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Spokes Response to the Spaces for People Consultation – South Queensferry July 2020

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, is pleased to welcome the proposed improvements in South Queensferry High Street. These will greatly improve the quality and safety of visiting this historic location. However, we are extremely concerned that the proposed diversion route along Rosshill Terrace and Station Road will significantly increase there the existing difficulties and danger for people walking and cycling.

1. High Street

1.1 It is normal for road closures in Edinburgh to commence at 10.30am and **we recommend** that this should be adopted here. This street will already be busy with visitors and shoppers well before the proposed 12 noon start time.

1.2 There are some short sections in the High Street where the setts have been laid parallel to the direction of travel as a decorative feature. Unfortunately, these areas are extremely hazardous when cycling, as the long grooves have a tendency to channel bike wheels. As these are due for replacement in the upcoming *South Queensferry High Street and Waterfront Public Realm Improvement Plan*, **we recommend** that they be lifted and relaid, or covered, with tarmac as a temporary fix.

1.3 **We recommend** that the road closure signage should specifically make it clear that the closure is only to vehicles and that through access remains for walking and cycling at all times.

1.4 **We recommend** that all signage should be on the road, not on the pavement.

2. Diversionary Route Rosshill Terrace / Station Road

2.1.1 **We have extremely serious concerns about the local impact on the chosen diversionary route and strongly recommend that significant additional interventions be implemented there, on the same timescale as those on the High Street, before it is brought into use. This is because there are already serious concerns about these streets, shared by local Spokes members, Councillors and the Dalmeny Station Residents Association, which will be made worse by introducing the extra diverted traffic.**

2.1.2 Rosshill Terrace and Station Road run through the middle of the residential area of Dalmeny Station and have a speeding problem, with many vehicles considerably exceeding the 20mph limit. This has become an increased problem during the lockdown period and is posing serious road safety problems for pedestrians and cyclists. They also comprises part of the 43 bus route between Edinburgh City Centre and Queensferry, which suffers congestion due to the narrow width and weekday commuter parking for Dalmeny railway station.

2.1.3 The road safety problems which were already evident here have become more serious due to the need to maintain physical distancing as a result of the pandemic. Due to the very narrow width of the pavement (less than 1m), pedestrians must venture on to the road to ensure safe physical distancing when passing. This results in people emerging from between parked cars and coming into conflict with motor vehicles and cyclists.

My concerns about this situation were considerably amplified by an incident at the beginning of May 2020 when an elderly gentleman, attempting to provide me with adequate space to pass safely was almost hit by a car travelling at what we estimated to be around 50mph. Comment by local Spokes member

A high number of elderly residents take access between facilities in Queensferry and their homes along this narrow footway. Accordingly, measures to increase pedestrian space to permit safe-passing will be required.

2.1.4 In addition, it is of particular concern that this is a key walking and cycling route for the pupils of :

- Queensferry High School
- Queensferry Primary School and Nursery
- St Margaret's Primary School
- Dalmeny Primary School (pupils walking and cycling to Dalmeny Primary School access the cycle-footpath at the steps at the east end of Rosshill Terrace)

2.1.4.1 Currently, very few children cycle to the three Queensferry schools along Station Road, probably due to the perceived road safety issues, particularly at busy drop off/pick up times, although many children do walk to school. Traffic congestion is already a problem at drop off/pick-up times and this will be likely to considerably increase as the entrance for the new replacement High School, which will open for the first time this August, has been moved from Ashburnham Road on to Station Road. The additional congestion will certainly add to overall road safety issues for pedestrians and cyclists during the afternoon pick-up period and we recommend that restrictions on parking and drop-off are introduced outside the schools; particularly the High School.

2.1.4.2 Part of the catchment area of Dalmeny Primary School includes the eastern end of Station Road and pupils have to cross and/or walk or cycle along Rosshill Terrace to reach the cycle-footpath access at the east end of Rosshill Terrace, which then provides a direct off-road link to Dalmeny Primary School, around ½ mile to the south. A high proportion of children access Dalmeny Primary School this way by cycle and walking rather than car and it would be very unfortunate if this declined due to safety issues arising from increased traffic on Rosshill Terrace.

