

COVID-19 Walking and Cycling Emergency Response Measures: Melville Drive segregated cycleways

Response from Spokes – the Lothian Cycle Campaign, July
2020

This response considers the proposals shared by the Spaces for People Team on 17th July 2020

General comments

Spokes is supportive of the Council's initiatives to support walking and cycling at this time of national emergency. We agree that it's vital to provide quality space for walking and cycling so that people can feel safe and confident in choosing sustainable modes of travel as lockdown measures are relaxed. In doing so, this reduces the load on public transport so that its limited capacity can be used by those that most need it, while avoiding people turning to cars and choking the city as they do so.

Melville Drive is a busy road cutting through the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links which are a haven for recreational leisure trips, physical exercise as well as active travel commuters. It also connects the neighbourhoods of Marchmont, Sciennes to Tollcross & Newington. Since Middle Meadow Walk was opened to cycling in 1983 it has subsequently become the backbone of the active travel network south of the city centre and a popular destination for those wanting high quality, car-free segregated cycling space for those of all abilities.

As such the paths through the park have been busy thus and Spokes supports the enhanced capacity for east / west journeys.

We're generally pleased by the proposals put forward, but we urge the council to review our comments carefully:

- **Pinch points:** We are pleased to see cycle lanes which get wider at pinch points such as traffic islands. These will be one of the first instances of such a layout in Edinburgh, and we therefore hope that appropriate evaluation and monitoring of their effectiveness is carried out, so that they can be used more widely if successful.
- **Junctions with side roads:** We believe that red screed should be applied at all places where the cycle lane crosses a side road.
- **Pedestrian crossings:** The zig-zag markings at pedestrian crossings should contain a "cycle

lane” - as has been done in the recent Spaces for People scheme on Old Dalkeith Road and is also in the plans for this scheme at the Toucan crossing by the Croquet Club.

- **Bus stops and cycle lanes:** Although we believe that floating bus stops are the safest way of dealing with conflict at bus stops with adjacent cycleways, we recognise that their implementation will not always be feasible in Spaces for People projects. However, it is important that monitoring and evaluation of the bus stop boarders on Melville Drive also takes place, and that they are modified if found to be unsatisfactory. Monitoring must also consider cyclists who choose to enter the carriageway in order to pass buses at bus stops. The ramps at bus stops should not be too steep or narrow, as this will cause problems for people using non-standard cycles such as recumbent bikes or handcycles.
- **Cyclist stop lines:** In a number of places, stop lines are put in the cycleway. We consider these to be unnecessary and counterproductive, as they will lead to increased conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Detailed comments

1. **Demarcation of cycle crossings at Junctions:** It is good to see that the red surface treatment is being added at the east-west crossings along Melville Drive. However it should also be applied north-south across Melville Drive at Argyle Place. Currently this lack of clear delineation often means vehicles block the Toucan crossing here. The new protected eastbound cones should be adjusted to allow a right turn from Argyle Place. Thus avoiding the desire to use the path along the southern edge of the pedestrian path of South Meadow Walk.

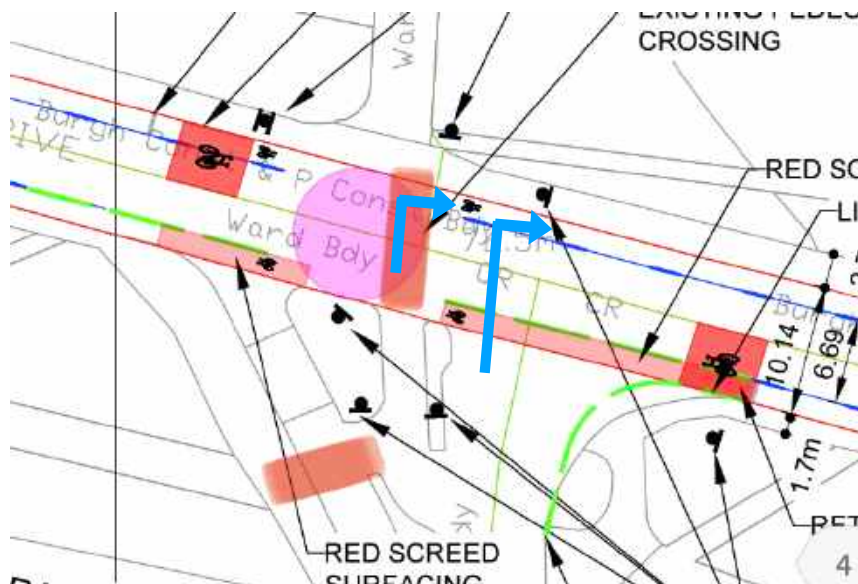


Fig 1: Additional red screeding & right turn suggested at Argyle PI junction

This surface treatment should also be applied to the crossing east-west from Argyle Park Terrace so drivers are made more aware the cycle route crosses here. Often drivers speed across if the lights are red if headed west, but this conflicts with cyclists headed south/west from Middle Meadow Walk on to Leamington Walk. See Fig 1 of the

proposed additional red screeding locations above.

