



Aberdeen Cycle Forum Response to OP63/Prime Four Phase Four

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum is committed to seeing safe, cohesive, and efficient cycle links from Aberdeen, Westhill, and elsewhere to the Prime Four site. Currently, there are some excellent examples of good cycle infrastructure at Prime Four, however, there are other examples of deliberate flouting of the national transport hierarchy as well as infrastructure that is dangerous and potentially deadly. We have been very vocal about the need for these links from the beginning of the development. We have spoken with employees of Prime Four individually as well as business corporately. At both levels, there is a desire to access the site using sustainable transport. While the Westhill Cycle Path (WCP) is heavily used for cycle commuting, it is also used for recreation. While many users are accessing the Prime Four site, others are trying to bypass the site either cycling to Aberdeen or Westhill. The current infrastructure follows Cycling by Design where it is convenient, but opts to ignore guidance where this may prove inconvenient to motorists. We petitioned formally regarding the narrow section of path to the west of the main development entrance on the A944 to the city council. The council's response was that perhaps mitigation could be achieved at the next stage of development. We are at that next stage.

Within the OP63 site, internal links appear adequate, but we await further clarification of cycle infrastructure. The documentation does indicate that access to this site, as to previous phases, is along the A944. There is also, potentially, a path through the site as well. Again, clarification would be needed to be certain that this could be an alternate route for users continuing their journey and not stopping at Prime Four. We again point out that the WCP, west of the main entrance on the A944, is inadequate. It is dangerous. It is sub-standard design. It is particularly problematic as it not only for cycling but for walking also. The OP63 site puts forward this section as part of its cycle links.

The documentation indicates that the development is still highly sought after and likely to have a steady uptake of occupation in the planned buildings. The WCP will only increase in traffic if this is the case. Other developments in close proximity are also liable to increase the traffic. As mentioned above, many cycle commuters or recreation cyclists will be using the Path while not needing to access Prime Four. If an alternate route is planned through the development instead of upgrading the Path, access would need to be efficient/direct and very clearly marked.

We are glad that the necessity for cycle infrastructure at Prime Four has already been identified and that it is intended to link with existing infrastructure. However, greater care is needed than has been demonstrated at early phases.

Specific concerns:

Section 3.2 – the need for a cycle connections within the development and to the Park and Ride is highlighted, but does not mention anything about the ongoing problems with the interaction with the Westhill Cycle Path. If new portions of Prime Four are to connect to everything mentioned in the document, upgrading the WCP or rerouting will be necessary.

Section 3.3 - 'Links to the wider path and cycle network have been provided at the main access on the A944 and via the pedestrianised route to the north of the Park and Ride. A solution to 'ensure no barrier or significant detour is created' to the cycle network by 'the provision of a priority crossing point, or raised / colour surfacing for the cycle route as it crosses the access road' could not be identified that satisfactorily complied with the roads technical requirements. Therefore, a full pedestrianised crossing was formed.' With respect, all solutions were not attempted.

Section 5.10 - 'The Aberdeen/Westhill cycle route travels along the southern boundary of Prime Four. Access to the cycle route has been provided via the main access point on the at the A944 junction. There is potential for improvements to be made to this route, these will be considered in more detail through future Transport Assessments.' Future assessments will be welcome, but the need for a plan for a cohesive, attractive cycle route past and through the development cannot be an afterthought. The connections for active transport should follow the national hierarchy. Thus, the links for pedestrians and cyclists to the site should take priority over those for motorised vehicles, particularly single-occupancy vehicles.