for Delivery

'The Way Ahead' AWPR leaflet provides a proposed timetable to completion.

Bابتie Group is currently undertaking work to assess alignment options.

The aerial survey is nearing completion.

A Geotech contractor has been assigned to undertake the Ground Investigation, which is due to start on 22.3.04.

Roadshows to engage the public are due to take place in autumn 2004 (probably late Oct/early Nov). The proposed route should be available to inform these events.

In the 3 to 4 months following roadshows, consideration will be given to mitigation of issues raised.

A Public Inquiry (PI) is highly likely during 2006. A successful PI is likely to see construction commencing in 2007 for delivery in 2010 (estimated 3 year construction is based on experience to date).

5 Current Position

Alignment Design

JW explained that aerial photos (2001 photography on display at meeting) indicated the proposed route corridor. Alignment options are still being considered at a number of locations, for example at Camphill.

Junction Design

Junction design has not been finalised. Junctions shown on the drawings to date are proposals only.

However, it has been agreed that all junctions will be **full grade separated junctions**. There is an ongoing, evolving process of junction design.

The current status of junctions that will provide access for motorists onto the AWPR, are listed below. It should be noted that the probability of a junction being designed and built in any location will also depend on traffic analysis results, which are yet to be completed.

From north (A90) to south (A90):

A90 (northern link)
junction required (✓)

B999
junction unlikely (x)

B9997

✓

A947

✓

A96

✓

A944

✓

North Deeside Road

✓

South Deeside Road

?

A90 (southern link)

✓

Additionally, a north only and south only approach to Kirkhill industrial estate and north only approach to Kingswells will be investigated.

The southern 'spur' road linking with the A90 will probably be withdrawn from the final specimen design. Traffic analysis has still to be provided to prove this.

Environmental Assessment

AJ explained that currently an environmental assessment is being undertaken for Stage 2 (assessment of option routes), which will include an assessment of effects on journey times and lengths with respect to pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. Stage 2 has included a consultation exercise.

This will be followed by a more detailed assessment of impacts associated with the preferred route (Stage 3) and production of an Environmental Statement. This stage will include further consultation.

Stage 2 and 3 refer to Stage 2 and 3 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRBs).

6 Key Issues

Key issues were discussed with reference to aerial photos (on display) and engineering drawings.

JW explained that the AWPR is being taken forward as a **trunk road** that is also classified as a '**special road**'. **This means there will be no cyclists permitted on the AWPR.** Measures for cyclists with respect to the AWPR must be made based upon the existing road network.

MH stated some basic principles regarding impacts on cyclists associated with new roads. Specifically, new roads tend to result in the following:

- cutting off cyclists
- differences in journey lengths for cyclists
- severance of communities as well as routes

There are also possible gains associated with new roads, for example the AWPR may provide opportunity to provide a facility for cyclists to cross the A90, the River Dee and the River Don.

Additionally, the existing road network would be freed up from traffic.

DT drew attention to the AWPR consultation response compiled by the Aberdeen Cycling Forum, which outlines some of the key impacts on cyclists, and mitigation measures that can be implemented at junctions. Comments in DT's response are provided based upon junction type.

JW stated that specific details regarding junction type are not yet known. For example, the need for traffic signals has not yet been determined. Traffic analysis results would feed into the development of junction design.

DT asked whether finances would be available for signal-controlled junctions and whether traffic models take account of other transport users, for example cyclists.

JW stated that junction design would aim to integrate opportunities for cyclists. It is understood that cyclists are not included in traffic models. Considerations for cyclists therefore need to be known now.

Specific key issues were discussed for the proposed route corridor working south to north from the A90 southern link to the northern A90 link.

Prior to discussing the junction locations JW intimated that at this moment in time, bearing in mind item 5), he could only give rough guidance on what would be the preferred option.

6.1 A90 at Charleston

A double bridge and gyratory system is proposed at this junction.

Minor roads would be maintained.

The Causeymouth cycle way (also ROW) is crossed by the AWPR but the link will be maintained. This cycle way is well used and there are currently proposals to extend it and possibly for it to become part of the National Cycle Network.

A study is about to be commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to consider possibilities for re-routing the National Cycle Network (NCN) between Stonehaven and Aberdeen, which may include integration of Causeymouth Way into the NCN.

Consultants awarded this commission should liaise with the Managing Agent (Derrick Murray).

6.2 South Deeside Road Junction

The need for a junction here is yet to be agreed and depends upon traffic analysis results.

MG stated that if there is no junction this may have effects via a change in traffic direction and possibly volume – and hence a different set of hazards posed to cyclists on this route.

DT stated that a 70m diameter roundabout at this junction is considered to be a hazard to cyclists. Roundabouts should be as small as possible in diameter.

JW asked what the best options are for cyclists given a large gyratory junction. All attendees representing cycling interests agreed that a circumferential cycle path around such a junction is extremely hazardous for cyclists and highly unfavourable.

