

Submission from Spokes to Edinburgh City Council consultation on the draft *Street Design* document 1 July 2014

The draft document is in this Planning Committee report of 27.2.14...

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/42380/item_51 -
_edinburgh_street_design_guidance_-_draft_for_consultation](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/42380/item_51_-_edinburgh_street_design_guidance_-_draft_for_consultation)

Our response is based on the questions in the public consultation, for which the website currently is...

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20089/roads_and_pavements/906/edinburgh_street_design

Note: Many of the early questions are 'multiple-choice', the responses to some of which really need comment/discussion rather than MCQs. Our more substantial written responses are in q4 and various questions from q27 onwards.

SPOKES RESPONSE

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that streets should be designed to:

Complement the surrounding buildings
Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Ensure you feel safe and comfortable
Strongly Agree

Be easy to find your way around
Strongly Agree

Provide for a variety of activities
Slightly Agree

Include trees and landscaping
Slightly Agree

Encourage travel on foot, by bike and by public transport
Strongly Agree

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following approaches to street design in Edinburgh?

Having wider pavements where there are lots of pedestrians
Strongly Agree

Using paving slabs to surface footways with lots of activity i.e. shopping streets
Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Using materials which would minimise the impact on the environment
Slightly Agree

Segregating cyclists from other vehicles where there is lots of traffic
Strongly Agree

Separating public transport from other vehicles to help it get past traffic queues
Strongly Agree

Allocating space for pedestrians to stop, rest and enjoy the surroundings
Strongly Agree

Focusing on busy shopping streets as the most important areas for making places better for people
Neither Agree Nor Disagree

Giving priority to vehicle space for car parking on the road in residential streets
Strongly Disagree

Having less space for cars in streets where lots of people are getting around by other methods
Strongly Agree

4. What is your favourite street in Edinburgh and why?

There is currently no 'Spokes favourite street' in Edinburgh. Potentially it is Princes Street, as was suggested by the results of a survey of nearly 100 Spokes members in 2010, but it would need to be free of motor traffic and redesigned with walking and cycling prioritised. Princes Street connects many other routes, it contains or is near many great and useful destinations, and of course in many other ways it cries out for a redesign which would justify its potential place as Scotland's premier street.

Spokes Note: In relation to the following questions about 10 Edinburgh streets, we attempt to give an overall perspective on each street, not solely a cyclist perspective.

We are interested in whether you like these streets or not, thinking about how they are used, what they look like and if they are welcoming, for example



5. Do you like this street?

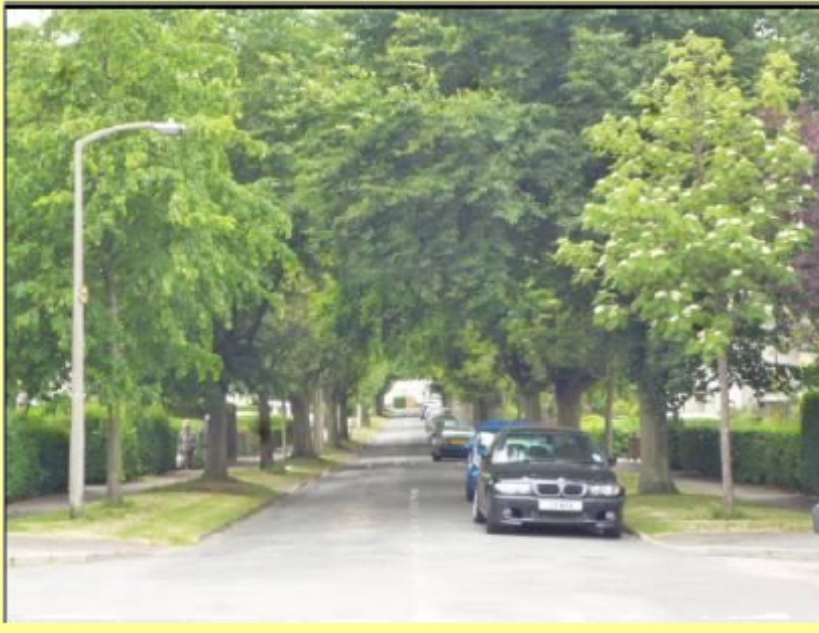
Like a little

6. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for parking - like

Street furniture (e.g. benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Safe to use - like



