

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes of meeting

Townhouse, Broad St, Aberdeen, Tuesday 24th February 2015

Attending:

Jyll Skinner (Chair), Gavin Clark, Mike Nieman, Jacqueline Willis, John Tuckwood, Sheila Tuckwood, Liz Lindsey, Tito Casquinha, Kris Howard, Matt Helme, Henri de Reuter, Euan Innes, Istvan Barkoczi.

From AECOM: Russell Henderson

0. JS welcomed all and especially Russell from AECOM who are part of the consultancy working on the city's Masterplan.

1. Presentation by Russell Henderson

AECOM are part of the team of consultants engaged by Aberdeen City Council to develop a 'transformational' masterplan for the city centre. It has been subject to several rounds of public consultation already, and as the proposals develop there will be further consultation. The next opportunity for public comment is likely to be 18 to 21 March. However, our comments on the draft (and especially the cycling content) were welcome ahead of that.

One of the themes is 'A Connected City' and the message from the public has already come through loud and clear that the current car-dominated city centre does not work. The 'Connected City' needs to a) change perceptions, b) recognise that people want a 'living' city, c) focus on creating an expanded employment base, and d) have a more metropolitan outlook (recognising that Aberdeen has failed to keep up with competitor-cities of similar size).

Sub-projects within this theme are 1) walkable 2) a cycle city 3) bus 4) a rail station and network 5) address car parking.

Cycle city – this means cycling needs to be accessible to far more people than the current 'hard core' who are prepared to put up with the danger and inconvenience that cycling in the city can mean at present. A network of 'cycle highways' is envisaged and the routes for these are currently being considered. Also, 'cycle hubs' being large, high quality cycle parking 'centres' at key nodes (such as the University or rail station). A 'Boris' type cycle hire scheme is also being considered albeit on a much smaller scale to start with.

The 'Connected City' also recognises that bus services need to improve markedly and that unreliable journey times are one of the biggest obstacles to uptake. There is also aspiration for a much more integrated and significantly redeveloped railway station, possibly including a 'cross rail' type service for commuters. Lastly, the team

recognise that Aberdeen currently has vastly more off-street car parking than comparable cities and that parking (again by comparison) is extremely cheap. This is seen as a major obstacle to modal shift.

We have the opportunity to feedback to AECOM on the initially identified plan and especially the cycle routes. Time did not allow this to be done this evening, but RH was willing to meet us again to gather feedback.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Matters arising:

JS and LL had met with Nestrans. A number of projects are ongoing including upgrades to the 'Shell' path and also Riverside Drive.

LL had been in touch with First Bus about the 'awareness' stickers on the rear left of buses.

JS had sent our response to the CHI committee about what we perceive to be the mis-use of CWSS funds. There had been no reply as yet. JT had also written to the Transport Minister on this topic. HdR asked if we are making no progress on something like this, might a press release help?

3. Cycle Leaders request

We had been asked by ACC if we had any qualified cycle leaders who would be willing to assist with taking school groups out. We could also ask the membership if anyone was willing to become trained if ACC were prepared to pay (MH thought it is something like a 4 day training course)

4. Pedal on Parliament – 'PoP Aberdeen'

We have not yet been able to establish beyond doubt that insurance is available through BikeWeek. However it was agreed that we should proceed on the basis that this will be available in due course.

The proposed route is from Hazlehead Park to Marischal College via Queens Rd. There was some discussion over whether Union St or Carden Place / Schoolhill would be better. After discussion it was agreed that Union St was preferred for maximum visibility. GC will set up another meeting of the sub-group within the next couple of weeks. Meantime JS has had no response back from the events team at ACC despite prompting by Cllr Ross Grant. Agreed that although any traffic issues should be handled by them, we should inform the Police of our intention to protect our position. Russell also suggested that we let the bus companies know.

The start time is TBC but we will aim to keep in parallel with what is being done in Edinburgh if possible. NB Edinburgh is a 12 noon start.

5. AOBs

JS has arranged to meet with Louise Napier of ACC to discuss the draft Local Transport Strategy. This is to take place on 10th March at 1830. Several members have volunteered to take part.

GC asked about the piece in the Evening Express recently reporting that Nestrans wanted to make bus lanes available to HGVs. JS had asked about this at her recent meeting with Nestrans and was told that it was a misrepresentation of the facts and that this is no longer an option being taken forward.

JS had also met with Abellio (new rail operator). They have very ambitious plans for the station and will supposedly introduce some trains with a dedicated cycle carriage on main routes. It was acknowledged that the current cycle parking provision at the station is very poor.

6. Date of next meeting.

Tuesday **24 March** 2015. Note: not the last Tuesday of the month