For some cyclists (fast, commuter cyclists) a gyratory may not be considered to be a significant obstacle, but for many users, such as slower recreational cyclists, total segregation from vehicular traffic is favoured. Other than total segregation, the diameter of the roundabout should be reduced where possible (to reduce speeds), a dumbbell arrangement could be designed as an alternative, the angle of approach on/off slip roads should be reduced, and the number of lanes should be reduced to as minimal an amount as possible. Beyond these measures there should be separate facilities or signaling controls provided. These measures are summarized in DT's Aberdeen Cycling Forum consultation response.

MH stated that the South Deeside road is used by a variety of different cyclists.

JW reiterated that the junction form, should one be necessary, would be determined from the traffic analysis.

6.3 River Dee Crossing

The AWPR is seen by those present representing cycling interests as an opportunity to provide a cyclist crossing facility over the River Dee.

JW explained that such a crossing is highly unlikely given the associated increase in costs and that the AWPR is a special road. The bridge form has still to be determined but whichever form is chosen will cost many millions. A rough estimate would be of the order of £ 5 to 10 million. Providing cycle crossing facilities would cost an estimated additional £1 million plus, which would obviously need to be justified.

It should be noted that the bridge may be a very high structure and may also need to span the floodplain. There will be no piers in the water due to the designation of the River Dee as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC).

DT stated that consideration must also be made for potential future mode shifts in transport and that the crossing provides an important opportunity to connect communities.

CM stated that access along the banks under the bridge should be maintained.

All those present representing cycling interests would still like to see a facility for cyclists included in the River Dee crossing.

6.4 Deeside Railway Line

JW stated that the current status with respect to the Deeside Railway Line is that it should be 'maintained for future railway use'. It is currently used as a cycle way and footpath and this would be maintained. The AWPR will pass under the old railway line. There are currently five different alignment options at this location and therefore the exact crossing location has not yet been decided.

DT stated that a large gyratory system would not be favoured and mitigation measures (as discussed earlier) should be considered.

The cycle track here is not ideal for fast commuter cyclists.

6.5 North Deeside Road

This route is well used by cyclists.

Since the old railway line route is not ideal for commuter cyclists, it should not be assumed that this route could provide an alternative to the North Deeside Road.

6.6 Countesswells Woods

These are very important recreational woods and extremely well used. Links with minor roads are to be maintained here.

Severance of the car park was raised.

JW explained that he will be meeting with Kevin Peace of the Forestry Commission to discuss this and other issues (23 March 2004).

6.7 A944

A double bridge is currently proposed at this junction.

The existing cycle path is not well used due to the poor quality of existing facilities.

However, latent demand for cycle ways must be considered.

MH asked if a new route for cyclists could be provided.

JW stated that the remit of the AWPR scheme is to consider only junction access and existing road facilities for cyclists, which are in the vicinity of the route.

Access for the Kingswells Park and Ride will be maintained.

6.8 Kingswells

MH asked where crossing points are located along the AWPR in this location?

JW explained that access along the consumption dyke (which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument) will be maintained. Some form of access will also be provided for properties on the western side of the proposed AWPR route.

CM explained that new access legislation (Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003) will entitle cyclists to be able to use any track and this may cause problems in some areas, especially given any future increase in recreational cycling. Consideration should be made for this.

6.9 A96

Junction design has not yet been agreed.

There is a proposal for a park and ride car park here although the exact design is on hold until the AWPR has been agreed.

Again DT reiterated that small roundabouts and signalised junctions are more favourable for cyclists.

The link with Kirkhill industrial estate will be maintained here.

Walton Road Right of Way will be severed by the AWPR. This is used for access to Kirkhill Forest, which is a popular recreational area, including use by mountain bikes. There may be possibilities for diverting Walton Road.

All agreed that statistics regarding cycling accidents would be helpful to assist identification of accident hotspots for cyclists. MG is to forward any relevant information to JW. JW will also speak to his colleagues within Aberdeen City Council.

MG

6.10 River Don

The proposed route originally crossed an aqueduct designated as a Listed Building and the old Aberdeenshire Canal designated as a SAM. The route may be realigned to avoid the aqueduct.

Similarly a fishing pool on the River Don could also be avoided.

The link at Pitmedden Road will be retained.

CM stated that again access along the banks under the bridge should be maintained.

JW explained that, as for the River Dee (see item 6.3) an elevation of the carriageway alignment within the River Don floodplain may be required.

All agreed that the visual impacts associated with piers/embankments must be considered.

JW stated that the current status with respect to the Formantine and Buchan railway line is that it should be 'maintained for future railway use'. It is currently used as a cycle way and footpath and this access will be maintained.

A junction with the B997 is currently under consideration. Based on updates to the Local Plan a junction here is more likely.

A number of minor roads will be severed, their current use is not known. MG stated that opportunities for use, e.g. as circular routes, should not be overlooked.