7. Do you like this street?

Like a little

8. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for pedestrians - like

Space for parking - dislike

Trees or vegetation - like

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike



9. Do you like this street?

Dislike a little

10. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for pedestrians - dislike

Space for parking - like

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Safe to use – dislike



11. Do you like this street?

Dislike a lot

12. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for pedestrians - dislike

Space for the general road - dislike

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Safe to use - dislike

Overall look and feel – dislike



13. Do you like this street?

Neither

14. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for parking - dislike

Trees or vegetation - dislike

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Overall look and feel - like



15. Do you like this street?

Like a lot

16. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for socialising - like

Space for pedestrians - like

Space for cyclists - like

Space for parking - like

Trees or vegetation - like

Street furniture (e.g. benches, art work etc.) - like

Quality of the surfacing - like

Safe to use - like

Overall look and feel – like



17. Do you like this street?

Neither

18. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

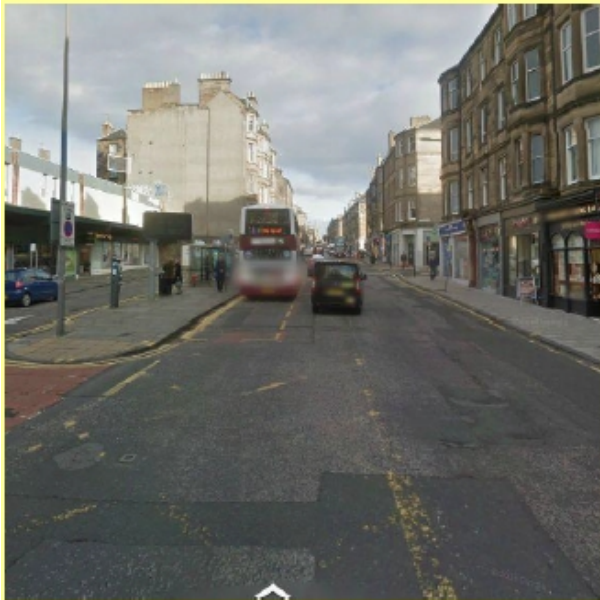
Space for pedestrians - like

Trees or vegetation - dislike

Street furniture (e.g. benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Safe to use - like

Overall look and feel – dislike



19. Do you like this street?

Like a little

20. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for pedestrians - like

Space for cyclists - dislike

Trees or vegetation - dislike

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Quality of the surfacing - dislike

Safe to use – dislike



21. Do you like this street?

Dislike a lot

22. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for parking - dislike

Trees or vegetation - like

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Overall look and feel - dislike

other - metal fencing - dislike



23. Do you like this street?

Like a little

24. Please tick the things you like or dislike most about this street (tick as many or as few as you wish).

Space for pedestrians - like

Space for cyclists - like

Space for parking - like

Trees or vegetation - like

Street furniture (e.g, benches, art work etc.) - dislike

Quality of the surfacing - like

Safe to use - like

Overall look and feel - dislike

27. When travelling around Edinburgh, what is your main means of travel? How do you travel?

Most Common - cycle, 2nd Most Common – foot

29. How clear do you find the structure of the guidance with the three interlinking sections covering A) context, B) design overview, and C) design details?

Neither clear nor unclear

If you think it could be improved in any way, please provide comments

While these seem sensible sub-divisions the way the structure is explained on pg 14 is a little unclear. In particular the way the sentence "There are chapters on the context of the document, overall design concepts, and detailed design guidance." relates to the diagram on the right. We suggest making the colour coded text in this sentence identical to the section headings in the table on the right of the page would improve the clarity, e.g. rename Part A context of the document , Part B overall design concepts, etc

30. The challenge of creating better streets for people, whilst making sure the city is easy to move around at the same time, is at the core of the Council's proposed new guidance. What do you think the balance of importance should be?

Making better places for people to enjoy the surroundings
Very important

Making sure people can get from A to B as quickly as possible by walking
Very important

Making sure people can get from A to B easily with a car
Not very important

Making sure people can get from A to B as quickly as possible by cycling
Very important

Making sure people can get from A to B as quickly as possible by public transport
Fairly important

Do you have any comments?

