

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	15 March 2011
DIRECTOR	Director of Corporate Governance
TITLE OF REPORT	The Aberdeen City Council (Bus Lanes in Aberdeen) (Amendment) Order 2011
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/11/021

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

A single statutory objection has been received as a result of the public advertisement of this order. The objection is discussed in section 5 below. The statutory notice is attached as an appendix, for information.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendation is that the objection be overruled and the order made as originally envisaged.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This is being funded by NESTRANS who committed £180,000 to the scheme at their board meeting on 16 February this year.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

During the main statutory objection period, no representations came in. However, a preliminary consultative response was being held over from the earlier (preliminary) statutory stage, this having been received from Mr Derek Williams, on behalf of Aberdeen Cycle Forum.

The Cycle Forum welcomes the assistance that bus lanes can give to cyclists on busy routes, but has concerns with the current proposal.

The first of these is that bus punctuality is a problem at the location in question (at the top of King Street leading round into Castle Street) because buses are impeded by large volumes of cars, a problem which the Forum believes will not be cured by a bus lane. In particular, they suggest that traffic heading for Market Street be diverted away from King Street/Castle Street altogether, and channelled through Virginia Street instead. In fact there are already signs recommending Virginia Street as a preferred route for HGVs, but any attempt to divert general traffic away from King Street/Castle Street would require a major traffic management scheme.

At present, along the King Street/Castle Street section where the bus lane would be introduced, there is already an advisory cycle lane which is well used. There is enough space for traffic to overtake cyclists using the cycle lane, whereas (the Forum argues) the new bus lane would be too narrow to allow safe overtaking of cyclists by buses or taxis (especially at peak times when the outside lane would be busy).

Also, the bus lane would only apply at peak times; at other times it would be open to all traffic, and cyclists would have no dedicated allocation of road space at all. The Forum rejects the idea that a part-time bus lane offers a like-for-like replacement of a cycle lane.

Finally, there is a complaint that the proposal actually offers advantages to car users. Bus lanes would be removed from the flow of cars and, outside peak times, roadspace for cars would be doubled, and the bus lane approaching the junction with Market Street would be reduced. The objectors argue that advantaging cars and disadvantaging cyclists does not comply with the transport hierarchy set out in national planning policy.

The roads officials acknowledge that, from the point of view of cyclists' interests alone, the new arrangements are less favourable. However, the diminution is not a large one, and the wider benefits to buses and taxis – and to cars and vans and lorries outwith peak times – are considerable. Transport hierarchies should not be interpreted as an excuse to make things difficult for car users if there is no realistic strategic purpose in so doing.

6. IMPACT

The Vibrant, Dynamic And Forward Looking document has a range of aspirations under the heading "Transport" (paragraph 7), and, as is outlined in the previous section, the compatibility of those aspirations with the current order is a matter of dispute with Aberdeen Cycle Forum, as is the order's compatibility with similar objectives in the Community Plan.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used as a point of departure for writing this report (other than the statutory objection itself).

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**

THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL (BUS LANES IN ABERDEEN) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2011

1. Aberdeen City Council proposes to make the above-named order in terms of its powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
2. The effect of the order will be to amend The Aberdeen City Council (Bus Lanes in Aberdeen) (Consolidation) Order 2004 by adding a new section of bus lane and revoking an existing section.
3. The new length of bus lane would be established at the top of King Street leading round into Castle Street. It would begin on King Street at a point 66 metres (or thereby) south of the extended south kerblines of East North Street and continue up to and into Castle Street, ending at a point 34 metres (or thereby) west of the extended west kerblines of Marischal Street, operating from 7.30am until 9.30am and from 4.00pm until 6.00pm, on every day except Sundays.
4. The revocation proposal means that the existing bus lane on Union Street between the extended east kerblines of The Adelphi and a point 48 metres (or thereby) east of the extended east kerblines of Market Street would be removed.
5. The new lane is intended to improve journey times for buses and other permitted vehicles whereas the revocation is intended to provide more capacity for lane interchange.
6. Full details of the proposals are to be found in the draft order, which, together with maps showing the intended measures and an accompanying statement of the Council's reasons for promoting them, may be examined during normal office hours on weekdays between 29 December 2010 and 26 January 2011, inclusively, in the offices of the Road Safety and Traffic Management Team. Please call at the ground floor of St Nicholas House, Broad Street, Aberdeen.
7. It is recommended that anyone visiting St Nicholas House to view the documents should make an appointment to do so, in order that a member of staff can be present to offer an explanation if necessary. The telephone number is 523463.
8. Anyone wishing to object to the proposed order should send details of the grounds for objection in writing to the undersigned during the statutory objection period which also runs from 29 December 2010 until 26 January 2011, inclusively. Any objection should state (1) the name and address of the objector, (2) the matters to which it relates, and (3) the grounds on which it is being made.
9. Any person who submits an objection should note that the Committee agendas are public documents, available in libraries and also distributed to the press. Objectors' names and addresses, perhaps with summaries of their observations, may be able to be found in these agendas. Also, although the original letters of objection will not ordinarily be copied as part of the agenda, they are available for inspection by Councillors and are essentially in the public domain. To that extent, however, they are redacted, with e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and signatures blanked out.

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