



17th July 2005

Mr Ewan Kay
Aberdeen City Council
Environment and Infrastructure Services
St. Nicholas House
Broad Street
ABERDEEN
AB10 1EZ

Dear Mr Kay,

Proposed Mandatory 20mph speed limit – central Aberdeen
Transport Infrastructure

Thank you for your letter of 27th May, your ref **HM/EK/SR/1/59**, RE the above. The response of Aberdeen Cycle Forum on your consultation is detailed below.

General comments; implementation of 20mph zones in Aberdeen

Excessive speed has been proven by a number of studies to both increase the risk of an accident and the severity of injuries sustained as a result of the accident. A trial in urban areas using signing alone has been shown to reduce accident figures by 30%^[1]. Implementation of a 20mph limit would reduce both the risk and the severity of cycle accidents.

Aberdeen Cycle Forum has recently conducted two quantitative studies soliciting feedback from cyclists in Aberdeen; at the Green City Fun Day and during National Bike Week. Respondents were asked to list the best and worst points of cycling in Aberdeen. During Green City Fun day those questioned that did not cycle were also asked why they did not do so.

A common feature of the “worst” feedback is conflict between cyclists and other motorised road users, including the speed of buses within the city centre. For those who cited reasons for not cycling within the city, a common factor was the speed and density of traffic on Aberdeen roads.

Specific Comments RE the proposal

The supplied map, Ref NJ9306, indicates two proposed areas for the implementation of a 20mph limit an inner area (delineated in red) and an outer area (delineated in green).

Whilst supporting the implementation of any 20mph limit, the Cycle Forum would encourage the adoption of the outer “green” area for the following reasons:

- A number of the “recommended cycle routes” both into and around the city centre^[2] are contained within this area.
- The inclusion of additional “commercial” areas such as the Bon Accord Centre etc. improves cycle access for employees in these areas.
- The inclusion of what are residential areas in the South West and North West of the outer area improves cycle access from these areas to the city centre.

Webster and Mackie^[3] indicate that to fully realise the benefits of a 20mph limit, speed signs alone are not sufficient and that physical “road calming” measures are required. Whilst realising that these are not practicable in all locations, we suggest that were the zone to be implemented, they should be considered in several of the roads surrounding Union Street.

We fully realise that converting the entire city to a 20mph zone is not a practical proposition, however there are a few areas where small changes to the boundary could yield benefits:

- The road surface of the Commerce Street / Beach Boulevard roundabout is itself not within the 20mph zone. Beach Boulevard contains existing cycle lanes that are, to many cyclists, isolated from the remainder of the city cycle network due to the risk, both real and perceived, of crossing the roundabout. We would suggest the road area of the roundabout itself be incorporated within the 20mph zone.
- The council is currently proposing to “dual” South College street. The Cycle Forum sees this as a detrimental move to cycling within the city. Inclusion of the upper section of the road within the 20mph zone would go some way to increase cycle safety were this to happen.
- There are a number of schools close to, but not contained within the zone. In a recent study by the National Children’s Bureau of 494 schools^[4] 10% of students indicated that they would be more likely to cycle to school if traffic was slower. Inclusion of the schools within a 20mph zone would help achieve this speed reduction.

Concluding Comments

Aberdeen Cycle Forum is supportive of any proposed 20mph limit as we believe it would increase the attractiveness of cycling around the city centre and will contribute to the aim of encouraging more sustainable travel choices.

We would encourage the adoption of the “green line” as defined on the proposal, modified as described above.

Even beyond the immediate issues of road safety, such a zone would represent a much needed rebalancing of the city centre away from a through-route towards the needs of shoppers, pedestrians and cyclists. We feel this will increase the attractiveness, and ultimately the viability, of the city centre as a whole.

References

1 20mph Speed Reduction Initiative, Scottish Executive 1998

2 Aberdeen Cycle Map, 2nd Edn March 2005, Aberdeen Cycle Forum

3 Review of Traffic Calming Schemes in 20mph zones, Webster DC and Mackie AM Transport Research Laboratory, 1996.

4 National Children's Bureau, YoungTransNet online survey 2004/2005, www.youngtransnet.org.uk/

Should you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

Aberdeen Cycle Forum,