The council needs to take further steps to make it more inconvenient / difficult to drive to and through important areas such as the city centre. A strategic approach is needed to the city centre to gradually remove general traffic from it over a period of years and allow people to enjoy it and shops to thrive.

The Council must recognise that there is a conflict between maintaining or providing greater car accessibility and designing well for walking and cycling. The Local Transport Strategy (LTS) does in fact recognise this, with its targets not just to increase walking and (substantially) cycling, but also to reduce car use. The Street Design guidance must reflect and implement these targets.

What do you see as the main issues arising from the following possible changes?

31. Using signage and road markings in a different way to normal standards to reduce clutter.

It is a good idea to aim to reduce street clutter provided the meaning of the signage and road markings is still completely clear.

32. Using shared surfaces where pedestrians and vehicles mix, in busy residential streets.

This is a good idea in some circumstances and can sometimes reduce traffic dominance and vehicle speeds, for example in 'home zones', which will benefit both pedestrians and cyclists. However, reducing traffic volumes and/or removing traffic and/or provision of segregated cycling facilities are usually preferable solutions, particularly where current traffic levels are high.

33. Reducing the formal level of traffic control (e.g. by using shared surfaces where pedestrians and vehicles mix) in busier shopping streets.

In some circumstances this can reduce traffic dominance and vehicle speeds, which will benefit both pedestrians and cyclists. However overall reductions in motor traffic, by parking and access controls, and/or provision of segregated cycling facilities are likely to be better solutions in 'busy shopping streets'*
** from current high levels of motor traffic.*

34. Using street space to physically separate cyclists from other traffic.

We strongly support this on streets with relatively high traffic speeds and volumes. Given the fear of traffic is one of the main reasons many people do not cycle, this type of design being widely implemented in Edinburgh is likely to result in large numbers of people taking up cycling and help to achieve the Council's cycling targets.

35. Using sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

No comment

36. In general, do you support the changes in approach set out in Section A5 'What changes will we see'? To view section A5 please click [here](#). Please note this will open in a new window.

Support

Streets have been classified into 25 types using a grid, or matrix, which has been called the Edinburgh Street Framework. This combines different movement and place functions for different streets.

37. How clear do you find the Edinburgh Street Framework?

Fairly unclear

If you think it could be improved in any way, please provide comments

It seems unnecessarily complicated with too many categories. This then makes everything that follows on from the Street Framework even more complicated. We strongly suggest it is made much simpler if you want this document to be accessible to the public and for them to understand why a given street is being redesigned the way it is.

One way to make it simpler could be by reducing the number of categories. You could start by with the link types. For instance from the street examples given 'strategic' and 'secondary' do not appear significantly different categories and could reasonably be merged as could 'local' and 'service'. This would result in 15 categories.

Design principle sheets summarise who should have priority and provide design preferences.

38. How clear do you find the design principles sheets as advice in helping to apply the guidance?

Fairly Clear

Please provide comments

The main comment is that this section is overly complicated due to too many streets types being defined as commented on above General comments on Design Principles

We strongly support the Council's recognition that mandatory or separated lanes should be considered in the design process for all streets types that have relatively high traffic volumes and speeds. We have long advocated the use of both these types of cycle facilities but to date there have been very few of the former and none of the latter in Edinburgh. We hope this marks a change in approach from the Council which will see many of these facilities implemented, not just in cycle-specific projects but also by maintenance teams when streets are resurfaced. Finally, the term 'separated lanes' should be changed to 'segregated lanes' for clarity.

Provision for long term cycle parking/storage should be included as a design option in all residential streets. It is particularly vital in streets with no convenient in-house or in-garden storage opportunities – for example terraced and tenemental areas.

We suggest a new type of cycle facility which we describe as 'including advisory cycle lanes on both sides of the streets and the removal of the carriageway centre line' should be a standard design option in certain types of street as appropriate (to be discussed with the cycle team and Spokes) such as relatively lightly trafficked rural roads with little or no frontage. It is a useful way to change the feel of the street and indicate more priority for cyclists. It has been used in a number of locations in the UK and is routinely used in the Netherlands.

