



26 January 2019

By email to:

RoadsProjects@aberdeencitycouncil.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Farburn Terrace – Cyclist and Pedestrian Improvements

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. 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 noted at the foot of this letterⁱ

Background and general principles Firstly, and similar to the comments we made on the recent consultation on Craigshaw Drive, we would ask why this location has been chosen as a priority for improvement? Is it based on accident data or cycle-count data showing that this route is heavily used by cyclists? Therefore, before we comment in detail, we suggest the proposal should be considered against the following tests:

1. Does it provide a route which is safe, direct, and convenient, which does not require cyclists to divert unduly from the shortest route or lose priority (e.g. by having to stop or give way more often than they would do had they remained on the road)?
2. Does it meet a need such as providing a missing link between other parts of a quality cycle route, or providing a safe route to a local school?
3. Is it located somewhere with other strong justification such as particularly high numbers of cyclists using the junction or is it an accident hotspot?

Farburn Terrace (N) Generally speaking, we are no longer in favour of on-road, unprotected advisory cycle lanes as they do not provide a cycling environment which is safe for all, including children. In this particular street we note that the road is relatively narrow so it is almost inevitable that traffic will drive in the cycle lane. Particularly adjacent to the permitted parking, width constraint is an issue. However from the drawing it is unclear if any on-road lane marking is proposed or if it is intended that the creation of a cycling environment is wholly dependent on the proposed reduced speed limit.

If the speed limit is to be reduced to 20mph we suggest that this is actively enforced with traffic calming measures, which should be designed in such a way as to allow cyclists to continue

unhindered. Elsewhere we note that 20mph limits are routinely exceeded by traffic and that there is little or no Police enforcement, so unless traffic calming is installed we are of the view that a 20mph limit would be fairly meaningless and would not provide a cycling environment which is safe for all users, including children. Anecdotally, we are told that this route is heavily used by taxis accessing the railway station, which underlines the need for effective measures to be introduced if this is indeed to become an attractive route for cyclists.

Farburn Terrace (E) to Wellheads Drive. (i.e. west then south-bound). Cyclists travelling in this direction appear to be expected to use a new off-road lane (shared use) to bypass the roundabout. However as this is only a short section, they are presumably expected to re-join the carriageway after the roundabout and presumably would also at that point have to give way to traffic on the road, coming from 'behind'. This would mean stopping, and looking back over the right shoulder at an awkward angle. Due to the awkwardness of this manoeuvre, the other temptation is for cyclists to re-join without stopping or without looking. Or, to stay on-road and negotiate the roundabout with the traffic, thus defeating the purpose of the "improvement". This is not a satisfactory design. Alternately at this point, are cyclists expected to cross Wellheads Drive to continue via the shared use path on the west side? No crossing point is provided so cyclists would have to give way to traffic in both directions. This is also an unsatisfactory design. The suggestion that a crossing point may be provided at a later date if demand warrants it, is not a satisfactory proposal in our view.

Wellheads Drive to Farburn Terrace (E) (i.e. north then east-bound). The design in this direction is slightly less problematic but we would welcome confirmation over whether cyclists using the route would have priority over traffic taking access/egress to adjacent premises. The "parallel" crossing is satisfactory but again cyclists are expected to take a longer route and presumably also to cede priority at the crossing point. Neither of these attributes help to make the cycle route appealing: the temptation for many cyclists will be just to remain on the roundabout with the traffic, because it is quicker and more direct.

Just east of the roundabout the drawing shows a spur in the cycle path which we don't understand the purpose of – especially as there is no crossing point provided here. There is a similar spur south of the roundabout. In both cases the prospect of a crossing at a later date if warranted by demand is not satisfactory in our view.

Farther east, again, we would want clarity over priority for cyclists over traffic entering or exiting adjacent premises.

At the crossing of Farburn Place we dislike the diversion away from Farburn Terrace to a crossing point some way down Farburn Place. It would be preferable for the new cycle lane to continue straight and parallel to Farburn Terrace and the crossing to be elevated to the level of the cyclist, and priority to be given to the cyclist. Diversions of the sort currently proposed - which would involve a cyclist having to negotiate four right-angle turns, and cede priority - cumulatively mean that the route becomes circuitous and unappealing to many cyclists who will prefer to cycle on the road.

Under the railway bridge the width narrows significantly. This is understandable but it might reasonably be asked if at this point cyclists will be given protection from traffic such as a barrier. In the past the solution at such pinch-points has been to erect "Cyclists dismount" signs. This is not an acceptable solution. In combination with the other diversions away from the most direct route, and loss of priority in several places, it would make the route unappealing for most

cyclists. 'Dismount' signs are also widely ignored so creating a potential conflict with pedestrians and/or cyclists travelling in the other direction (noting that on Farburn Terrace (E) the cycle path provision is on one side only, so is presumably intended for two-way cycle traffic, as well as pedestrians).

East of the railway bridge there is another access point (bank car park) where priority needs to be considered. No details of this section have been provided and importantly no detail is given of how cyclists will re-join traffic at the junction with Victoria Street. Neither is there an existing cycle path or lane provision on this section of Victoria Street, as far as we are aware, and in that respect this section cannot be described as a "missing link".

Conclusion Overall we believe this proposal has significant shortcomings and the risk is that if implemented it will create a sub-optimal route that will not actually appeal to a significant number of cyclists. Utilisation of the 'improvements' may be low and therefore the value for money represented by the scheme may be poor.

We would be happy to further discuss points of detail if that would be of assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Clark

Chair, Aberdeen Cycle Forum

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ⁱ 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.