

## Spokes Initial response to the Trams to Newhaven Consultation - April 2018

This is an initial response from Spokes to pass on our main areas of concern and show our early thinking - but none of the points in this document should be taken as our final views. A detailed and final response covering the entire route will follow later in the consultation period.

Spokes supports the basic principle of extending the tram route to Newhaven. We see this as an environmentally-friendly alternative mode of transport with potential to reduce the amount of traffic and consequently to reduce congestion and pollution. However, to introduce the tram without taking parallel measures to reduce traffic and provide quality facilities for cycling and walking would be a big mistake and lost opportunity.

Although supporting the basic principle of the extension, Spokes has very serious concerns with key parts of the design proposed in the consultation, as outlined below.

- A. Proposed increase of current 2 traffic lanes to 4 lanes from Pilrig Street to the foot of the walk
- B. Proposed continuous kerbed median strip with pedestrian deterrent paving from Picardy Place to the foot of the walk
- C. Relocating some stops and/or changing their design to staggered or non-central platforms
- D. The lack of dedicated cycle provision between Pilrig Street and the Foot of the Walk
- E. The lack of any cycle provision (apart from ASZs) along Constitution Street and Ocean Drive

Key Parts:

### **A. Increased number of traffic lanes from Pilrig Street to the foot of the walk.**

The increase in the number of traffic lanes squeezes pedestrian and cycle space intolerably, - in particular, leaving no space for safe cycle lanes. The proposed cycle lanes that are shared with loading and parking facilities are wholly unsuitable and do not provide for cycling by all ages and abilities. Alternative designs should be considered, that retain the existing 2 lanes of traffic and segregate the cycleways.

The 18-month closure during the construction phase will enable many drivers to become accustomed to using a different transport mode or route and they will also have the new tram travel opportunity once construction is complete. The Council should therefore restrict private cars in this section perhaps by implementing a bus gate, or at the least during the peak period, to give tram and bus priority. We also note that cars were banned totally in Shandwick Place in the first tram project. Surely the Council is not moving backwards on its traffic reduction targets in this further project!

### **B. Kerbed median strip from Picardy Place to the foot of the walk**

The median strip reduces available space for cycleways and significantly restricts turning movements for cyclists. Suitable provision needs to be made so that cyclists can access all of the side streets and cross from east to west.

The median strip should be removed and poles installed on build-outs between car bays, or on the footway edge and/or cables could be hung from buildings.

Failing this, gaps could be left in the median strip for cyclists to enter or leave all of the side streets, not just those at the existing signalised junctions. This could be combined with the provision of additional signalised crossings (for cyclists and pedestrians) and by cyclists and pedestrians sharing signalised crossings associated with the tram stops, depending on the suitability of their locations.

We also note that having two traffic lanes instead of four, together with car restrictions, removal of the median strip, segregated cycleways and wider footways, makes it possible for pedestrians to cross the road at any point – or perhaps at very frequent zebra crossings. Such a solution would contribute not just to a far more pleasant pedestrian and cyclist environment, but to local shopping and the local economy.

### **C. Relocating some stops and/or changing their design to staggered or non-central platforms**

The tram stops at Picardy Place and Constitution Street significantly constrain the design of safe cycle routes in the area. Relocating some of the stops or changing the platform design to staggered or non-central platforms would provide opportunities to significantly increase the space available for cycling.

### **D. Lack of dedicated cycle provision between Pilrig Street and the foot of the walk**

Segregated, cycle facilities need to be provided along the tram route from Pilrig Street to the foot of the walk. These should be at road level and separated by kerbs and a minimum of 500mm buffer strip from traffic. This would be facilitated by the additional space created by the proposals in tA and B above.

### **E. The lack of cycle provision (apart from ASZs) along Constitution Street and Ocean Drive**

The opportunity should be taken to provide safe and convenient cycle facilities along Constitution Street and Ocean Drive. These should be segregated wherever appropriate.

Moving the tram stop out of Constitution Street would allow continuation of the cycle facilities. Alternatively Newkirkgate should be considered, although we appreciate this would be difficult to implement given the current free movement of pedestrians and the stairway. However it is difficult to see any realistic alternative to one of these two options

Further north, opportunities need to be investigated including cycling facilities on the rest of Constitution Street. Space should also be available along Ocean Way and Ocean Drive and to include a link via the old bridge and Rennie's Isle through to Victoria Quay to link with a route along the South side of the Scottish Government Offices.