

The proposals following December's consultation represent a considerable improvement for cyclists and pedestrians as compared to the earlier plans, and the officers deserve credit for that. For cyclists, they are also a huge improvement on the current roundabout as regards cycling safety and attracting more people to travel by bike.

Nonetheless we oppose the basic concept of a gyratory – the roadspace is excessive and the area within the gyratory is somewhat sterilised as public space due to traffic on all sides. With a non-gyratory solution, all space would be easily accessible on foot and the conditions for cycling, walking and, especially, lingering, could be far better.

Spokes has always strongly opposed a gyratory and we have signed the joint letter from the Picardy Place deputation. In fact back in 2010, long before the GAM, we wrote to the Transport Convener opposing the idea of a gyratory (hold up copy of the letter!)

Since the Picardy Place deputation will be covering the gyratory issues, our deputation will not repeat those points but will cover other aspects of the proposals.

Due to the GAM agreement, as described in the Committee papers, and potential major financial implications, we understand that Edinburgh Council is in a difficult position, however we urge you to reconsider the gyratory design alongside the City Transformation work and the result of the tram decision. Whether or not it is approved, however, there remain additional steps which can be taken to provide safer and more attractive cycling and pedestrian conditions, and our deputation will now discuss three issues...

- the future of Leith Street
- minor tweaks to the proposed plans
- then Ewan will talk about how Picardy, with or without a gyratory, could be greatly improved by a redesign of the proposed tram stop within its existing envelope.

1. the future of Leith street

Already many pedestrians and cyclists use Leith Street, and the ESJ development will bring many more. Yet the proposed narrowness of the uphill pavement - at one point a mere 2m, well below the Council's own standards - makes for crowded and unpleasant walking conditions. Cycling will be even worse, pedalling up a steep slope whilst jammed in the traffic lane beside lorries and cars. People who might have been encouraged to cycle by the new Leith Walk cycle lanes will not do so if they lead into this!

Reducing the traffic or limiting the types of traffic that use Leith Street would enable one of the uphill traffic lanes to be converted into a wider pavement and a cycleway, so eliminating the above problems entirely. It is notable that even the temporary segregated cycling facilities at the top of Leith Street during the current works appear to have led to a noticeable increase in cycling. However these new cyclists may well give up if they are inserted instead into two lanes of uphill lorries, cars and buses.

We are of course aware of concern by some New Town and London Road residents that closure of Leith Street means possible deterioration in their local areas. We therefore suggest a compromise whereby Leith Street would be fully reopened to downhill traffic, whilst only buses, emergency vehicles and possibly taxis would be allowed uphill (private traffic uphill could also be permitted as far as the St James car park entrance and/or possibly Calton Road). Any problems elsewhere which are currently caused by diverted buses and buses stopping would obviously cease entirely, and any rat running should also be eliminated or greatly reduced. Local mitigation measures could be considered if any such problems did remain.

2. Tweaks to the Picardy Design.

Should the committee decide that they are unable to defer a decision on Picardy Place, Spokes has a number of minor suggested improvements that could improve the plans further. These include...

- improved cycling conditions joining and leaving Broughton
- a cycle crossing connecting Picardy Place to Union Place and Leith Walk
- consideration of cycleway and crossing specifications and accesses

As regards tweaks like this, we ask only that the Committee allows sufficient flexibility in their decision that such points of detail can be discussed with officers and included if appropriate.