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Wellington Road

Thank you for consulting us in relation to the proposed improvements to walking & cycling (and equestrian use) in the study area.

About us: Our comments are phrased from the perspective of cyclists, who are our constituency. Although we cannot claim to speak for all cyclists, ACF has around 600 members. Our Objects, as set out in our Constitution, are shown at the foot of this page¹. We will generally only comment on other modes of transport when relevant to cycling provision.

Firstly, we note that this is at least the fifth time we have been invited to comment on proposals for Wellington Road, the previous instances being 2014, 2017, 2020 and 2021. It is incredibly disappointing and frustrating for us that after almost nine years of planning, nothing to improve active travel has yet been delivered on this route. Indeed this consultation to *assess current provision* suggests that designs are not yet even at a detailed stage.

We understand from you that the purpose of the current exercise is:

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.

1. To gain an appropriate understanding of all relevant existing facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (users) in the local area
2. To provide background user information that can be referred to throughout the development of the highway scheme
3. To identify opportunities for improvement for users

You have invited us to provide comments on the above and with reference to a map of the area in ARC GIS [online map](#)

General We would describe existing provision for active travel (walking & cycling) in the area as **generally poor or very poor**. We are not aware of any equestrian use and will not refer to it further, although that is not to say that it doesn't occur.

We feel that the extent of the study area is slightly bizarre: it takes in part, but not all, of several key routes such as Wellington Rd itself, but also Coast Road (NCN1) and a small part of Riverside Drive on the north side of the river. This does not seem coherent.

We are also slightly mystified by the layers shown and some of the descriptors. The red 'recommended routes' are in some cases places that we would not choose to cycle and certainly don't meet the usual Sustrans standard of being suitable for use by an unaccompanied 12 year-old. By way of examples, Rockall Road is generally not suitable for cycling because of gradient. Greenwell Road and Greenbank Road pass through very industrial areas with significant HGV traffic. Again using Rockall Road as an example and taking that as a starting point, and assuming an intended destination somewhere say Lochside Academy, the route is not only incomplete but also very indirect and involves several changes of gradient.

As you may be aware, Lochside Academy now covers catchments in Torry, Cove and Kincorth. Of these, Torry is particularly badly connected for active travel and Wellington Road itself is a huge barrier. Walking and shared use routes through the greenspaces of Kincorth Hill and Tullos Hill may be fine for recreational use but not really suitable for active travel journeys to work or school. Whatever improvements are to be implemented, we suggest that providing a high quality and realistic active travel connection between Torry and Lochside Academy should be a top priority.

On-road cycle lanes (advisory) such as on Provost Watt Drive and Crawpeel Road are generally not regarded as suitable infrastructure and we do not endorse them.

We note that your 'layers' do not capture the cycle lanes which have been installed on the approach to Lochside Academy from Wellington Circle. The first section (from Souter Head roundabout) is in any case an on-road advisory lane which we feel is sub-standard given the potential use by significant numbers of school children.

We are aware that Aberdeen City Council intend to develop a new segregated cycle lane on Craigshaw Drive. We are not convinced that this is now a worthwhile project, and risks being an

expensive white elephant. We feel that an off-road route (cycle track or even shared-use path) connecting the 'Shell Path' to Wellington Road along the length of Abbotswell Road, would be far more useful.

Turning to the 'junction improvement scheme extent' itself:

From the junction with **Craigshaw Drive to Hareness roundabout**, existing provision for walking or cycling is very poor. On road cycling here is unpleasant and (in our view) hazardous due to the speed and volume of traffic and the number of HGVs. There is no off-road cycle provision although the few people who do cycle here probably attempt to use the pavement, although it is also narrow and in poor condition (badly maintained and with numerous obstacles and street furniture) that on the east side i.e. adjacent to the south-bound carriageway being particularly bad. For much of this section there is no verge or set-back from traffic making this a very unpleasant environment for walking or indeed cycling.

Hareness roundabout. This is currently a significant barrier to walking and cycling. On road cycling here would be challenging even for an experienced cyclist. Using the controlled crossing points which are set-back some distance from the roundabout (none on Hareness Rd) would be slow and tortuous.

Hareness roundabout to Souter Head roundabout: on this section the existing shared-use path is in reasonable condition although possibly of insufficient width for other than very light use. Notably shared-use paths are not supported in current design standards, except as a last resort (Cycling by Design, Transport Scotland, 2021, p53). We would like to see clearer prioritization at any side crossings.

Souter Head roundabout – as with Hareness roundabout, very few cyclists will attempt to cycle on-road at a large and complex roundabout such as this. For cyclists on the shared-use path, crossing points e.g. at Souter Head road, are not controlled and would have to be crossed dismounted. There are potentially 10 arms to be crossed around the circumference of the roundabout (11 including the entrance to the petrol station), of which only 4 are signal-controlled, which currently makes this slow and frustrating, and potentially dangerous especially for less-able users.

Souter head roundabout to Charleston Road North: this is a shared-use path of slightly better standard than further down Wellington Rd, however we note there is no verge or set back to separate users from the traffic. Again this is a busy and potentially fast section of road (40mph posted limit) with a significant volume of traffic including many HGVs. It could not therefore be described as a pleasant or attractive walking & cycling environment. Again we would like to see clearer prioritization at side crossings, such as the un-named road serving car dealerships on the west side of this section of road. Our understanding of the recent changes to the Highway Code is that cyclists on the main route should have priority over turning traffic. As noted above, shared-use is not supported within current design standards.

We have a few other related remarks about provision within the study area:

- Redmoss Road is a useful, traffic-free, route for cycling. However it is currently very disconnected from adjacent routes and destinations, and these links could be significantly improved.
- Redmoss Avenue is a useful connection but needs better signposting. A connection between Redmoss Avenue and Wellington Circle would also be very useful and a way of avoiding the busy traffic on Wellington Road, and serving destinations such as Lochside Academy and the postal depot.
- Abbottshill Crescent, Tollochill Drive, Provost Watt Drive, Girdleness Road and Ladywell Place all have potential to be useful connection routes, with the right infrastructure in place which is currently lacking at present for the most part.

We hope you find these comments useful. We especially hope that the pace of development of improvements for active travel in the Wellington Road corridor significantly improves over what we have experienced to date.

Yours sincerely,

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