



28 April 2019

Transport Strategy

Aberdeen City Council

By email: transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on Bike Hire Scheme

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation. We are doing so by letter rather than via the proforma questionnaire, in order that we can highlight issues which the survey questions do not address.

In summary, we are neither strongly in favour or against such a scheme: we believe that although a bike hire scheme could be part of the solution in allowing or encouraging more people to cycle in Aberdeen, it should not be the first priority and the risk is that it will be a distraction from what we believe are the real issues.

1. Aberdeen badly lacks good quality cycle infrastructure such as segregated paths where cyclists will feel safe. Although there are a few safe places to cycle (the 'Shell' path, the beach esplanade, the Deeside Way) these are isolated and crucially are not 'joined up'. City centre destinations such as the Art Gallery or main shopping areas, have poor cycle access. Some key destinations such as the harbour and railway station have access via roads which would discourage all but the most committed and brave cyclists.
2. In a survey¹, 88% of non-cyclist respondents said the primary reason they do not cycle is that they do not feel safe. Only 45% of respondents said that access to a hire bike would encourage them to cycle more. Therefore before providing hire bikes, the City needs to provide more safe and attractive routes on which they can be used.
3. We would suggest that if you have not done so already you study examples of hire schemes in other cities - both those which have succeeded and those which have failed.
4. We would also suggest that you investigate the success of the hire scheme operated by Abellio at Aberdeen railway station. Anecdotally, we believe these bikes receive very little use, which

¹ <https://www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/news/cycling-infographic-p1.png>
<https://www.aberdeencycleforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/news/cycling-infographic-p2b.png>

would not be surprising given the extremely challenging cycling environment offered by the immediate environs (e.g. Market St, Guild St, Wapping St).

5. If a hire scheme were implemented and was not successful or received low uptake – which we believe is a real risk for the reasons given above - we are concerned that this could be used to justify lower investment in cycling in future.

I hope you find these comments useful. If the scheme proceeds in due course then we would of course be glad to comment further on details of the design and locations.

Yours faithfully

Gavin Clark

Chair, Aberdeen Cycle Forum