

# ROD-230-1: Leith Street redetermination (RSO/17/13)

Final comments from Spokes – the Lothian Cycle Campaign, September 2019

Spokes welcome the Council's additional comments as published to the DPEA case<sup>1</sup> on 3 September 2019. Further to our previous comments on this case, we wish to address some of the points made by the Council using the Council's numbering as follows:

## General Comments

*Objections relating to: 3. Purpose of Cycleway (Spokes 2.3); 8. Cycleways not of sufficient width (Spokes 3.3); 11. Leith Street traffic should be restricted to buses, cycles and pedestrians (Spokes 2.1); 12. Northbound Access (Spokes 2.7) to the cycleway.*

The Purpose of the cycleway is stated to be to provide a route to Waverley Station and beyond via Calton Road. Whilst this route provides some benefit, the route to Waterloo Place/Princes Street is far more important. It is also (and will be for some time) the most straightforward and convenient for people cycling via Picardy Place from Broughton Street/Leith Walk to the South East of the City. This is borne out by the counts quoted in the Council's document (4. Cyclist Numbers), albeit these counts were at different times of the year - with only 115 Southbound and 105 Northbound on the Calton Road route, but 662 Southbound and 777 Northbound to/from Waterloo Place.

The design and construction of Leith Street were too far advanced when the RSO was issued for full consideration to be given to suggested improvements. A number of changes were made in response to points raised by Spokes, but the fundamentals of not providing for the primary requirement of a continuous route along the whole length of Leith Street, the lack of cycleway continuity at crossings (the use instead of shared space) and the lack of a Northbound facility, suitable for all ages and abilities, were deemed to be out of scope at such a late stage of development and with a completion date already set.

Extending the cycleway, providing Northbound access and widening the cycleways are all dependent on reducing carriageway space, which hopefully will come, eventually, as part of Edinburgh's City Centre Transformation programme.

In the meantime, the removal of the bus "Greenways" have made the carriageway south of Calton Road much more dangerous for cyclists.

The Council should therefore be urged to investigate shorter term solutions to reduce the number of carriageway lanes necessary to support the turning movements at this junction and thereby free-up space for Southbound cyclists and a wider footway at the pinch point on the East side.

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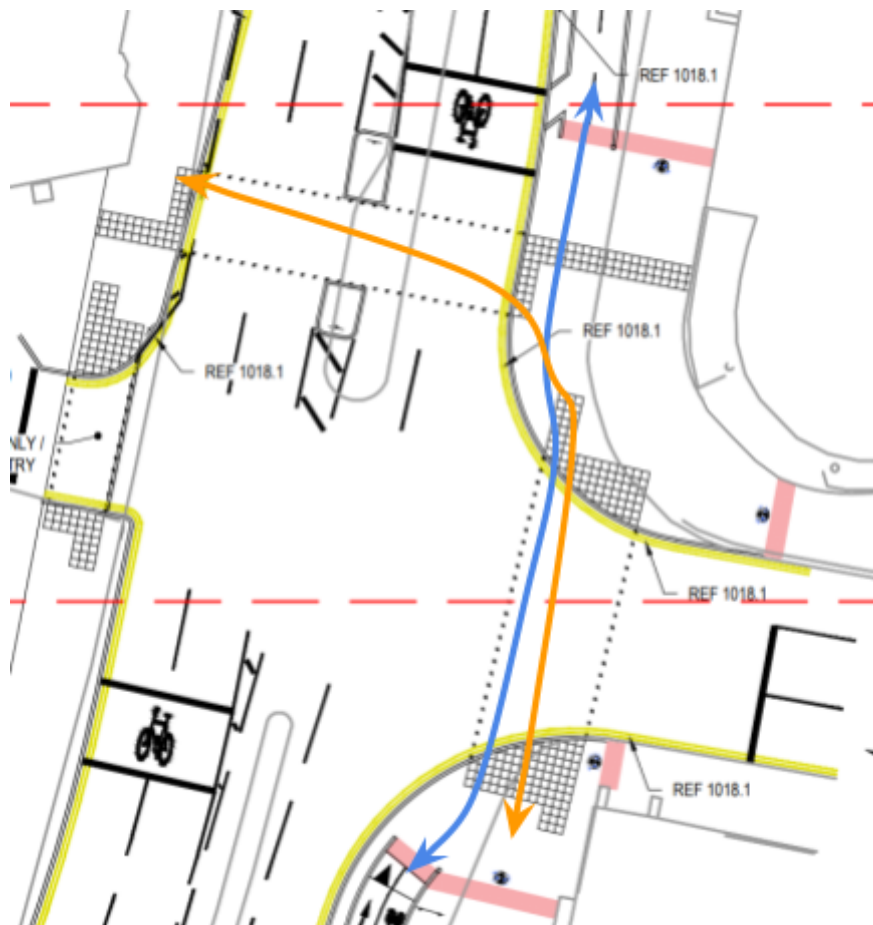
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/CaseDetails.aspx?id=119990>

## 6. Greenside Row Junction (Spokes 2.5 and partially 2.4)

Spokes remain adamant that the junction design is not fit for purpose. Moreover, we believe that the Council have failed to consider alternative options adequately. We offer an alternative below that we believe would solve many of the problems.