39. How clear do you find the overall layout of the information in the factsheets?

We will comment on the factsheets in the consultation which you have informed us will take place in July and August 2014

40. Do you have any comments on any detail in the factsheets?

Ditto

45. Please use this space to provide any other comments you have on street design or how this guidance could be improved upon, e.g. useability, clarity, terminology, content or coverage?

Our main general comment is that the guidance is overly complicated and difficult to follow. This may limit how well the principles it is trying to convey are implemented by the wide range of staff at the Council, plus outside consultants, developers, etc, who will need to use it. For example, the overall aims on page 15 are not as succinct and clearly worded as they could be, especially the third and the fifth bullet points.

We support all the elements included that are in line with 'Designing Streets', e.g. considering streets as a place first, tight corner radii, facilitating pedestrians crossing on desire lines.

page 15 - We strongly disagree with the fifth aim of the street design guidance on page 15 and the priority it implies will be given to motor traffic over other modes of transport in particular "improving conditions and integrating solutions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as a priority whilst not causing undue congestion or delaying other street users (depending on the location or time of the day)". The conditional element of this statement means that you will not in reality give priority to designing for sustainable modes of transport. What it means is that you will try and improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users however if it might inconvenience drivers by potentially causing too much congestion then you will not go ahead with the improvements, i.e. when it comes to the crunch existing poor conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users ultimately are acceptable, whereas inconveniencing car drivers is unacceptable. This overall presumption must change if Edinburgh is going to break away from traffic dominated spaces and begin designing places for people and not cars in line with Scottish Government Policy - Designing Streets. Furthermore, this presumption is surely incompatible with the LTS targets to increase walking and cycling and to reduce car use.

Page 30 - We disagree that streets with no frontage (or buildings) necessarily have a 'very low' place function, for instance streets that run between parks such as Melville Drive.

page 40 - we disagree that on Strategic shopping streets the primary design focus should be solely public transport and pedestrians. Encouraging cycling to and through strategic shopping streets, by means of high quality infrastructure such as segregated cycle lanes, is vital both to enable people to cycle along these main city arteries and also to improve their retail vitality. This is also essential if the council is to achieve its very ambitious LTS targets to increase cycle use.

page 44 - 4% travel to work by bike is incorrect. This was 5% (to nearest %) in the 2011 Census which is the most reliable existing data. It should be changed to 5% and the census referenced. Furthermore this is likely to have increased since 2011 too! Additionally the policy reference should be modified to read " The City of Edinburgh Council supports and encourages cycling through the Active Travel Action Plan and has a set a target that 10% of all journeys in Edinburgh will be made by bicycle by 2020".

page 45 - under comfort for public transport include smooth carriageway surface, a poor surface leads to an uncomfortable ride on the bus!

page 46 - replace 'motor vehicle' with 'car' as motor vehicle implies other modes such as bus are included in this figure whereas the 40% figure relates to just those who drive by car/van to work.

page 56 and 57 - the tables are difficult to understand

pg 80 - what are cycle gates? this needs to be defined. For example, are they entry points for cyclists only or are they barriers forcing cyclists to dismount?

It is our understanding that this section will be expanded by means of detailed design factsheets which will be subject to a consultation later this summer. We therefore reserve comment on this section until that time.

*We do however highlight in advance one issue of great concern, since the council is still continuing to install facilities dangerous and intimidating to cyclists, namely **central islands** substandard from the cyclist perspective. The question of width and layout between kerb and island is a well known issue, but other aspects can be equally intimidating and dangerous. These include parking/loading spaces immediately after an island (as at the new Dalry Road island) or fast roads where two traffic lanes merge into one just prior to an island, (e.g. downhill on Comiston Road). Gradient is also significant where motor vehicles need to wait behind cyclists approaching such a pinch point – the driver may overtake unsafely uphill as the cyclist is going slowly, or downhill not appreciating the cyclist's speed. Obviously safe and convenient pedestrian crossings are very important, but alternatives should be sought where an island increases cycling dangers.*

46. How do you think we should trial the guidance in a way that is relevant to you?

No comment

47. If you would like to be kept up to date with the development of the Edinburgh Street Design Guidance, please provide your contact details, below.
spokes@spokes.org.uk