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27th March 2009

Aberdeen City Council
St. Nicholas House
Broad Street
ABERDEEN
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Dear Mr Cole

RE : Green Townscape Heritage Initiative - Consultation

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation for The Green Townscape Heritage Initiative.

We support the aims of the project, to create a stronger sense of 'place' in the area of The Green and to enhance the area as a destination.

By 'place' we understand the idea of not just somewhere with 'character' but also somewhere where people want to go, as opposed to 'have' to go. The proposed streetscape works will go some way towards achieving this but we believe that correct traffic management is crucial to achieving a strong sense of place.

The recent draft guidance from the Scottish Government on 'Designing Streets' mentions 'place' as one of the prime objectives of street design, along with 'movement' and it stresses the importance getting the balance right between the two. We do not believe the current proposals get the balance right. The current proposals continue to allow unrestricted vehicle access along all the streets and for extensive on street parking. This will undermine the attempt to change the perception of the area and its attractiveness as a place to visit and linger, not just pass through. The area could then truly take advantage of the proximity of Union Square. As a minimum, we believe that Carmelite Street should be closed to motor traffic, recognising this as the main route for pedestrians through to Union Square.

We are particularly disappointed that there is no mention of cyclists. 'Designing Streets' includes a hierarchy of travel provision; "consider first" it says 'pedestrians and cyclists. Consider last, private vehicles'. The improvements to pedestrian connectivity and permeability etc mentioned in the document apply equally well to cyclists. "Pedestrian" should be amended as appropriate to "pedestrian and cyclist". Certainly, resurfacing the area as proposed will improve the attractiveness of the area for cyclists.

We hope cyclists will be welcomed to the area for the healthy, quiet and sustainable travel mode they represent. We would wish to see mention of the kind of provision that might be made. This should include cycle access and parking - parking for visitors, shoppers and indeed those who work in the area. We would also wish to see how cycle linkages through the area to the Union Square development can be improved.

We hope that the final version of the project document will integrate cycling into its proposals and will be much bolder in restricting the movement of motor traffic through the area.

Yours sincerely

Derek Williams

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