Spokes Response to CEC Detailed Street Design Guidance 5.9.2014

Note: this document is our response to the consultation on Edinburgh City Council's detailed street design factsheets, and specifically the *Cycling Environment* draft. This response, together with our separate response to the main Street Design draft document, and the draft documents themselves, can be found at...
spokes.org.uk : documents : submissions : local
Direct link:...
www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/documents/campaign-submissions/local-edinburgh-lothians/
The Council's Street Design consultation web page is here...
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/20089/roads_and_pavements/906/edinburgh_street_design

General comments on the detailed design guidance

- The detailed design section has not been released in full on your website. Given the importance of the Street Design Guidance to how streets in Edinburgh will be designed we would have liked to see **all** of the Technical Street Design Manual (section C) completed and released for public comment prior to adoption by the Council.

- The design guidance is very detailed and it is very difficult to comment on every aspect. There need to be formal opportunities to review the guidance in the light of experience, say after one year.

- Some sections that are missing we need to comment on – in particular. the section on setted streets. In general we propose a presumption in favour of **only** well-laid **flat-topped setts** being used in Edinburgh. Flat topped setts have the same historic look as round-topped setts however they are considerably more comfortable and *safe* to cycle over. A cyclist who has to concentrate on the road surface cannot also give fully attention to traffic – indeed we know one case of a crash (on the High Street) classified as 'serious' by the police which might not have occurred had the cyclist not had part of their attention on the road surface

  A good example of the use of flat-topped setts is at the junction of George IV Bridge and the High Street. Flat-topped setts should be introduced whenever a tarmac street is converted to a setted street (as is proposed for Canongate) and should replace existing round-topped setts whenever setted streets are required to be relaid. We also note that Bristol, which is aiming to be England's top cycling city, is experimenting with innovative ways of dealing with this difficult subject, including sawing setts in half and relaying them to form a flat surface but still using the historic materials.
  https://www.citizenspace.com/bristol/city-development/sawn-setts-trial-1/consult_view
  Edinburgh should do the same.

  Another option is to incorporate a smooth-paved strip through the cobbles, as in Linlthgow High Street or outside the loading bay on Horse Wynd. In effect, the smooth drainage slabs in the St Giles area of the High Street provide this function.

  Further there should be a presumption against laying setts parallel to the direction of travel (unless they are laid completely flat as in our point above). An example of this is on the Royal Mile going uphill from St Mary's Street. Here they are laid at the edge of the street so that the depressions between them run parallel to the normal direction of travel. The continuous depression or groove created has a dangerous feeling - like cycling in a tram track.

- Additionally we refer to an aspect of development which impacts heavily on how streets are used, but which seems rarely to be effectively handled by local authorities – namely, the new waiting and loading demands that are generated by the development. There is a need for the Council to proactively manage the impacts new developments will have with respect to all servicing arrangements. The Council should require that developers ***provide a method statement of how intended businesses would be serviced using the road network***. It seems this is often not fully considered.

  The reason for our concern is that vulnerable road users need vehicle loading and parking to be predictable and controlled rather than a free for all. The new IBIS Hotel South Bridge is an example. Since it was built there is a regular problem with pavement parking opposite the foot of Blair St in Cowgate. The pavement is regularly parked on at about 9:00 a.m. by a range of vehicles including a Laundry vehicle which we assume is delivering / picking up from the IBIS Hotel South Bridge (part of the development). The vehicle(s) would cause a significant traffic problem on the Cowgate if parked on the road, especially in rush hour, and currently cause problems for pedestrians. Servicing arrangements need to be agreed in advance of developments happening, satisfactory solutions found and their implementation monitored. If satisfactory servicing arrangements are not proposed then the development in question should not be permitted.

C1 *Cycling Environment* draft document

General comments on C1 Cycling Environment

1) This document appears rushed in its production, given it is incomplete and contains a number of typographical errors. The sentence on page 9 "Further guidance is being prepared on the conditions under which mandatory or advisory lanes are recommended" is an example. Why is this information not included? On page 21 a diagram is referred to that is not present. Additionally the off-road cycle facilities section is missing altogether. Spokes feels very strongly that the Cycling Environment section of the guidance is critical for the future development of cycle facilities in Edinburgh. We are disappointed at the level of priority the Council has given this section of the Street Design Guidance and we should be consulted on a updated version prior to the document being finalised and adopted by the Council.

2) It is good to see detailed guidance is being developed for constructing physically segregated cycle facilities and those separated by 'soft' features such as armadillos. We hope that many facilities of these types will now be implemented, including in the major East-West city centre cycle route which is to be designed in outline by the Council this year.

3) A few positive items in the former "Cycle-friendly Design Guide" are not present in this new updated guidance and should be included, namely:

- the presumption that cyclists should be exempted from all road closures (particularly given that there are recent examples of this not happening)
- the presumption against new roundabouts
- the policy of replacing large roundabouts with traffic signals
- the illustration of a cycle friendly small roundabout design i.e. single lane and tight corners, is worth including.

