

I Suggest a NEW Core Paths REVIEW

I wish to submit the following ideas to the The fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4). In particular to the items
How can planning best support our quality of life, health and wellbeing in the future? and
What infrastructure do we need to build to realise our long term aspirations?

Essentially my comments actually reiterate many of the ideas that have already been expressed in other Scottish Govt. papers and proposals. These are :-

Lets Get Walking 13th June 2014 - which said
Provide better quality walking environments with attractive, well designed, managed and built with natural spaces for everyone and the need to get better understanding of the barriers that influence people's decision or ability to walk which I suggest below can be provided by properly designated and implemented CORE PATHS which will also have the ability to make Scotland's roads safer for pedestrians and other users and enable easy, convenient and safe independent mobility for everyone.

AND

Scottish Govt paper by J Swinney Designing Streets 2010 ISBN: 978-0-7559-8264-6 which stated
place before movement and under the heading Pedestrians and cyclists it stated Street user hierarchy should consider pedestrians first and private motor vehicles last
Street design should be inclusive, providing for all people regardless of age or ability it should also Achieve appropriate traffic speed.
Design should be used to influence driver behaviour to reduce vehicle speed to levels that are appropriate for the local context and deliver safe streets for all.

So rather than go through what several Scottish Policy papers have reiterated time and again such as Walking and Cycling good for health and well being I direct you to the above papers and many similar exhortations to allow Active Travel.

Main contention is that the present Core Paths definitions and implementations are not fit for purpose as they do NOT ensure safe travel for pedestrians and or cyclists, especially when taken in the city context.

I speak from experience of a desire to be able to walk or cycle into Aberdeen City from my own house on Queens Road. For years I have tried to get possible Active Travel available into the city. Presently the Core Path consist of a black line on the Local Development Plan for the city which I (as Community Council Secretary) have consistently said is a MISS representation as people will assume it is a meaningful safe route for walking or cycling into town. Which it is NOT. I

have taken the matter as far as a complaint to the Scottish Office which upholds the Aberdeen City Councils position that it is correctly designated a CORE PATH. Without going into detail (which can be found elsewhere) about the lack of proper safety features on a CORE PATH even the pavements have been usurped by local businesses (like banks) by removing pavement flagstones etc and lowering the access to the main road with tarmac (ie OVER THE CORE PATH) for ease of use by cars etc. This including dividing walls between businesses make it dangerous for pedestrians on the pavements as cars assume they have right of way over the CORE PATH and exit banks quickly. This is only ONE example of the lack of proper meaning of CORE PATHS.

The other aspect of safety for active travel is that because the access routes into the city are mainly designed for Cars etc the cyclists feel unsafe on the roads and so they come on the pavements.

I have taken up the question of safety on CORE PATH with Aberdeen City Council to which their Officer replied - well you have pavements don't you - well actually we don't have very safe pavements either as explained above.

I suggest the new NPF4 review should include a full review of the rules and definitions of CORE PATHS which will coordinate the ideas and meaning of the other Scottish Govt Policies with regard to Active Travel and the benefits it will provide for the people of Scotland as is put forward in many other Scottish Govt Policy papers.