

Spokes objection to RSO/17/13

Leith Street, Calton Road, Greenside Row, Waterloo Place

Referencing:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/2349/rso1713_leith_street_calton_road_greenside_row_waterloo_place

1. Preface

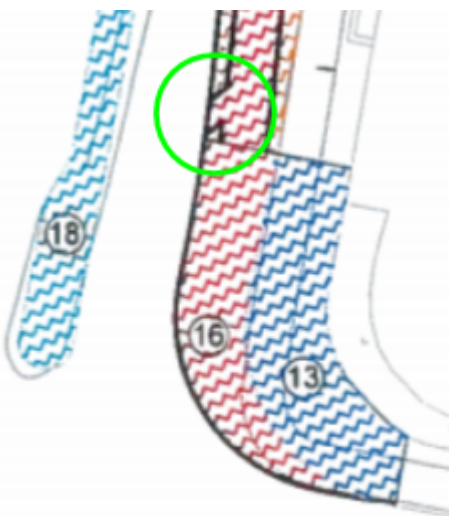
Spokes would like to express our frustration that detailed drawings for the area covered by the RSO have not been made available despite us requesting them repeatedly through multiple channels. Whilst the RSO includes a plan showing the areas to be redetermined, we cannot properly evaluate this without seeing the associated plans for markings, signage, bus stops, crossings, etc. which still have not been published. Even though these plans may not legally be required to promote an RSO, we think it's unacceptable that they have not been made available.

2. Reasons for objection

Spokes recognise that Leith Street currently has multiple roles to play as a corridor for walking, cycling, public transport, and private vehicles, and that space for accommodating all of these modes is limited. Nonetheless, we are unsatisfied that the redetermination as proposed provides an acceptable compromise and we object on these grounds:

2.1. Rejoining the carriageway southbound at Leith Street

A safe method of leaving the cycleway onto the southbound carriageway of Leith Street has not been provided. This is a key route for cyclists coming from Leith Walk travelling to the East End and must be safely catered for in the design.



It seems clear from the layout of the southern terminus of the cycleway at Calton Road that cyclists can only rejoin the carriageway onto Calton Road, and not Leith Street. We therefore assume that cyclists wishing to continue up Leith Street to the East End junction will need to use the small section of cycleway just north of the Greenside Row crossing that looks like it will permit rejoining the southbound carriageway (see diagram, left).

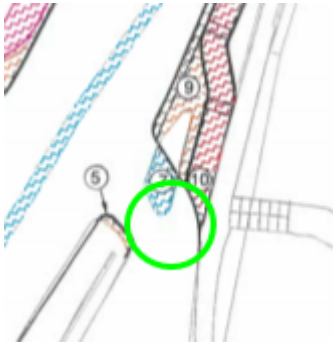
We are concerned that this forces cyclists to make a dangerous maneuver by merging into traffic without room to do so. Inspection of the plans suggests that there is width to accommodate 5 lanes for general traffic at this point and we suggest that this is reduced to 4 lanes so that space can be reallocated to provide a safe zone for merging, as described in *Cycling by Design* §6.2.6 and as used in the recently opened cycleways on Leith Walk.

Additionally, it seems likely that cyclists unfamiliar with the layout who are looking to get to the East End junction will assume they can continue on the cycleway across the Greenside Row crossing only to find they are forced onto Calton Road as per the above. We trust that appropriate markings/signage will be

used to avoid this confusion, though quality cycle routes should be intuitive to follow without signage and we do wonder whether access to Leith Street could be provided at the south terminus of the cycleway.

2.2. Northbound access to the cycleway from Calton Road

It is not clear that there is a safe method for northbound cyclists to access the cycleway from Calton Road. This is key route for cyclists coming from Waverley and the new Caltongate development travelling to Leith Walk and must be safely catered for in the design.