Page specific comments

P1 Add new final sentence to first paragraph, “Arterial roads towards the city centre, in particular, are often direct, less hilly and more convenient than alternative routes – and therefore need made safe and attractive for cycling with strong cycle facilities.”

P1 Reference to ATAP Family Network Map. Spokes have requested that a better quality Family Network map is created so that streets can be more easily identified, given that the map in ATAP does not provide sufficient detail. Our enquiry was acknowledged but we have neither heard nor seen any more about this.

P1 "The Council's wider strategy/ objectives for the street”- where are these made known, agreed, subject to consultation other than ATAP?

P2 "Continuity of destinations" - it is not clear to us what this sentence means.

P6 Mandatory cycle lanes. The Council should adopt much greater use of mandatory cycle lanes instead of advisory lanes. The solid white line sends a much stronger message to drivers about the status of the cycle facility.

In particular, a study should be undertaken of all existing advisory lanes (including the Quality Bike Corridor) to assess their potential for conversion to fully segregated or mandatory.

Mandatory lanes should normally be 24/7. However there may be cases where the council will not implement a 24/7 mandatory lane but where it could upgrade an existing advisory lane to mandatory status either all-day or peak-hours. The definition of a mandatory lane in this guidance should allow for this option (rather than the existing phrase, “at all times”). The study which we propose above could include experimenting with such time-limited mandatory lanes.

P7 Change the final para to, “Any increase in lane width above 3m is helpful for cyclists, and therefore the other traffic running lane(s) should be the minimum essential width.”

P8 & 9 Unsegregated contraflow - A reference should be made at an appropriate place to state that it is Council policy (both in the LTS and ATAP) that cycle contraflows (whether segregated or not) should be added to existing streets and also included as part of any new one-way streets that are created (including as part of new development).

P8 Design detail section, second bullet point should be supplemented to say "Cycle logos **and white arrows** aligned in the direction of contraflow cycle movement should be used [at the locations stated]" additional text is in bold.

P19 Add, “Parking and loading should not be allowed beside the kerb where adjacent to the taper strip.”

P22 Left turn provision - although the Mound example illustrates the problem, the solution is not ideal. The measures at the foot of Ardmillan Terrace are preferable. Further work needs to be done to come up with best possible design solution at any given site.

P23 Central island pinch points - this section needs considerable strengthening as central islands are a serious danger and deterrent to cycling.

Islands should not be installed unless there is adequate width for a cycle lane through the pinch point, which will not be encroached upon. Parking and loading should not be permitted close to a central island, as it forces cyclists out into nearby overtaking traffic immediately after the pinch point (parking adjacent to the new Dalry Road island is a case in point). Additionally where there is a wide gap between the kerb and the island, parking restrictions must be included to prevent vehicles parking and narrowing the gap to a dangerous width.

Where roads widths are narrower a zebra (or pelican) crossing should be installed rather than a central island.

P25 Good photo, suggest including more example photos from Edinburgh

P25 "Access points to cycleways from the road network should always have a dropped kerb." We think they should have a **flush** kerb if cyclists are expected to enter the cycleway by turning left into it, especially from a cycle lane. Badly-maintained dropped kerbs can deflect tyres.

P26 Coloured surfacing
(1) should be used in more locations - at the minimum, everywhere that the cycle lane is not adjacent to the left hand kerb.
(2) A brighter solution is needed, especially at particular danger points. The guidance clearly states the reason for colouring cycle lanes is that "colour is used to increase the visibility of the cycle facilities to other road users." We feel strongly that red chipping **fails to meet this objective** since it does not provide an adequate visible colour contrast to the general carriageway, especially in dull and/or wet conditions. For a more visible colour contrast coloured tarmac should be considered (rather than a return to thermoplastic overlay)as this would retain the long-life advantages of chipping and also better meet the objectives of the Council's guidance.
(3) The second sentence should state, “Colour is used to make cycle lanes more attractive to potential users and also to reduce motor vehicle encroachment by making them more visible.”

C3 *Public Transport Environment* document

P15 change word in sentence from should to must "Due to the nature of heavy wear at Bus Stops a high specification of surfacing at Bus Stop locations must be used to prevent the common problem of rutting at Bus Stops due to the buses heavy braking."
These deformations where the carriageway ripples can be very dangerous for cyclists as they can be almost invisible from a distance and if hit by a cyclist at speed unexpectedly they can cause a cyclist to fall off their bicycle.

C4-1 *Geometry* document

P7 The statement "Older, wider streets give opportunities to reduce radii" and the whole Corner Radii section should be strengthened. A clear presumption in favour of reducing corner radii should be introduced, especially as part of carriageway resurfacing schemes. Replacing radii like with like should not generally be acceptable.