



Traffic Management Team,
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By email to: trafficmanagement@aberdeencity.gov.uk

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Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your email of 30 May consulting us on various Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) proposed by the Council.

The majority of these are for parking restrictions or speed restrictions, both of which are in general terms favourable to cyclists. Reductions in speed should contribute to cyclists feeling safer and encourage more people to cycle. Previous research by one of our members found that safety was by far the most significant barrier to cycling in Aberdeen, both for cyclists and *potential* cyclists¹. Parking restrictions at junctions should also improve general road safety. We are therefore generally supportive of these measures and do not wish to comment in detail on the proposals.

We also note the proposal to implement a scheme of **one-way traffic on Salisbury Terrace and Gray St**. Unlike the other proposals, we feel this will do nothing to benefit cyclists (or pedestrians) and may have a negative effect on these groups of more vulnerable road users for the reasons set out below. We **OBJECT** to this proposal.

We note that these are primarily residential streets, with few business premises. Gray St, at its junction with Broomhill Rd is the location of Broomhill Primary School, with the main entrance via the playground being off Gray St.

Firstly, it seems to us that if the streets are made one-way, the likely effect will be to increase the use by through traffic. In other words they may become “rat runs”. Speed of traffic may also be liable to increase due to the certainty of drivers that they will not meet an opposing vehicle on narrow streets with limited opportunities to pass, as is currently the case. Either or both of these effects (i.e. increases in volume or speed of traffic) would be inappropriate for residential streets where traffic calming (speed humps) has already had to be implemented to attempt to reduce speeds. We also wonder whether the back lanes linking and between the streets might be used by drivers in an attempt to circumvent the one-way restrictions. As these streets and back lanes currently provide a relatively low traffic environment, suitable for walking, cycling, or ‘scooter-ing’ to school, we believe a scheme of one-way traffic will be detrimental. This seems perverse at a time when many government initiatives are actively encouraging more children to walk or cycle to school.

We note that the one-way proposal includes an exemption for cyclists. We welcome that in principle and indeed we have advocated previously for no one-way schemes to be implemented without such an exemption. However some of our members also take the view that cycle contra-flows are a poor compromise unless they are laid out with a clearly marked and segregated cycle lane. In the circumstances of the streets in question here, where the limited available road width between 2 rows of parked cars is the issue, we question whether it is feasible to implement a cycle contra-flow which is safe. Please bear in mind that Highway Code (rule 163) states that when over-taking, a driver should allow a cyclist the same space as they would when over-taking a car. The on-going Police campaign to tackle “close passes” uses a minimum figure of 1.5 metres as the distance a vehicle should leave when over-taking a cyclist. Neither of these is likely to be achievable in the streets in question due to parked cars.

Furthermore, the scenario in a one-way scheme would be worse than the current situation because drivers would be less likely to expect oncoming cyclists in a one-way street.

We could support a one-way scheme here if the purpose of the scheme was to free up road space to create a proper segregated cycle lane which met design standards. However that is not what is being proposed.

In summary, the problem here appears to be caused by high numbers of parked cars restricting the available width of the road. The proposed solution - to maintain/increase flow capacity by implementing a one-way scheme – will fail to address the problem which instead requires a three-pronged approach: discourage car use, implement parking restrictions, and promote active travel with segregated cycle paths. Measures which raise traffic capacity as this proposal will do, whether deliberately or inadvertently, inevitably result in more traffic, which we consider

inappropriate for these predominately residential streets and particularly in view of the location of the primary school.

It is becoming increasingly recognised that to deliver modal shift, some re-allocation of road space away from private cars and in favour of active travel is needed. What is proposed here seems to represent movement in the opposite direction, i.e. attempting to maintain (or increase) flow capacity while maintaining existing levels of parking and at the probable detriment of the walking and cycling environment. While the impact of such measures over two streets may be small in the context of the whole city, we would nevertheless contend that the proposal represents an out-dated and inappropriate response to traffic management. We consider that this proposal is contrary to the tenet of the Council's 'Aberdeen Active Travel Action Plan 2017 – 2021'

Finally, we also note that the intention is to pay for the introduction of this proposal using the Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) Budget. Given what we have said above regarding the likely detriment to the walking & cycling environment, we consider this inappropriate.

Yours faithfully,

ACF Secretary

On behalf of Aberdeen Cycle Forum

ⁱ <http://www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk/?p=1723>