2.2 Background to Existing Concerns

2.2.1 Following submission of a petition to the Council regarding road safety on Rosshill Terrace co-ordinated by *Dalmeny Station Residents Association* in June 2018, the Area Transport Manager confirmed that **the road is recognised as a problem street** and the Council **agreed to install a speed table** at the junction of Rosshill Terrace and Forth Terrace “in the first weeks” of the 2019 school summer holidays. The installation was then delayed until autumn 2019, and then again until spring 2020. As a consequence of these repeated delays, the safety risk to cyclists and pedestrians remains high on Rosshill Terrace.

2.2.2 The Council had also promised the Residents Association that HGVs would be banned from using Rosshill Terrace / Station Road as a through route at the same time as the speed table was offered.

2.2.3 Although not articulated in the recent *Queensferry and Kirkliston Traffic and Active Travel Study*, the accompanying report to the *Transport and Environment Committee* in December 2019 noted that the survey data for the Study found **“a significant change in route choices following the opening of the Queensferry Crossing”**. The report notes that with the closure of the Echline Junction, the majority of journeys into and out of Queensferry now make use of residential streets. **Displacement of traffic from the A90 to Station Road/Rosshill Terrace, further exacerbated by residential development at the former Agilent site and South Scotstoun, has resulted in increased traffic congestion and reduced safety for cyclists and pedestrians on this corridor.**

2.3 Effect of Extra Diverted Traffic

2.3.1 The closure of the High Street to through traffic will further increase traffic flows on Station Road/Rosshill Terrace, because it will form the most direct route for traffic entering/leaving Queensferry towards Edinburgh, further exacerbating the existing road safety problems.

2.3.2 Furthermore, the temporary closure of the High Street, as part of the *Spaces for People* initiative, is likely to be continued to enable the planned refurbishment of the High Street, resulting in the diversion continuing for at least two years and possibly longer.

2.3.3 It is therefore urgent that the long-overdue installation of the **previously promised** measures are carried out in advance of this closure of the High Street to through traffic, to ensure against a further increase in risk to cyclists and pedestrians, which would be entirely contrary to the objectives of the *Spaces for People* initiative.

2.3.4 Whilst there is no locally available alternative to using Station Road as the local diversionary route, measures should be included to discourage its use by longer distance traffic, by giving motorists advance warning of the High Street closure. Accordingly, advance diversionary signage should be introduced to advise motorists of the High Street closure before they leave the A90. The diversionary signage on The Loan should be altered to show: the left turn into Station Road as being for “Hawes Pier and Local Access Only” and a straight on diversionary route sign showing “Edinburgh/A90”, to encourage diverted Edinburgh/A90-bound traffic to use The Loan and the A904 instead of Station Road.

2.3.5 Please closely monitor traffic on Station Road and the surrounding streets post implementation, with a view to the need for further interventions, including the possible creation of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, akin to your current proposals at East Craigs. These are neighbourhoods with similar characteristics.

2.4 Diversion Route Recommendations

We therefore **strongly recommend** that the following measures are included in this phase on Rosshill Terrace and Station Road, **as prerequisites before the High Street is closed.**

2.4.1 Differentiate eastbound diverted traffic at The Loan between between “Hawes Pier/Local access only”, signed to turn left into Station Road, from “Edinburgh/A90” traffic, being signed to continue on south on The Loan, with further signage at subsequent junctions to the A90/A904 junction.

2.4.2 Install diversion advance warning signage on the A90 westbound for South Queensferry traffic; indicating that the B924 is for “Hawes Pier/Local Access Only” and diverting main South Queensferry traffic to use the A904.

2.4.3 Install the previously promised speed table at Rosshill Terrace and also consider other strong contender locations, such as the junction of Station Road and Ashburnham Road.

2.4.4 Implement the previously promised ban on HGVs

2.4.5 Install other speed calming measures, such as pinch points (e.g. similar to those on High Street), speed-sensor warning signs and reducing certain stretches to a single carriageway at strategic points.

2.4.6 Introduce restrictions on parking and drop-off are outside the schools; particularly the High School.

2.4.7 Introduce measures to increase pedestrian space to permit safe-passing.

2.4.8 Prior to the next phase, closely monitor traffic on the diversion route, with a view to further interventions, including creating a Low Traffic Neighbourhood, akin to the current East Craigs proposals, encompassing the area east of The Loan.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or require any clarifications.

Ewan Jeffrey, for Spokes Planning Group

29 July 2020