### Problems with the proposed design

The crossing design might work in a quieter suburban environment, but it is a recipe for disaster in this situation. Cyclists are forced into shared space on a busy, city centre pedestrian route creating unacceptable levels of conflict for both cyclists and pedestrians. This conflict is exacerbated by the signalling arrangement where pedestrian crossings of both Greenside Row and Leith Street will be active at the same time and so cyclists traversing the Greenside Row toucan will directly cross the path of pedestrians crossing Leith Street.



The Council say in 6.7 that:

*Having shared pedestrian/cycle space on the immediate approaches to the Greenside Row junction will encourage cyclists and pedestrians to mix at low speed and sends a clear message to cyclists that they are entering an area in which they can expect to have to give way to pedestrians.*

We are unconvinced by this. Firstly, the shared space on the south side is small, and comes off a downhill section such that at least some cyclists are likely to maintain a speed that will cause concern for pedestrians.

Secondly, even if cyclists do slow down and give way as intended, this doesn't recognise the pedestrian anxiety created by cyclists maneuvering around them. Imagine multiple cyclists who have queued at the signals all trying to concurrently navigate this shared space amongst many pedestrians also crossing at the same time in multiple directions. Imagine yourself as a pedestrian crossing with a long, wide family cargo bike passing right by you – would you feel comfortable?

## Purpose of the cycleway

In our view, even small cycle volumes will cause serious problems with the junction design. But the Council acknowledges in 3.1 and 3.2 that the purpose of the cycleway is not just to provide connectivity to Waverley Station (and the garage entrance to the Waverley Gate office building, which they omitted to mention), but also to provide onward connection to the QuietRoutes network and National Cycle Route 1.

Furthermore, the recently published final Edinburgh City Centre Transformation strategy<sup>2</sup> confirms plans for a pedestrian/cycle bridge across Waverley Station to Market Street. It is therefore clear in the Council's own mind that this cycleway is in fact a core part of Edinburgh's cycle network and so it must cater for an appropriate volume of current and future cyclists.

## Alternative designs

The question then is how to redesign the junction. As per our original objection, Spokes insist that the cycleway must be continuous across Greenside Row using a split crossing with no conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. The Council's comments on this in 6.4 say:

*If the cycleway had been segregated through the junction, it would have been necessary to either:*

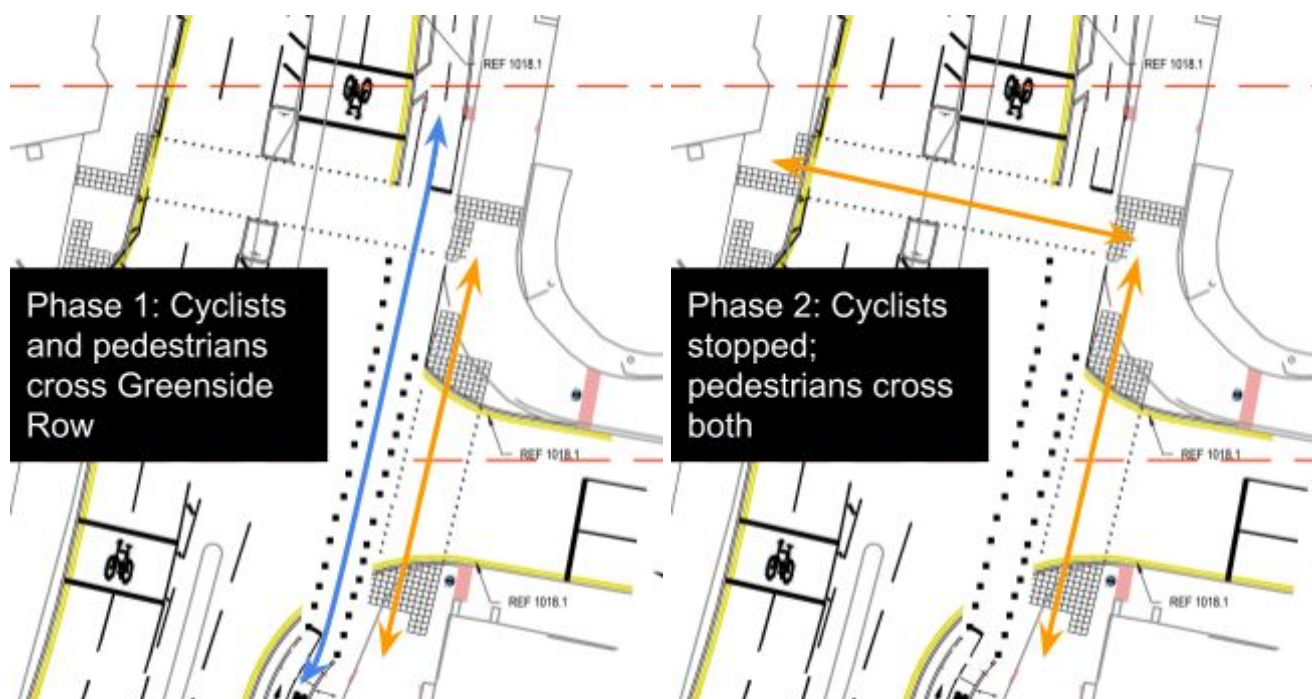
- a) install an informal zebra crossing of the cycleway at the point where it crossed the pedestrian crossing of Leith St (option a); or*
- b) change the signalling so that the pedestrian crossing of Leith St operated at a different time in the signal cycle to the crossing of Greenside Row (option b).*

