

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure
DATE	29th August 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Market Street / Guild Street Junction – Rationalisation of Turning Movements to Improve Capacity (Final Stage of Statutory Process)
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/121

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report deals with the results of the Initial Statutory Consultation along with the results of the Public Advert. The public notice is included (Appendix 1), from which members will be able to see the exact content of the proposals. Also, where applicable, the letters of objection are also attached (Appendix 2).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended this Committee:-

- (i) in relation to The Aberdeen City Council (Market Street / Guild Street, Aberdeen)(Rationalisation of Turning Movements) Order 201(X), overrule the objection received and approve this order be made as originally envisaged.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding has been identified within the Road Safety & Traffic Management budget for 2013/14 to allow for the necessary physical alterations to the geometry of the Market Street/Guild Street junction as well as modifying various directional signs. The cost of these works has been estimated at £18,000. The cost for promoting this permanent order has been accommodated within the existing budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the introduction of a permanent ban on the movement of vehicles westbound from Virginia Street into Guild Street will reduce the potential for traffic conflicts at this busy junction and will

improve junction efficiency thereby reducing congestion, delays and air pollution. The efficiencies attained from the revised junction arrangements will support the aims of the policy document Aberdeen – the Smarter City, to improve the environment and transport connections.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At its Committee on 6th November 2012 approval was granted to introduce a temporary ban on the movement of vehicles westbound from Virginia Street into Guild Street from the 19/11/12 until 28/1/13, additionally requesting Officers to report back to the next Committee the results of this temporary ban showing its effectiveness.

The results of this temporary ban was then presented to Committee on 22 January 2013, with a recommendation that approval be given to commence the legal process to introduce a permanent ban on the movement of vehicles westbound from Virginia Street into Guild Street.

This section has now been sub-divided into the results for Initial Statutory Consultation and that of the Public Consultation.

5.1 Initial Statutory and Public Consultation

The Aberdeen City Council (Market Street / Guild Street, Aberdeen) (Rationalisation of Turning Movements) Order 201(X)

5.1.1 Objection to the proposal to remove the movement of vehicles travelling westbound on Virginia St in to Guild Street.

An objection has been received from the Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) to the above mentioned order.

ACF expresses the following points with regard to the proceeding of the legal procedures:

1. ACF feel that the consultation required to be carried out with stakeholders, as instructed by November Committee, was not completed correctly as ACF had not been consulted at all prior to reporting back to the January Committee.
2. There was no impact assessment on cyclists carried out, which should have covered safety impacts due to cyclists being diverted onto other, longer routes and possible mitigation measures.
3. At a meeting with Officers and the ACF on 7th March 2013, officers agreed to investigate an on-demand option within the traffic signal sequence. Subsequently ACF were informed that this would have a significant negative impact on the operation of a junction, but when asking for the results of this assessment they were not supplied.

4. It had been suggested to upgrade the pelican crossing on Virginia Street to a Toucan crossing, but for this to be of any benefit it would require to be part of a package of measures which has not been forthcoming.
 5. Ultimately this process has not reflected the fact that encouraging cycling is a strategic priority for Aberdeen City Council.
- 5.1.2 Support to the proposed introduction of a permanent ban on the movement of vehicles westbound from Virginia Street to Guild Street has been received from 3 statutory bodies; NESTRANS, Police Scotland and Grampian Fire and Rescue.
 - 5.1.3 No statutory objections have been received in relation to the public consultation.
- 5.2 Response to objection (Aberdeen Cycle Forum)

Point 1

As requested by Committee, a consultation was carried out with all relevant stakeholders with the results submitted back to the 22nd January 2013 Committee. Within this report initial comments received from the Aberdeen Cycle Forum (ACF) were included, although it subsequently transpired these were not intended to form the basis of ACF's response to the proposal.

Points 2

An assessment on how cyclists could still travel in a westerly direction from Virginia Street and Trinity Quay was considered. This could be achieved by the upgrade of the existing puffin crossing on Virginia Street to a Toucan crossing and the utilisation of the existing dual use path which runs parallel to Virginia Street and Guild Street from Ship Row to The Green Area. Although not a direct route, this route is considered to have significantly less of a safety impact on cyclists.

Allowing an exception for cyclists to make the westbound movement at the Virginia Street / Market Street junction would mean a loss of effective green time which would have a similar impact on the junction efficiencies as its previous configuration. In doing this it would also place them in direct conflict with right turning vehicles from Guild Street to Market Street that would move away from this junction quicker and may risk turning against the flow of any cyclists.

Point 3

Discussions held with ACF and Councillor Ross Thomson on 7th March 2013, following the Committee meeting, confirmed that ACF would have a further opportunity to comment on the proposals during the statutory consultation process to promote any Traffic Regulation Order. While Officers agreed to look into the feasibility of an on-demand

option, it was highlighted at the time that this option was not considered viable. Vehicular movement surveys for Virginia Street to Guild Street confirmed Officers concerns' regarding the viability of installing an on-demand option with results recording one cyclist travelling during both the am and pm peak periods at this location.

