

## **Sustrans Scotland – Position Statement on City Centre West to East Cycle Link and Street Improvements Project**

At the outset, please could I note that the process you have run has been exceptional – tackling a sensitive issue with so many competing interests is not easy. It has been good to be part of a process that is fair and balanced. We are keen to support you in a project which, if implemented, should provide major benefits for Edinburgh as a whole whilst taking account of all the interests in Roseburn and Haymarket.

At our meeting, you asked me three specific questions regarding the Roseburn to Leith section and I said I would come back to you with our position. I have had discussions internally and my team have met with your officers over the past few days. We have carefully considered our position on those three questions, please see below:

### **1. Would Sustrans fund Option B?**

We have looked at the designs in detail for Option B1 and B2. Considering the Community Links criteria and the demands on the Community Links budget, there is a significant risk that this option will not be match-funded through Sustrans. The design has added potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists in certain places where none existed and it does not prioritise active travel over other modes of transport. Because Community Links is a competitive process and is always over-subscribed with applications there is therefore a real danger that Options B1 and B2 would be compared unfavourably to other applications that met, or outstripped, the necessary quality criteria. So funding cannot therefore be guaranteed..

### **2. Would Sustrans fund an E-TRO for the Roseburn section (with a TRO in place for the rest of the project)?**

We have been involved in pilot projects in the past, however, we don't believe that in this particular instance, funding an E-TRO would be the best use of public funds. The sensitivities around the project would mean that the review process for making any pilot scheme permanent could potentially be as time-consuming as what we have seen so far. If at the end of a year, the decision is made to take away the segregated route, we believe it could cause significant damage to CEC's reputation. As the manager of funds on behalf of Scottish Government, we would also expect the money provided by Transport Scotland to be returned to them.

For this reason, we would find it difficult to justify funding an E-TRO.

### **3. Would Sustrans be willing to compromise on design detail – if it meant that everyone could get behind Option A? More specifically, would we consider an option with the bi-directional width of cycle route being 1.55m?**

This question has been one that internally we have extensively pondered, discussed and debated. I have discussed design options with my colleagues in London, looking at what solutions the engineers there have provided in similar situations.

My colleagues met with CEC officers earlier this week to look at the details on maximising the width of the cycle route. I believe now there is a workable solution that gives us a width of a **2.0m** cycle route through Roseburn whilst generally increasing (and otherwise at least maintaining) the footway width in front of the shops on both sides of the road.

We must emphasise that even a width of 2.0m is not considered ideal for a busy, bi-directional, segregated cycle route and would ordinarily not meet the criteria for Community Links funding. However, we understand the importance of compromise in this particular situation. We also think that with good communications to the public, pedestrians and cyclists would also see the reasons for compromise. In order to help support you and your officers to get the best solution that works for everyone in the community, we would be willing to support this on the understanding that:

1. The detail of the design is carefully considered to ensure the smooth operation of the route, especially noting that risks of any potential collision need to be mitigated.
2. A review process is set up where we can monitor use and revisit its design of the route/public realm if we find that there is a growing critical mass of people on bikes on it.
3. Where there are no exceptional circumstances along the entire length of the project, we would expect the minimum width of the cycle route to be 2.5m - for example, the section from the Roseburn/Russell Road junction to the start of the Haymarket Terrace shopping area.

We view this solution as a step change not just for the community in Roseburn, but for the City of Edinburgh - one that acknowledges and emphasises the substantial benefits the scheme can bring to the city via efficient, healthy, active, transport.

Daisy Narayanan

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