They then go onto discuss the problems with these options in 6.5 and 6.6 and we acknowledge these drawbacks. However, they completely fail to consider an option c where there are two phases:

1. A first where both cyclists and pedestrians can both cross Greenside Row at the same time, and pedestrians waiting to cross Leith Street wait.
2. A second where cyclists are stopped, and pedestrians can continue to cross Greenside Row, and may additionally cross Leith Street.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s6001/Item%207.1%20-%20ECCT%20Final%20Strategy...>



In this approach there is no need for a mini-zebra crossing of the cycleway as cyclists are stopped when pedestrians cross Leith Street, mitigating concerns about option a. But there still exists a phase where pedestrians may cross both Greenside Row and Leith Street at the same time, mitigating the concerns about pedestrian provision with option b.

Furthermore, we note that "split" crossings (where pedestrians and cyclists stick to their side) are being built for all five of the pedestrian/cycle crossings at Picardy Place just to the north<sup>3</sup>, and so the use of a split crossing at Greenside Row will be consistent with those, thereby reducing confusion. We note that the concept designs for the Council's Meadows to George project<sup>4</sup> also include split crossings. Indeed, we can think of no crossing either current or proposed in the city centre that uses shared space as proposed by this redetermination.

This alternative also improves the situation for southbound cyclists heading for the East End (Spokes objection 2.4). Instead of using the gap to enter the ASL, which may be tricky if traffic is flowing, they can instead wait for the cycle phase and then merge into the carriageway to their right, free from pedestrian obstruction.

We recognise that this option c will result in an increase to the junction cycle time to accommodate the first phase described above. However, this can be a relatively short phase as cyclists can move quickly through the junction, and slower moving pedestrians would be able to continue crossing into the second phase. As such, the increased cycle time would be less than that required for option b and so it partially mitigates the concerns about delays to traffic including buses noted by the Council.

## Summary

Overall, we recognise the challenges in designing this junction. However, we believe that the Council have failed to consider the suggested option c or a variant thereof. At the cost of a small increase in cycle time it eliminates cyclist/pedestrian conflict and drastically improves the experience and safety for both user groups. We assert that option is therefore a better trade-off, particularly given local and national guidance

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/picardyplace>

<sup>4</sup> <https://meadowstogeorgestreet.info/project-details/>

on transport hierarchy emphasising that pedestrians and cyclists should be prioritised over other modes. We therefore urge the reporter to require the Council to amend the RSO.

## 10. Floating Bus Stop (Spokes 3.2)

Spokes is in favour of the use of Floating Bus Stops. We had commented that shelters at such stops should have transparent sides, but this bus stop has an advertising display at the South side that obstructs to some extent the view of people exiting the shelter.

We agree with the Council's comments and would add that there are already many such stops in the UK, including in Glasgow and some other west-of-Scotland Councils. We would also refer you to the detailed analysis done in Manchester<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/1609-Oxford-Road-Trial-Bus-Stop-Evaluation-Report.pdf>