

HOLYROOD PARK TO RATCLIFFE TERRACE: WALK AND CYCLE LINK (QUIET ROUTE 30): SPOKES RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/design-cycle-walk-holyrood-park-ratcliffe-terrace/>

General Points

1. This is our response to the recent consultation on these proposals. As is normal for SPOKES, we have not used the Council's standard pro forma, but we would be grateful if you could ensure that our response is taken into account in preparing any overview or summary report.
2. Although we have a number of detailed comments on the proposals (see below), SPOKES is strongly supportive of the intention to provide a quiet route from Holyrood Park to the Grange area with links into the Quality Bike Route to Kings Buildings. Proposals along these lines have been floated on a number of times in the past and we are pleased that this general intention has now been turned into specific proposals.
3. Although we appreciate that Holyrood Park is outside of the control of Edinburgh Council, we think that it is disappointing that Historic Environment Scotland has not yet been able to consult, in parallel, on proposals for improving the provision for cyclists and walkers in the Royal Park itself. The current provision is very unsatisfactory and creates conflict between walkers and cyclists on the narrow shared path from St Leonards and Holyrood with unsatisfactory arrangements for access and exit. In addition, there is no provision for cyclists linked to the road from St Leonards to Duddingston which is narrow, bendy and dangerous for cyclists. We look forward to further consultation on proposals within the Park on a joint basis between HES and the Council linking in to these current proposals.
4. In the short term, many of the cyclists using this quiet route are likely to live in the Pollock Halls of Residence. Other nearby cyclists regularly use the road through Pollock to get access from the Blacket area to Holyrood Park and the cycle path outside the Park through the Dumbiedykes area. Given the cost and likely delays in implementing the proposed 2 way, protected cycle lane on Dalkeith Rd and Holyrood Park Rd, we suggest the implementation should be taken forward in 2 phases:
 - The proposals for the Blacket and West Blacket areas including the crossings of Minto St and Dalkeith Rd
 - The proposals for a 2 way, protected cycle lane on Dalkeith Rd and Holyrood Park Rd which should be integrated into the proposals for within the Park itself when these become clear.

Detailed Comments

Duncan St

5. We support the proposed changes to 1 way priority for motor traffic with 2 way cycling along the whole street. However, simply installing new sign posts is unlikely to ensure conformity to these new priorities given that the existing 1 way street has been in existence for more than 40 years. We recommend 3 additional measures to help with implementation and ensure that the street become safe for 2 way cycling.

- A raised table at the junction between Duncan St and Upper and South Gray Sts so that traffic is forced to reduce speed.
- Replacing the proposed priority for traffic along Upper Gray St and South Gray St with no priority in any direction.
- Instating some physical protection at the western end of Duncan St to give a small area of protected space for cyclists to exit on to Ratcliffe Terrace. (This could be on the lines of the extended curb with a cycle lane in it as at the west end of Rankeillor St or a short protected cycle lane as at West Newington Place – in either case suitably adapted to the specific site). This would prevent traffic turning into Duncan St from swinging into the wrong side of the road at speed in front of approaching cyclists.

Blacket Ave

6. We support the proposal to make the stretch of Blacket Avenue from Blacket Place to Minto St one way from west to east for motor vehicles with 2 way access for cyclists. This stretch of road is potentially dangerous for cyclists. Retaining 2 way traffic would also encourage reverse rat running for motor vehicles through Duncan St and the Gray Sts and, therefore, make them less attractive for cycling.

The Proposed Toucan Crossings across Minto St and Dalkeith Rd

7. We strongly support these proposals which are essential for making the route attractive and usable for cycling and will also be advantageous for walkers going to and from Holyrood Park and the Commonwealth Pool. The precise alignment of the Dalkeith Rd crossing should be designed to ensure that it links into the entrance to Pollok Halls.

Blacket Place – the 2 Options for the Junction with Dalkeith Rd.

8. We strongly prefer option 2 which envisages blocking up this junction to motor traffic as this is much safer for cyclists travelling from west to east. A responsive push button control is essential for the toucan crossing so that cyclists and pedestrians can cross without undue wait.
9. If for any reason, option 1 is selected and access for motor traffic into Blacket Pl continues, then a responsive push button control in Blacket Place itself will be necessary linked to the toucan crossing.

Rebuilding of Raised Table at the Junction of Blacket Ave and Blacket Place with “Cycle Friendly” Setts with a Smooth Surface

10. We support this proposal. The current raised table is badly constructed with gaps between the some of the setts which can trap bicycle wheels.

Reversing Priority at the Junction of Blacket Ave and Blacket Place

11. It may be best to have no clear priority at this junction (as suggested for the Duncan St /Gray Sts junction).

New Raised Table on West Mayfield at Junction with South Gray St

12. This raised table may help to slow traffic on West Mayfield but this is already limited by the traffic lights at each end. We doubt it will be more than limited help for cyclists wishing to turn right to get to Ratcliffe Ter and would be content for this part of the proposal to be deleted.

New Protected 2 Way Cycle lane on the South Side of Holyrood Park Rd and the East Side of Dalkeith Rd.

13. We support this ambitious proposal. It would provide an alternative to the current, informal route through Pollock and also offer a protected route towards the East Parkside and Dumbiedykes route to Holyrood Rd. The current right turn exit from Pollock to Holyrood Park Rd is difficult and unsafe and this proposed protected cycle lane together with the new proposed toucan crossing would avoid this. We also welcome the proposed reduction in the number of traffic lanes on Holyrood Park Rd. The proposed width of 2.5m for the cycle lane is the minimum acceptable.
14. On a point of detail, the proposed cycle route ends in a blind spot at the Park gate. If it is built before agreement is reached with HES on a route through the Park, then we suggest that the cycle path should end at the East Parkside toucan.
15. The proposals should also consider cyclists who want to continue along Dalkeith Rd and, therefore, at the entrance to the Pollock Halls we suggest that the current painted, advisory cycle lane should be refreshed to allow cyclists to continue across the gate and link into the bus lane.

Conclusion.

16. We welcome this ambitious and integrated set of proposals for this part of Quiet Route 6 and look forward to them being taken forward in due course. We also ask that you give careful consideration to our additional suggestions for Duncan St (see paragraph 5 above). We would be happy to discuss any of our comments and we would particularly welcome the opportunity to discuss any changes you may be considering in the light of comments from other consultees.

Richard Grant

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