Without detailed drawings we cannot comment on how northbound cyclists will get from Calton Road to the cycleway. We are concerned that northbound cyclists turning right into the cycleway from Calton Road are at risk from vehicles turning left from Leith Street into Calton Road (see diagram, left), particularly as cyclists will be travelling slowly as this section is uphill. It's crucial that the final design includes measures to keep cyclists safe while making this maneuver.

2.3. Northbound access from Leith Street

There is no clear method for northbound cyclists to access the cycleway from Leith Street. This is a key route for cyclists coming from the East End travelling to Leith Walk and must be catered for.

Without seeing the detailed drawings it's not clear how this will be provided. It is not acceptable to force northbound cyclists through the busy Picardy Place junction (whatever form it ultimately takes).

2.4. Greenside Row crossing

Separate cycle and pedestrian signals should be provided at a high volume crossing like this one. Additionally, corner radii should be reduced to maximise space for cyclists and pedestrians.

We assume that the crossing of Greenside Row is a toucan given that the order classifies the area on each side as cycleway (which will presumably be marked as shared space) rather than having separate areas on each side for cyclists and pedestrians. We are concerned that this mixing of cyclists and pedestrians will lead to conflict, particularly given that cyclists and pedestrians are otherwise expected to stick to the cycleway and footway respectively.

We would prefer this crossing to be a split crossing, e.g. similar to the one used at Forest Road, thereby keeping cyclists and pedestrians on their respective areas and minimizing conflict. If the signalling demands that the crossing is a toucan then we urge the final design to include markings to encourage cyclists and pedestrians to keep to their respective sides.

Furthermore, conflict will also be minimised by reducing the corner radii to provide additional space for cyclists and pedestrians. We recognise that there is need for larger vehicles to use Greenside Row for access to the Playhouse and the Omni Centre, but we question whether widths can be reduced further given how much space is available at the junction to allow oversized vehicles to swing out where required.

3. Additional comments

3.1. Top of Leith Street

We are disappointed that dedicated provision for cyclists has not been provided up to the East End junction as this is a key route connecting Broughton Street and Leith Walk to the Bridges leading south and used by many cyclists – as demonstrated during the recent closure where many journeys are made using the temporary cycleway provided. At the very least an uphill route is required to help cyclists where they are slowest and most vulnerable.

We have discussed this previously with CEC and been told that there is insufficient width to provide both cycle facilities and maintain throughput for vehicles. Spokes appreciate the limited widths at the top of Leith Street but argue that some of this space must be devoted to cycling – which is after all a clean, healthy mode of transport that CEC are keen to support – even if it means reducing throughput for general traffic.

We urge CEC to start developing plans to tackle this section as soon as possible. The status quo where cyclists find themselves squeezed in with other vehicles and often large buses at the top of Leith Street isn't tolerable.

3.2. Segregated cycleway

We welcome the segregated cycleway and are pleased to see that the space for it has come from the carriageway and not the footway, as it is crucial to the success of this cycleway that pedestrians have enough footway to walk on so that they don't feel the need to encroach on the cycleway. We would prefer a wider cycleway but recognise that widths are limited, though as per comments about the top of Leith Street above we hope this can be reconsidered in future.

3.3. Floating bus stop

We know that there is some concern about using floating bus stops in Edinburgh, however they have been proven successful in other locations both in the UK and abroad and so we are pleased to see one used here. That said, we urge CEC/TfE to use bus stops with transparent sides (rather than advertising boards) in this location so that passengers alighting a bus can clearly see cyclists coming. This is especially crucial given the assumed two-way nature of this cycleway means that cyclists could approach from either direction, and so the usual bus stops used in Edinburgh, where one side is an advertising board, are not appropriate for this location.

4. Closing comments

We recognise that there are conflicting objectives when designing a space like Leith Street. However, it is clear to us that pedestrians and cyclists must be prioritised and we hope that more will be done to achieve this both in this determination further and going forward. We are, as ever, happy to discuss further particularly when detailed drawings are provided.