



02 August 2019

By email to:

transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on the Deeside Way crossing at Pittengullies Brae

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on options for improving this crossing.

Firstly, to put the questions in context, we note that the Deeside Way is probably the best and longest traffic-free route in Aberdeen. Between Duthie Park and Station road East in Peterculter it offers a relatively uninterrupted and traffic-free environment for safe cycling over a distance of several miles which can be enjoyed by all abilities including children. Its limitations are the two remaining crossing points, and the fact that it is a shared use path which can only operate successfully if all users behave reasonably and responsibly.

Of the 2 crossing points, Milltimber Brae (B979) is the more problematic as it involves crossing a busy road, which may be dangerous or intimidating for some users, particularly those who are less confident.

Pittengullies Brae presents different challenges in that it is generally (in our experience) a low-traffic environment. The gradient and angle of approach on the ramps, along with the physical barriers, are such that they will cause most cyclists to dismount, and only re-mount once having pushed to the top of the opposite ramp. The barriers and gradient are likely to be most problematic for unconventional bikes such as tandems, cargo-bikes or adaptive bikes and may therefore be discriminatory. We therefore agree that some improvements would be beneficial.

In terms of possible solutions, we imagine that whilst a new bridge would be ideal it may also be very expensive, and although benefits would be delivered, without further information we cannot be sure that these would be proportionate to the costs. It seems unlikely that a bridge would deliver a significant upsurge in use of the Deeside Way (it is already well used), and as a shared use route we are not certain that it could accommodate a significant increase in users in any case. The principal benefit of a bridge therefore would be the convenience and the fact that it is the most easily used by all classes of user including all-abilities.

If a bridge is prohibitively expensive, as an alternative and at significantly less costs we believe that worthwhile improvements to the crossing could be achieved by:

- Changing the angle of approach on the ramps

- Reducing the gradient of the ramps as far as possible
- Replacing the existing offset barriers with something which is more easily negotiated by all types of bikes including unconventional bikes (and trikes) and with full regard to the needs of all-ability users.
- Raising the level of the road to pavement level (i.e. a 'table' crossing to also serve as traffic calming)
- 20mph speed restriction, and priority given to cyclists and pedestrians
- Parking restrictions to improve visibility.

If a satisfactory solution can be designed at substantially less cost than a bridge, and noting that the B979 is a busier road to cross, could some investment not be directed to improving this: if not a full light-controlled crossing then a central refuge, or other form of traffic calming.

We would also point out that the surface of the Deeside Way beyond the end of the existing tarmac is very poor and more or less unusable by a thin-tyred road bike, such that many cyclists will leave the Deeside Way at least temporarily before rejoining further west.

Other problems relate to lack of maintenance: tarmac disrupted by tree roots, overgrowing vegetation, lack of sweeping of fallen leaves, and no winter treatments, all of which make the route less useful than it should be.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark, Chair
Aberdeen Cycle Forum

Cc Cllr Sandra Macdonald