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Nestrans / Aecom

By email to:

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Aberdeen - Laurencekirk multi-modal study

Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) is a campaigning organisation of around 600 members which seeks to promote all types of cycling. It was established in 2003 and our aims are as stated at the foot of page¹

The following comments are submitted in response to your current consultation. Our focus is on cycling and our comments on other modes are limited to how they impact cycling.

1. In our view the top priority for the corridor should be a high quality segregated cycle route between Stonehaven and Aberdeen. We believe there is significant demand for such a route and there are numerous communities (Cove, Portlethen, Newtonhill, Chapleton of Elsie, Muchalls and Stonehaven) which are within relatively easy cycle-commute distance of each other and of Aberdeen. The current NCN1 between Aberdeen and Stonehaven is indirect and for most of its length can only really be considered a 'tourist' route which does not meet the needs of daily users such as commuting journeys to work or school. Many cyclists travelling between destinations within the corridor currently take long and convoluted detours via minor roads in order to avoid the volume (& speed) of traffic using the A92. This is particularly true south of Muchalls, where there are no reasonably direct minor road alternatives. We regularly hear anecdotes from cyclists who wish to travel

¹ A) To encourage cycling and to promote the benefits of cycling to the individual and the wider community

B) To advocate for a safer cycling environment and improved cycle facilities in Aberdeen.

C) To campaign for cycling to be an integral part of planning and transport strategies and practice, in order to provide the widest possible access to cycling as a healthy and efficient means of travel for work and leisure

from Newtonhill and Muchalls to Stonehaven and are forced to do so in the grass / mud on the verge that constitutes the only option – other than a long detour – to stay off the carriage-way.

2. Any provisions to make bus and rail stations in the corridor more accessible to cycles are welcome, but overlook the fundamental issue that many cycle commuters will wish to take their bikes with them to continue their journey. Therefore what is really needed is significantly greater capacity to carry bikes on the buses and trains themselves. It is possibly beyond the scope of your study but nevertheless worth noting that onward travel connections from Aberdeen railway station by bike are currently poor and off-putting for all but the most determined cyclist.

3. Another example of the current inadequacy of the provision for cyclists is the relatively new junction of the A90/A92/B979. Cyclists travelling south on the B979 (“Netherley Road”) to a Stonehaven destination are faced with staying on-road to negotiate a very busy multi-lane roundabout, or taking a short section of cycle (or shared use) path which continues only a short distance (to the underpass) before stopping and leaving them stranded on the wrong side of the carriageway with no controlled crossing to allow them to continue their journey. This lack of provision also extends to the recently developed housing at Ury Estate.

4. The framing of the study as Aberdeen – Laurencekirk omits numerous communities on the A92 south of Stonehaven such as Kinneff, Inverbervie, St Cyrus and Montrose, all of which are commuting destinations from Aberdeen, and are served by bus, and in the case of the latter (Montrose) also by train. We understand that Montrose is outside the Nestrans area but nevertheless there would be merit in extending the study to give a more complete picture, particularly given the relative size of Montrose in comparison with Laurencekirk.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of the study in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark, Chair

Aberdeen Cycle Forum.