2. **Meadow Place:** It is positive to see the addition of the pedestrian 'courtesy zebra' crossing markings at the north end Meadow Place. This is the location the segregated cycle lanes switch sides so a clear delineated pedestrian crossing point will be helpful to all users. Spokes would suggest the zebra crossing should be further to the west: as shown it leads straight into a garden wall (so not on a desire line). It should also be angled NW/SE to emphasise the switch of the cycle lane from the north side to the south. Often there's a popular food van positioned here with customers gathered around on the cycle path here, so a parklet here could help provide seating for customers whilst discouraging queue's forming on the cycle path.
3. **Jaw Bone Walk Crossing:** The Pelican crossing to Jawbone Walk is primarily used by pedestrians but is also used the occasional cyclists. Therefore it is positive to see the guard rails being removed here. However would a dropped kerb (& bollards be possible to allow ease of crossing to/from the Just East Bikes docking station at Meadow Place. The design of the north end of Meadow Place and position of the Pelican crossing is a legacy of the old road access arrangements, which in the longer term should be reviewed. This should be a modal filter to / from Melville Drive from Marchmont Crescent (thus avoiding Marchmont Rd). Until this is resolved Spokes would encourage cyclists to still use the Argyle PI crossing further to the east to join Middle Meadow Walk as Jaw Bone Walk is not wide enough. Additional signage directing cyclists between Bruntsfield and the Old Town should point along South Meadow Walk and Middle Meadow Walk (e.g. incl. travel time to encourage).
4. **Bus Lane & Stop Adjustments:** As Melville Drive is has a lower frequency of use by buses (Services 24 & 41 only) and has only slight gradients, we consider this a suitable location to try them out. We suggest that their use here should be seen as experimental and monitored carefully with changes made if they clearly do not work for most cyclists. We imagine that many experienced cyclists may prefer to simply overtake buses at bus stops if the road conditions allow for this and again the spacing of the orcas should allow for this. This low frequency of buses also supports the removal of the bus lane at the eastern end of Melville Drive during the 'Spaces for People' trials.
5. **North Meadow Walk Junction:** The western end of these proposals should continue further west, ideally to join with the Tollcross junction & *Meadows to Canal* schemes being consulted on. Slightly outwith the boundary, but a fully dropped kerb would be very helpful from North Meadow Walk to opposite the bottom of Leven Terrace. This can be awkward especially when exiting westwards by bike onto Melville Drive headed towards Tollcross.



Fig 2: Current entry / exit manoeuvre at west end of North Meadow Walk

6. **Eastern Connections:** Similarly, at the eastern end the scheme should, at least, start in Hope Park Terrace, joining to related Spaces for People proposals for Newington & hopefully Causewayside as well.
7. **Zig-Zag Lines:** Spokes support the corrected position of the zig-zag lines at the Lonsdale Terrace Toucan crossing, putting them in the traffic lane rather than the cycle lane. This should be replicated at the all the other crossings (Meadow Place, Boroughloch Walk, Archers' Walk).
8. **Parking on the Park:** Enforcement of parking needs to be enhanced if the on street parking here is being removed. On previous recent occasions (01.06.20) cars parking on the park grass parallel to Melville Drive weren't removed due to lack of enforcement.



Fig 3: Parking on the Meadows on the north side of Melville Drive - 01.06.20 with limited enforcement by CEC / Police Scotland

We therefore would like reassurance from the Council & Police Scotland that there will be adequate resource provided for enforcement as at weekends and any park events especially can be an issue for off road parking. It is thought that up to six vehicles can park next to the pavilion, allowing for parking not on Melville Drive.

Additional / longer term measures we consider in need of review include;

9. Could the Meadow Place crossing be repositioned and upgraded to a toucan to align with the south end of Jaw Bone Walk (we assume the existing position predates the closure of the road to vehicles). This should then act as a modal filter and enhanced public realm for the popular food trucks that stop there. It could also possibly tie in to the on going EWH Jaw Bone conservation project. This may also require repositioning of the popular Just Eat Bike hire docking station, forming a new gateway public space into Marchmont.
10. At Argyle Place car drivers can turn left into Melville Drive whatever the state of the traffic lights, thus crossing the pedestrian and cycle path crossing at speed (and usually not signalling left until after they have forked into the slip road). This should be reviewed as any crossing is potentially hazardous for vulnerable road users (VRU). Should the speed hump here be extended southwards or a left turn phase be added to the lights to avoid this conflict altogether?

11. It would be good if this scheme could become the focus of enhancements to the adjoining active travel routes;
 - Marchmont Rd/Kilgraston Road/King's Buildings axis - university campus link
 - Lauriston Place, to link the Tollcross and Forest Road schemes together
 - Causewayside arterial route.
12. The clearer delineation of the user routes at the junction of Middle Meadow Walk at North Meadow Walk as for those unfamiliar at the busy cross roads there can be confusion for some path users.
13. Finally fixing of the cycle counter on Middle Meadow Walk would help encourage those who are choosing active travel by showing they are part of an increasing number of those choosing to do the same.