6.11 A90 north junction

Potterton road will be maintained.

There is an existing cycleway along the A90 and there may be opportunities to provide a crossing over the A90 as currently the A90 severs east to west cycle routes. For example, there is potential for commuter use of such a crossing by residents within Blackdog and Balmedie.

6.12 Additional General Comments

DS stated that he would like to see consideration given to additional cycling infrastructure, in particular the possibility for a segregated parallel cycling facility and crossings at the River Dee (see minute 7.3).

JW stated that consideration would be made for parallel cycling facilities where there are potential opportunities e.g. where there are a number of minor roads severed. However the additional costs (e.g. for further land-take, construction costs, special roads status) mean that a parallel cycling facility along the whole route is extremely unlikely.

DS raised the possibility for collaborative funding with an organisation such as Sustrans.

Appendix B



25 View Terrace
Aberdeen
AB25 2RS

29 March 2004

Andrew Smith
Principal Engineer
Environment and Infrastructure Services
Aberdeen City Council
St Nicholas House
Aberdeen AB10 1EZ

Dear Mr Smith

Air Quality Action Plan consultation

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum welcomes the opportunity to respond to the City Council's draft Air Quality Action Plan.

We support the City Council's active monitoring of pollution levels in the city centre and its identification that a range of measures over a period of time are required in response to actual and predicted exceedences of NOx. We also recognise that buses and HGV's, as well as cars, are active contributors to pollution levels in the city centre. People's health, as well as the urban environment, would be well served by reductions in general traffic levels and associated reductions in pollution.

1. General Comments

1.1 The Cycle Forum's view is that the key target of promoting modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport has to be the basis for the plan. Technical solutions involving low emission vehicles have their place, but without measures to reduce general traffic levels, then congestion, hotspots of pollution and an unpleasant city centre environment will persist. The necessity of promoting modal shift should be more explicitly emphasised as a key principle in the plan.

1.2 It is clear that the WPR will have only a minor impact on city centre traffic – the plan acknowledges a barely noticeable reduction of 5%. This will easily be overwhelmed by general traffic growth and by developments such as Guild Street, with parking for well over 1000 cars, which will attract more traffic into the city centre. Moreover, if current plans to build a third Don crossing, and to create extra road space in the Berryden and College Street corridors come to fruition, these will only serve to bring more vehicle traffic into and through the city centre. There is now ample evidence that more road capacity induces traffic growth. It is vital that these new developments are assessed for their impact on city centre traffic levels, induced traffic impacts and pollution. This seems to be a case where the councils thinking is not sufficiently 'joined up' – the measures in the Plan will have to work very much harder to achieve the goal of reduced pollution levels if these other proposals go ahead. And these roads plans will do nothing to promote modal shift, as they favour the private car, and thus run counter to what should be the key principle referred to in the previous paragraph.

2. Specific Comments

2.1 Cycling is a non-polluting form of transport. It is ideal for city commuting and for short utility trips. Almost every adult is able to cycle and cycling is both affordable and socially inclusive. Other cities in the UK, and in Europe, have high levels of utility cycling and ambitions to support cycling even further. Every journey by cycle rather than car is an absolute pollution gain. It is striking, therefore, that the Plan has scant mention of the contribution that cycling can make to improving city centre air quality, most particularly in section 4 where the elements of the Action Plan are outlined.

2.2 The Aberdeen Cycle Forum considers this to be a serious weakness in the overall Plan. Research shows that a significant proportion of journeys are under 5 miles, an ideal cycling distance. We believe, therefore, that the Plan needs to identify ***the support and promotion of cycling*** as a key proposed action, initially for both *the short and the medium terms*.

2.3 This would require measures such as:

- a comprehensive network of signed cycling routes into and through the city centre
- associated measures to improve cyclist safety
- cycle parking at leisure, retail, transport and workplace sites
- road safety measures especially on speeding and driver awareness
- proactive promotion of cycling as an everyday form of travel.

2.4 This should not be seen as a stand alone set of measures. On the contrary, supporting cycling in this way would enable other elements of the Plan to be better realised; for example, Green Transport Plans (4.3.6) which can take advantage of an improved cycling infrastructure. And raising public awareness about the problem of air quality (4.3.2) needs to be associated with advice on what positive things people can do in response, and considering cycling for trips into and around the city centre should be one of the options.

3 Concluding comments

3.1 The Aberdeen Cycle Forum is supportive of measures to reduce traffic levels and associated air pollution in the city centre. We believe cycling has a contribution to make to improving air quality in the city centre. However, to achieve the very real benefits that cycling can bring needs active support and promotion. The omission of this from the draft plan is, we believe, a serious weakness. We hope that the final version addresses this and includes cycling as a key component of the overall strategy to tackling air pollution. The Aberdeen Cycle Forum would be happy to work with the council as it develops its response to air pollution in the city centre.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Williams
On behalf of the Aberdeen Cycle Forum