

11.8.2019

## **Spokes email to relevant CEC officers suggesting a factsheet on 'best practice' for contractors on roadworks as they affect cycling safety and convenience**

to: Phil Noble <Phil.Noble@edinburgh.gov.uk>,  
"stuart.harding@edinburgh.gov.uk" <stuart.harding@edinburgh.gov.uk>  
Spokes PG <spokes-lothian-planning@googlegroups.com>,  
cc: Andrew Easson <Andrew.Easson@edinburgh.gov.uk>,  
"ewan.kennedy@edinburgh.gov.uk" <ewan.kennedy@edinburgh.gov.uk>  
date: 11 Aug 2019, 14:04  
subject: Road Maintenance / Roadworks - Guidance for Contractors

Dear Phil and Stuart

At the July 15 'strategic meeting' between Spokes and Council transport officers, our correspondence about road maintenance impacts on cycling was discussed alongside the recently prepared Council guidance document. The Council document - *Road Maintenance and Active Travel Factsheet* - largely concerns the current position based on legislation and government advice. However our discussion highlighted the value of a 'good practice' document which would go further than the basic legislative position. Phil Noble then said that a (separate or combined) good practice document could be produced as a factsheet in the *Street Design* documentation series.

I now write with feedback on the existing document and ideas for inclusion in a new best-practice factsheet. Spokes also requests the opportunity to comment on a draft of any new document and we look forward to hearing about how the Council intends to take this forward.

The Council's new document is welcomed for bringing together references to cycling from Roads Maintenance legislation into one document. We think it has positive potential if it is widely read and acted on by contractors and council operators. However we think it could be improved both in its emphasis, and were it to be extended to become more of a good practice guide for contractors, undertaking maintenance which impacts on cyclists. For the sake of ease of communication and to make certain that contractors see all the relevant documentation, Spokes favours a single document covering both legal and good practice aspects.

The areas where we see potential for further advice to contractors are as follows (in some cases we are just giving a different emphasis than in the existing document)

**NB** Could the Council consider using the term *roadworks*, or some other wide term, rather than *road maintenance*, so that all forms of road closure and temporary restrictions are covered, not just maintenance (e.g. when roadways are closed to install new traffic management layouts or for adjacent building works)

### **Minimising the impact of roadworks generally**

Contractors should seek to minimise the impacts for road users when planning roadworks

- the greater vulnerability of active travellers, compared to motorised vehicles should be taken account of
- even when motor traffic is to face a road closure, cycling should still be catered for if safely possible. The Council wishes to encourage travel by bike, but detours, especially alongside diverted traffic, are a deterrent.
- Barriers should be in place for a minimum time - not put in place days before work starts, and removed at the earliest opportunity and not left in place unnecessarily such as over weekends.

## Signs, Traffic lanes and Barriers

- When it is necessary to create coned or barriered traffic lanes under 4 metres wide, the Council should require contractors to put up signs advising that motorists should not overtake cyclists through the works.
- If a road has to be reduced to a single shared lane controlled by traffic lights, their phasing should allow cyclists time to go through the works before motor traffic starts going the other way, particularly if going uphill.
- The effectiveness of barriers on pavements and roads should be checked regularly, especially when high winds may have blown them over (could the Council raise charges against Contractors if they do not put barriers back in place?)
- Never use advisory Cyclist Dismount signs, they can be misunderstood and cause aggravation for cyclists and pedestrians. Instead, there are a number of locally developed signs that could fit such situations - see examples in the photos attached. If additional messages need to be included on a sign you need to use, please discuss this with the Council's active travel team.
- Mandatory Cyclists Dismount signs are different - they should be avoided where possible, but may be unavoidable in some circumstances.

## Road Surfacing

- If it is necessary to use steel plates to cover a road defect, the repair should be effected as soon as possible. Tarmac ramps at the edges of the plate should be provided. Where steel plates are in place for extended periods they need to be inspected and defects in ramping or plate surface (needs to provide grip) undertaken without delay.
- When resurfacing treatment has involved spreading tar and stone chips, this needs to be effectively swept in the days following the work so that no dangerous build up of chips occurs at turns or on the approach to stopping points.

## Temporary Cycle Paths

Where existing cycle paths are being worked on, alternative temporary paths should be made available whenever possible. These should meet the following standards

- Be at least 3 metres wide (unless space constraints mean they must be narrower)
- Avoid sharp turns (less than 120 degrees) when possible and
- Be reasonably smoothly surfaced (not large stone chips)
- Be clearly signed if they are not completely obvious.

## Examples of good practice

The examples below could be included in a good practice document. Photos of some of these are attached and we may be able to find photos of some of the other bullet points if the Council does not have them.

- Temporary 2-way cycle lane during Leith Street 10-month closure for the St James development
- 'Do not overtake cyclists' signs at Haymarket during gas roadworks
- 'Cyclists slow to walking pace' (rather than dismount) during lighting works on North Edinburgh paths
- Gap for cyclists at the recent Brunstane road closure (the gap only provided after complaints from local cyclists)
- Portobello prom signage seeking considerate path use rather than dismounting.

Euan Renton

For Spokes Planning Group