

Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes of meeting

Townhouse, Broad St, Aberdeen, Tuesday 27th January 2015

Attending:

Jyll Skinner (Chair), Gavin Clark, Mike Nieman, Dave Shannon, Jacqueline Willis, John Tuckwood, Sheila Tuckwood, Ruth Wolfe, Liz Lindsey, Ian Mitchell, Colin Allanach, Moragh Buchan, Tito Casquinha, Patricia Melo, Kris Howard, Matt Helme, Henri de Reuter.

From Nestrans: Kathryn Mackay, Cycling Development Officer (CDO)

0. JS welcomed all (great to see such a good turnout!) and especially Kathryn Mackay.

1. Presentation by Kathryn Mackay

Firstly an introduction of her background and the role of Nestrans, especially in promoting cross-border working between City and Shire. Sustrans part fund the post. They provide funding for capital projects, but also revenue such as the 'i-bike' initiative which targets schools. Also in schools 'The Big Pedal' which is a countrywide virtual 'race' encouraging cycling and scooters for travel to school. Sustrans also responsible for co-ordination and maintenance of much of the NCN.

The CDO's specific role is to encourage closer and better working between Sustrans and Regional Transport Partnerships. It is one of several posts nationally. It comes with a small capital budget to facilitate smaller projects.

Current projects include:

Riverside Drive (Phase 1) , Ellon Rd (to Balmedie), Formartine Buchan way resurfacing, Deeside Way improvements.

And in the Shire, Integrated Travel Towns (Ellon, Huntly, Inverurie, Fraserburgh, Portlethen). Peterhead continues as a Cycling Demonstration Town.

Future projects:

Riverside Drive (phase 2) [to RGU, but only a feasibility and design study], Parkway Ellon Rd to Whitestripes Rd, Altens / Wellington Rd

Funding

There are a couple of funding streams currently: "Community Links" funding for 2015/16 for capital projects, but has a deadline of 13 February.

Smarter Choices Smarter Places has circa £5m but is only open to Local Authorities to apply. Needs match funding, and has tight timescales [which may mean nothing is likely to happen in Aberdeen?]

Final copies on Nestrans new Active Travel Plan were distributed, further copies can be downloaded from the Nestrans website.

MH asked how the Nestrans ATP links with the City Centre masterplan, for example. It is believed that ACC are currently working on their LTS (Local Transport Strategy) and will begin on a cycling strategy shortly after that. We expect to see progress on that within the next 6 months or so.

MH would like to see an 'ideas' session open to all, and to see evidence that these various strategies and plans were 'joined up'. We need some unconstrained thinking and to take examples from other cities or overseas.

MN asked about future maintenance of whatever infrastructure Nestrans puts in? KM replied that this is indeed an issue. Sustrans likes to encourage some NCN routes to be maintained by volunteers (for example cutting back vegetation). However lack of local authority budgets for maintenance was an issue and could lead to reluctance on their part to participate in projects.

This led to a discussion about the lack of winter maintenance of cycle routes in Aberdeen, which had been very evident and had led to some media attention after a video of numerous falls on ice on the un-gritted Westhill cycle path had been widely circulated. There were numerous comments to the effect that in Shire towns such as Banchory or Inverurie it was evident that pavements received a higher priority over roads, compared with the City where very few pavements, cycle paths or shared-use paths received any grit, even after prolonged spells of ice or snow.

CA wondered whether our pleas to Councillors or officials would be heard better if made in a combined letter? HdR noted that there still seemed to be no awareness of the need for a 'liveable' city.

KM was asked how Nestrans works with businesses? Colleague Don Kent works on Green travel plans with employers. HdR commented that there must be potential for businesses to work together - the economic loss to the city from traffic congestion must be enormous so there is a real business imperative to do more to reduce it. MH pointed out that at our November meeting Cllr Laing had talked about needing a 'business case' to support cycle infrastructure improvements. An increase in economic activity from reduced congestion was a clear example of evidence for such an argument to be successfully made.

2. Minutes of last meeting

November meeting had been with Cllr Laing, so there were few matters arising. One had been for JS to follow up with Louise Napier what the 'coming soon' or 'in the

pipeline' matters were. LN confirmed work on the LTS (as noted above) and that consultation would be coming soon.

3. Website re-design

Carl is currently working on a re-design of the website and moving it to a new host. JS and GC had discussed some points of minor re-vamp, but if anyone had ideas for something new or different that they think the website could or should have, please send them in.

4. Consultations

- Bus lane timing changes – all present in favour of bus lane operation times being extended.
- Shell Path – the proposal is to install stud lights. Also to re-surface and provide lighting in the underpass at George IV bridge.
- JS had attended the Disability Action Group meeting. They had expressed some concern about shared use paths, both from visibility and hearing impaired members. No specific action arising except for cyclists to take care and remember that the pedestrian ahead may not have seen/heard you coming.
- C, H & I Committee. The issue was what we consider to be an improper use of CWSS (Cycling, Walking, Safer Streets) funding to install parking restrictions which were little to do with walking or cycling but were to do with preventing car parking where it was obstructing access for HGVs to business premises. This has only tenuous links to 'safer streets' and is especially frustrating because there is a list of outstanding projects which ACF has provided to ACC Roads in the past, which could properly be funded from CWSS, but which ACC never seem to get around to. Cllr Yuill had intervened after being made aware of our concerns, but the proposals still seemed to be going forward to the Committee without amendment. It was agreed that we should send a strongly worded response, and that it should be copied to Cllr Laing (Leader of Council) and Cllr Grant (ACC Cycling Champion).

5. AOBs

- Richard Pelling had sent a few items to JS: Stoneywood shared use path now had some 'Cyclists Dismount' signs installed. Could we follow this up with the developer (Dandara?). F&B way seemed to have diversions in place even when no work underway. ASL still not installed in R turn lane at the HMT end of Union Terrace.
- Winter maintenance discussed again – as above.

- Pedal on Parliament. JS had been in touch with the organisers. An Aberdeen 'satellite' event on the same date (25 April) was being considered, but it will be for ACF to organise. Some details were discussed but it was agreed that a sub-group should meet separately to consider this. Volunteers were HdR, MH, RW, DS, & JS. GC to set up the meeting.
- KM – NCN is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and there are likely to be some events to mark this in June or July, but no details yet.
- MH - gave a report of his work on Space for Cycling
- LL – Coast cafe on Beach Boulevard had been in touch asking for advice on routes for one of their staff or volunteers to use a three-wheeler for sandwich deliveries. However they were inexperienced and we thought it was perhaps impractical and that we couldn't give advice.

6. Date of next meeting.

Tuesday 24 February 2015.