Point 4

The upgrade of the existing puffin on Virginia Street to a Toucan crossing would allow cyclists to cross Virginia Street unhindered and utilise the existing cycle route on Shore Brae / Ship Row, although this may add additional journey time, it is considered to be very minimal. This alternative route would take cyclists away from an extremely busy junction and the traffic conflicts associated with negotiating a three lane approach to traffic signals thereby improving the safety of cyclists.

Point 5

As stated above an alternative route is available to cyclists who wish to continue their journey from Virginia Street westwards towards Guild Street.

Over the last six months a temporary order has been in place and has been seen to deliver improved junction operation and contributed to the efficiency of the Market Street / Virginia Street corridor. During the first few months of operation in the morning and evening peak periods the extended queues along Virginia Street back onto the Beach Boulevard and on King Street, that have been seen in previous years, have not occurred with the same frequency. In addition congestion and delays on Guild Street were reduced with Stagecoach reporting they were finding it easier to gain access onto the road network and turn right from Guild Street into Market Street.

For full details on the Trial results from the period of November 2012 to end of January 2013 please see the report submitted to Committee on 21st January 2013.

Given the aforementioned, it is recommended the objection to this order be overruled and the order be implemented as originally envisaged.

6. SERVICE AND IMPACT

Section 5 above – and also the public notices attached – will allow members to consider the possible impact on communities compared with the intended virtue of the original proposals.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report submitted to Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 6 November 2012:

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2523
&T=10](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2523&T=10)

Minute of Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee meeting 6th
November 2012:

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2523
&T=1](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2523&T=1)

Report submitted to Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee
on 22nd January 2013:

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=7567
&T=9](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=7567&T=9)

Minute of Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Committee meeting
22nd January 2013:

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2524
&T=1](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2524&T=1)

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Appendix 1

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

THE ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL (MARKET STREET/GUILD STREET, ABERDEEN) (RATIONALISATION OF TURNING MOVEMENTS) ORDER 201(X)

Aberdeen City Council proposes to make “The Aberdeen City Council (Market Street/Guild Street, Aberdeen) (Rationalisation of Turning Movements) Order 201(X)” in terms of its powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect of the order will be to impose a prohibition on the movement of vehicles westbound from Virginia Street into Guild Street. That is to say westbound vehicles on Virginia Street will only be permitted to turn left on to Market Street.

Full details of the proposal 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 10 July and 7 August 2013, in the offices of the roads officials in the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure department, at 74-76 Spring Garden, Aberdeen.

It is recommended that anyone visiting Spring Garden to view any of 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. Anyone unable to visit Spring Garden can telephone (01224 538050) to speak to one of the officials.

Anyone wishing to object to the proposed order should send details of the grounds for objection, including their name and address, in writing to the undersigned or to trafficmanagement@aberdeencity.gov.uk during the statutory objection period which also runs from 10 July to 7 August 2013, inclusively.

Any person who submits an objection to a road traffic order should be aware that any objection made will be available to members of the Committee, available for inspection by members of the public, distributed to the press, and will form part of the agenda pack which is available on the Council's website. To that extent, however, they are redacted, with e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and signatures removed from this correspondence.

Jane MacEachran, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Aberdeen City Council, Town House, Aberdeen

Appendix 2

Dear Mr Cowie

Thank you for your letter of 1 May inviting comment on the traffic management scheme for the Virginia Street/Market Street/Guild Street junction.

The Aberdeen Cycle Forum wishes to object to the commencement of legal procedures for this scheme for the following reasons:

1. The consultation process with stakeholders was mishandled. Committee on 6 November 2012 instructed that cyclists were to be fully consulted as part of the stakeholder consultation. Despite this instruction, ACF was not consulted prior to the Committee decision of 22 January 2013. Moreover, the officers report to that Committee gave the misleading impression that ACF had indeed been consulted. Councillors were accordingly denied the full range of stakeholder views.
2. Officers did not undertake any impact assessment on cyclists. This assessment should have considered safety impacts due to cyclists being diverted onto other, longer routes as well as potential mitigation measures.
3. At a meeting with ACF and Councillor Thomson on March 7th 2013, officers agreed to investigate the suggestion made by ACF for an on-demand option within the traffic signal sequence. Subsequently ACF was informed by officers that such an option would impact too negatively on the operation of the junction. ACF has asked for the details of the analysis behind this conclusion but none has been supplied, raising concerns on our part that a properly conducted analysis of the option has not been undertaken.
4. Officers are suggesting that the existing pelican crossing on Virginia Street be upgraded to a toucan crossing, as if this was somehow a mitigation measure for cyclists. An isolated toucan crossing is meaningless. It has to be part of a package of measures that includes shared path linkages and measures to help cyclists integrate back onto Market Street. No such package has been forthcoming.
5. The process to date has not reflected the fact that encouraging cycling is a strategic priority for Aberdeen City Council.

We regard these as substantial concerns and ACF would like to request a delegation to Committee.

Regards

Derek Williams

Deputy Chair, Aberdeen Cycle Forum.