

EDINBURGH COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON IMPROVEMENTS TO RANDOLPH PLACE (CCWEL) : FEBRUARY 2018 - COMMENTS FROM SPOKES

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals for Randolph Place as set out on the Council's website and in the recent exhibition in Harry's Bar, Randolph Place.

Since our comments are detailed and represent the views of a major stakeholder, we have set these out in this email rather than by way of the consultation form on the web.

Randolph Place and the associated corridor by the side of West Register House are key parts of CCWEL and their design requires careful consideration to ensure that standards are consistent with its overall objective to provide a safe, protected route for cyclists from Roseburn to Leith Walk. It is important to note that, at present, Randolph Place and Charlotte Lane are used by motor vehicles accessing the many parking spaces linked to offices and garages in the mews as well as the on street parking. Commercial vehicles also use it regularly for deliveries to the many restaurants and bars in this area. It is essential that the design takes account of these potential threats to cycling safety and we have made recommendations to this effect below.

Our views on the proposals are as follows.

The surface of Randolph Place- replacement of current setts with flat top setts

Although not specified in the consultation documents, we understand from the officer at the consultation event that all 3 options will include the replacement of the existing badly worn setts with new flat top setts. If correct, we very much welcome this as it will make cycling through Randolph Place, as part of the approved route for the CCWEL, much easier and more comfortable.

It is important that this replacement work extends up to the passage way through to Charlotte Square by the side of the West Register House building. In addition, cyclists would not have to negotiate a change in level between the cycle path and this passage way.

End-on parking

We also welcome the decision to remove “end-on” parking from Randolph Place in all 3 options in the interests of safety although we note that “end-on” parking is being introduced to Randolph Lane very close to the entrance to the passageway to be used for the cycle route through to Charlotte Sq.

We are very concerned that cars getting in and out of these proposed parking bays will endanger the safety of cyclists on the CCWEL and suggest that they should be replaced with conventional parking bays on the side of the road.

Crossing Queensferry St

The 3 options set out in the consultation do not include details of the arrangements for protecting cyclists as they cross Queensferry St from Melville Street. The report to the Transport and Environment Committee on the 30 August 2016 (City Centre West to East Cycle Link and Street Improvements: Consultation Results and Potential Project Amendments) indicated that there would be a formal crossing for cyclists at this junction and we understand that this idea was included in the Final Preliminary Designs as approved by the Future Transport Working Group on 16 December 2016. **It is absolutely essential that a formal crossing with a separate phase for cyclists to cross safely is provided in the detailed designs.**

The 3 options presented in the consultation.

We are disappointed that the consultation did not include more options or variants on the existing options. In summary, our position is as follows:

We do not support option 2. we are concerned at the prospect of delivery vans and other service vehicles being forced to undertake 3 point turns if, as proposed in option 2, they cannot get access to Charlotte Lane during specified hours for closure of the road to motor traffic. Although many such deliveries will be arranged for the permitted times, there will always be some that turn up in the prohibited times. In addition there is currently access to a private parking area directly off Charlotte Lane (approx 20 cars) and access is likely to be necessary to this at all times.

We also do not support option 3. This retains too many parking spaces in Randolph Place and, in particular, parking spaces on the north of Roseburn Place. The proposed number of car parking spaces in option 3 would conflict with the objective of improving the pedestrian experience and improving the sense of place in this area and it would also create a “tunnel effect” for cyclists who would be at risk of car doors being opened on both sides of the proposed path.

We support option 1 but only with significant modifications. Modifications are necessary to take account of the substantial traffic generated from the many private and other car parking spaces that required access through Randolph Place. Our understanding is that there are more than 100 such car parking spaces, including office car parking and parking associated with the mews in Randolph Lane which require access through Randolph Place. In addition, access by delivery vehicles and refuse lorries will also be necessary. Given this level of traffic, we recommend the following modifications:

- Making Randolph Place 1-way from west to east for motor traffic with an exception for cyclists so that traffic exiting Randolph Place would need to use Charlotte Lane. This will reduce the amount of traffic using Randolph Place and make it easier to create a sense of space.
- Creating a new west to east cycle lane in the expanded pavement area to the north of Randolph Place. This could be distinguished from the pavement area by some form of soft segregation such as a different coloured surface and marked to flow through to the link to Charlotte square.
- The cycleways and pedestrian areas should be constructed so that they cannot be parked on or used for loading or unloading.
- To increase cycling safety during the rush hours, consideration should be given to restricting deliveries into Randolph Place and Charlotte Lane during this time. The rush hours are likely to be the busiest time for other motor traffic accessing or exiting from the parking spaces and also when many cyclists will be committing on the CCWEL.

We consider that this would ensure a safer experience for cyclists while still providing space for place enhancements and pedestrian circulation. It would also provide a better alignment and consistency with the segregated cycle lanes on Melville St.

Our modifications to option 1 could allow the carriageway to be the width proposed in option 3 so making plenty of room for our suggested new east-bound cycle lane as recommended above..

The alignment between Randolph Place and the passageway to Charlotte Sq.

We have already noted a number of potential problems here (“end-on” parking and the surfacing of this area). In addition, we think it should be made very clear where cyclists are expected to go.

Cycle parking

Good quality cycle parking is required in Randolph Place as part of the place making improvements to cater for cyclists who wish to use the local bars and restaurants.

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On behalf of SPOKES Planning Group

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