

# Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Minutes from meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Attendees: Gavin Clark (Chair), Rachel Martin, Liz Lindsey, Richard Pelling, Francesco Sani, Daniel Verhamme, Fiona McDonald

## 1. Welcome, Intro & Apologies

## 2. Note of last meeting and reflecting on 'Active Travel Schools'

Discussion about presentation on an Active Travel School in Wales at the August meeting and what follow-up actions could be taken by ACF. Fiona commented that it might be easier to take forward some of these ideas when a new school was being designed and offered to contact the head of the new Countesswells Primary School to share the work from Wales.

Daniel highlighted that it was Bike to School week this week but participation from schools has been patchy this year. Daniel also reported that Peterculter Primary School is looking into establishing some quiet lanes around the school into designated cycle lanes. Daniel is planning to speak to the parent council about this initiative.

Gavin said ACF would be happy to provide expert advice if required.

## 3. Current Consultations

### Physical Distancing Measures

Aberdeen City Council consultation on physical distancing measures has now been extended to December 2020.

### Beach

Lanes have been installed but it's not entirely clear if all the works are complete. Ellon Rd changes will now not go ahead. There has been a mixed reaction from the general public with concerns about space for unloading cars. Some cyclists worried about 'car-dooring' and the buffer zone does seem very tight. Recent comments on facebook from somecyclists that would still prefer to cycle on the shared path rather than the cycle lane. Agreed not perfect but good improvements for cyclists and good to see new methods being trialled by the Council.

Heading south after Beach Ballroom, past roundabout at the traffic lights cyclists on left but then need to switch lanes if going straight on - seems dangerous.

Some issues at other end of the Boulevard near the Shell garage as well.

Rachel has recently featured on the Radio Scotland Out of Doors radio programme talking about the new beach cycle path.

### Hazlehead Active Travel Corridor

Liz has been in contact with her councillor Martin Greig but he had not been able to find out any more details about what was happening in this area. Major disruption at Springfield Rd/Queens Rd junction may have prevented works?

### North Deeside Road Active Travel Corridor

No consultation appeared.

### **Low Emission Zone (LEZ) in Aberdeen City Centre (ACC)**

Gavin summarised the 4 options - each with a sub option to include/exclude Denburn underpass. Largest one felt not to be very ambitious. Richard thinks the LEZ is key to achieve better cycling in the city. Clean air means people happier to cycle.

Agreed Denburn dual carriageway needs to be included.

More detailed report on the ACC website. Summary report available. Criteria for different classes of vehicles explained but generally the dirtiest vehicles will be kept out of the centre.

Richard said that he had been consulted on the London LEZ - the fines of £250/day were still more cost-effective for businesses to pay than to refit or upgrade their vehicles.

Physical distancing measures of Union St have unfortunately caused more congestion and therefore the pollution is worse at present. Agreed most of the pollution in Union St is from buses. In North Aberdeenshire there are a lot of hybrid buses being used. The LEZ should improve this although it was acknowledged that it is going to be a tough time for bus companies.

ACC is investing in the hydrogen fleet which will help.

Rachel and Richard agreed to draft a response from ACF.

### **Draft Active Travel Action Plan**

Rachel thought that the report contained some good graphics and messages and was pleased that some new roads are mentioned for improvement eg King St. Gavin thought that 'improvements' were not necessarily for active travel users but for all road users and generally thought that the council's delivery on past plans was very poor. Consultation closes on 11th October.

Gavin to draft a response and share with interested members for comment.

### **A944 corridor – City centre to Westhill (inc Queens Rd)**

Route from Westhill - Langstracht – Westburn as far as Mount Hoolie – Castlegate – Union St – Queen St – Westhill

Gavin thought the consultants had done a good job taking on board points raised by ACF in the past. NESTRANs are also looking at A944 corridor in parallel.

Francesco volunteered to comment on some of the consultations and then left the meeting.

Recent improvements include tarmacking across the short cut route at the roundabout and adding an extra set of traffic lights?

### **NESTRANs 2040**

Felt to be a very large & difficult consultation to respond to.  
Discussed the fact that lower speed limits on minor rural roads seem to be a lost opportunity.  
Questionable impact of NESTRANs 'Get about' campaign.  
NESTRANs is felt by some to be very dominated by hauliers and bus companies but on the plus side they do have a Cycling Officer and Gavin highlighted that Colin Allanach is now on the Board and Cllr Sandra MacDonald is now the Chair.

## **5. Cycle Lessons and Dr Bike Events**

Rachel reported that the first set of cycle lessons in August at Duthie Park had been very successful – 1 for beginners then 1 for refreshers. Then further sessions had been held at Hazlehead and repeated at Duthie Park. All except first session had been fully booked (4 in each class)

All participants had been asked to complete a survey and comments had been very positive. Some commented that one lesson was not really enough for beginners although some had booked more than one session.

Adventure Aberdeen can run another 2 sessions this month - planning for Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Oct at Hazlehead and Sat 31<sup>st</sup> at Duthie Park.

Gavin & Rachel who had supported the lessons said it had also been a good opportunity to promote cycling with the general public. Liz volunteered to attend to support the event on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct; Rachel happy to attend on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct but others welcome.

Dr Bike sessions had been well used every time.

Agreed these will be the last sessions this year as the winter would not be an ideal time and Rachel has found it time consuming to organise.

## **6. Other Campaigns and Events**

Rachel has explored options for buffs/snoods (neck gaiters) which can double as a face mask, and bells. Agreement for Rachel to order snoods which will also come from the Paths for All and crowdfunding. Bells warrant further investigation before we commit, and it could be part of a mini-campaign in the spring, handing out free bells such as on the Deeside Way.

Discussing potential cycling lessons for kids in the future – Adventure Aberdeen do already offer some paid sessions.

### Walk, Cycle, Vote

Gavin attended a recent meeting (group linked to Pedal on Parliament and funded by Cycling UK) to talk about a strategy for Holyrood elections next year. What proportion of the transport budget should cyclists be asking for? Once their strategy has been agreed it should be useful

for local groups to utilise. Fairly central belt dominated but they are open to all to participate if we can find the time.

Daniel pointed out that the active travel budget is already fixed for the next 5 years. (£100million each year for 5 years). A couple of years ago this increased from £80m and previously increased from £40m.

## **7. Any Other Business**

Richard mentioned the Road Peace campaign on reducing road casualties, particularly around setting a new standard for construction vehicle safety design. Local authorities are being asked to sign up to ensure their construction contractors adhere to these standards.

<https://www.roadpeace.org/prevention/lorry-danger-campaign/>

Daniel mentioned that the Deeside Way needs further improvements. Some sections, especially the city section, need widened as it's the only active travel corridor west of Aberdeen. Plans for improvements recently announced by Sustrans haven't included the 2 major road crossings – at Peterculter and Ballater. Rachel said that the improvements would need to be funded 30% by the City Council fund and 70% by the Scottish Government.

## **8. Date for Next Meeting**

Tues 27<sup>th</sup> October