

ACF meeting with Aberdeen City Council – 16 July 2014.

Present:

ACF Jyll Skinner, Liz Lindsay, John Tuckwood, Sheila Tuckwood, Radek Tschich, Gavin Clark

ACC Cllr Ross Thompson, Maggie Bochel, Louise Napier, Doug Ritchie, Tom Rodgers

NB: This note is from ACF's perspective and is not intended to be a full minute of the meeting nor has it been agreed with ACC.

Purpose of meeting

ACF had been calling for a meeting with ACC for many months to discuss road safety issues and in particular roundabouts. In the interim a number of other issues had come to light which we wanted to take the opportunity to discuss, including matters related to the AWPR.

Road safety

ACC: Accident statistics do not show any reduction, but if levels of cycling in increasing this may represent a reduction *per mile cycled*. ACC has good links with Police via the Community Safety Partnership. Via the partnership, cycling is a high priority for action along with speeding and indiscriminate parking near schools. Police are working on a statistical analysis of reported incidents involving cyclists to see if any trends are indicated. This will allow any actions to be prioritised. However there is no set timetable for this work to be done and Police seem to be stretched for resources.

There is an opportunity for ACF to feed in information from members about road design problems which are contributing to their safety being compromised.

ACF has had numerous comments from members about safety on roundabouts and problems caused by the speed of traffic coming onto the roundabout, and visibility being impaired by ornamental planting on the roundabout itself. Some roundabouts seem to be particularly bad e.g. Cromwell Road / Forest Avenue and Riverside Drive / South College St. Is it the case that the vegetation is deliberately large to limit visibility and make drivers slow down?

ACC: No. Planting was decorative but over the years has grown up and it is recognised that in some places it is now too big. Some is being cut back, but maintenance staff have difficulty keeping up with all the work required. ACC has also done a lot of work installing pedestrian crossings adjacent to roundabouts to allow safe crossing.

ACF: the roundabout at the foot of Wellington Road (Queen Elizabeth Bridge) is another dreadful obstacle for cyclists and for pedestrians too. There is no safe way to cross.

ACC: there are particular issues here because the construction of the bridge means that a crossing can't be installed there. There is work underway to look at the whole of the Wellington Rd corridor

at the moment (ACF is being consulted) and longer term (post AWPR) it might be possible to make more fundamental improvements here, such as replacing the roundabout with traffic lights.

ACC: it would be useful for us to reconvene the Road Safety meetings which used to take place with ACF and with Police in the past.

A90 (Anderson Drive).

ACF: want to know what the plans were for management of traffic on Anderson Drive once the AWPR is built and the road is 'de-trunked'. For example would this mean that the speed limit could reduce to 30mph from the current 40mph, and that roundabouts might be replaced with signalised (traffic-light controlled) junctions?

ACC: will be examining options but no real work has been done on this yet. The predicted drop in traffic volumes on Anderson Drive after the AWPR is only about 15%, so volume would still be well above the levels where a 40mph limit could be justified.

ACF: Does this mean that the previous commitment to "locking in the benefits" of the AWPR is being lost?

ACC: No. There is still a commitment to locking in the benefits, but at the same time we have to be realistic. Aberdeen is undergoing a period of growth with thousands of new homes being built. Anderson Drive will still be a main route and although no decisions have been taken it seems more likely that an off-road cycle route (a shared use path) would be more appropriate for this type of road, possibly in combination with alternative routes being given more priority for cyclists – what is known as the "roads hierarchy".

AWPR

ACC: Firstly need to remember that the AWPR is a Transport Scotland scheme and ACC are not in control. Secondly that the Road Orders for it have been made already so there is no possibility of changing these.

ACF: At the recent exhibition by Transport Scotland there seemed to be a lot of detail lacking. Is it the case that details of how cycle routes will cross intersections with the AWPR haven't all been finalised yet?

ACC: There is an element of that. These sorts of details will be designed by the contractor so aren't all available yet.

ACF: We want to avoid the scenario which seems to have arisen in the past where firstly we are told that it is "too early" for us to comment and the detailed designs haven't been done, and then we are later told that they have been finalised and it is "too late" for us to comment.

ACC: We will be having £1.3 million for mitigation for non-motorised users. Plans are to be drawn up. Will include Balmedie to AECC and Bridge of Don, a small section at Weshill, junction with A96. However this won't be done until after the new road is complete in 2018. It's not ideal but that's how it is. Work is also being done on mapping a parallel route on existing side roads, and making use of routes through Kingswells, Craibstone etc

ACF: We also want to point out the need for adequate temporary diversions during the construction phase. There seems to have been instances recently where routes have been closed at short notice and with no proper diversion, or diversion onto a route which isn't suitable for cycling.

City Centre Masterplan

ACC: consultants have now been appointed to work up the city centre masterplan. Timescale for delivery is 9 months. This could include some fairly radical suggestions as to how traffic through the city centre should be managed in future.

ACF: Another case of *jam tomorrow*? Some time ago we were consulted on improvements to Justice Mill Lane which would have made it more attractive for cycling. What has happened to those?

ACC: Proposed improvements to Justice Mill Lane have been put on hold because of the number of new large developments there. Police have requested that consideration be given to a part-time pedestrianisation there.

Cycling Development Officer

ACF: any news on this proposed post?

ACC: The job description for this post has at last been finalised and it should be advertised for recruitment (by Aberdeenshire Council) within the next couple of weeks. Salary range likely to be £25-27k, and is a 2 year post funded by Nestrans covering City and Shire jointly with a budget of about £100k.

ENDS