

Spokes response - DRAFT

The Scottish Government's Programme for Reviewing and Extending Permitted Development Rights (PDR) in Scotland – Consultation on Phase 1 Proposals¹

- Closes 12 Nov 2020
- There are 11 questions on the topic “Development Related to Active Travel” – questions are numbered 60 to 70 inclusive.
- Proposals for changes to Permitted Development Rights for developments related to active travel:

60. Do you agree with the proposal to allow the erection of a cycle store in the front or side garden of a house up to a maximum size of 1.2 m height, 2 m width and 1.5 m depth?

Yes No

If you disagree please explain why

Proposed answer: In principle we agree but we DISAGREE strongly with the detail, because the sizes do not compare favourably with the normal sizes of commercially available bike stores, would be extremely difficult to work with in practice and are too limiting for many families who wish to travel actively.

Your proposed sizes are 1.2m high x 2m wide x 1m deep in Conservation Areas and 1.5m deep in other areas. The suggested height is a major problem - many bikes are around 1.15m and would be almost impossible to insert into a 1.2m finished size (less framing) height. The 1.2m height dimension also makes insufficient allowance for the common sloping roof detail on cycle stores (normally sloping forwards from the rear).

Furthermore, depth and width must be carefully considered – sheds should certainly be able to cater for a family of two adults and two children at a minimum, remembering that the government-promoted trend to e-bikes means that many bikes have become slightly larger or heavier. In order to make the store useable, it must also be possible to manoeuvre bikes in and out reasonably easily, which requires some spare space on all sides, as also does the need to store accessories such as oil, panniers, bike locks and helmets. In particular, the proposed 1m depth in Conservation Areas will be unduly limiting for many families, rendering impossible some of the above needs.

Following a series of highly distressing individual cases of planning enforcements, and time-wasting for Edinburgh City Council, in the early 2010s, Spokes worked with the Council to devise shed dimensions which would normally expect to gain planning permission - namely 1.5m high x 2.5m wide x 1.2m deep. These were incorporated into [a factsheet](#)² which was approved by the Council's [Planning Committee of 3 October 2013](#),³ and is now referenced in the

1 <https://consult.gov.scot/planning-architecture/programme-reviewing-extending-pdr/>

2 <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Cycle-sheds-factsheet-Word97-v12-FINAL.pdf>

3 http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/1309-Cttee-report-item_6.2_Cycle_Storage_in_Gardens.pdf

Council's official Guidance to Householders. We strongly recommend these dimensions for the above reasons, and as they cover the most popular cycle stores currently on the market, many of which are high-quality secure steel structures in unobtrusive colours.

Perhaps most significantly, since these dimensions were adopted by Edinburgh in 2013, the Council has been able to approve every compliant planning application, thus confirming that the dimensions are fully reasonable and wise in planning terms. Allowing a further depth increase in non-Conservation Areas, as in the consultation, would give added active travel opportunities, particularly for households with children or more than two adults.

We do appreciate that these dimensions are insufficient to fully cater for many larger machines, such as some cargo bikes, adapted bikes, trailers etc, all of which are rapidly increasing in use. Nonetheless for front gardens we accept that there has to be a compromise with conservation requirements. However, the fact that PDR is, hopefully, to be granted for sheds of the size we recommend does not preclude householders seeking planning permission for larger sizes – albeit with the associated uncertainties, financial and administrative costs, and likely subsequent appeals if refused.

In summary, we urge you to adopt for Conservation Areas the Edinburgh dimensions of 1.5m high x 2.5m wide x 1.2m deep and (as suggested in the consultation) a possible greater depth for non-Conservation Areas.

61. Do you agree with the proposal to permit cycle stores up to 1.2 metres in height, 2 metres in width and 1 metre in depth in the front or side garden of a house in a Conservation Area?

Yes No

If you disagree please explain why

Proposed answer: In principle we agree but we DISAGREE strongly with the detail, because the sizes are unduly restrictive in terms of encouraging active travel and indeed will not even work in practice - see above answer, Q60.

It is vital that the proposals should extend to Conservation Areas as these cover so much of Scottish cities, and the capital city in particular, and many of whose inhabitants are likely to wish to travel by active means in line with government and public health recommendations.

As explained in Q60, the dimensions **1.5m high x 2.5m wide x 1.2m deep** have been used successfully by Edinburgh City since 2013 including in Conservation Areas – and with no planning problems resulting We urge their adoption for Conservation Area PDR.

62. Should such an extension to PDR be subject to a restriction on materials?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

Proposed answer: In our view, the use of a discrete colour is more important than the material used in the construction of cycle stores. Strength of construction is important against theft and steel cabinets are proving more popular than the more traditional timber designs, depending on the perceived vulnerability to theft of the stored cycles and where the greater cost can be borne. We would support a restriction on colours.

Under Building Standards, non-combustibility can be an issue close to houses requiring the adoption of all-metal designs.

63. Do you agree with the proposal to increase the floorspace of storage sheds allowed in the rear garden of houses in Conservation Areas to eight square metres?

Yes No

If you do not agree please explain why

Proposed answer: We support this. Not only is it important for cargo bikes, adapted bikes, etc, but it will make the process of taking out and replacing bikes much easier when the household has a number of bikes and of bike users, and it may avoid the need to stack bikes one behind the other.

64. Do you agree with the introduction of PDR for the erection of a cycle store in the private garden area of a flat, including in a Conservation Area?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

Proposed answer: A large proportion of the population live in flats. The Scottish Household Survey 2017 found the following statistics for the occupation of flats: owner occupied 19%, private landlord 62%, local authority 50% and Housing Association 64%. It is therefore vital to extend PDR to flats, including Conservation Areas, as they cover so much of the population. To exclude flats would make it very much harder to achieve the government's Active Travel targets. Bike stores can invariably be sited and screened discretely.

65. Do you agree with the proposal to allow cycle stores sufficient to accommodate up to two bikes per flat to the rear of larger blocks of flats, including in Conservation Areas?

Yes No

If you disagree, please explain why

Proposed answer: We support this proposal, including in Conservation Areas as discussed above, but some flexibility should be allowed on the location of such stores as good cycle stores should be overlooked and well-lit for security and not hidden, say, at the rear of a block of flats.

66. Do you agree with the introduction of PDR to allow the erection of cycle stores for buildings of class 4, 5 and 6 uses?

Yes No

If you disagree, please explain why

Proposed answer: We support this proposal as it is important for everyday places of work to offer the same standard of security against bike theft as in the home location. This will be an important element in helping to promote increased bike use by commuters.

67. Do you agree with the introduction of PDR to allow the erection of cycle stores on-streets?

Yes No

If you disagree, please explain why

Proposed answer: We support this proposal and we are particularly pleased to see the current rollout of such facilities in Edinburgh. Most people in Scottish cities live in flats and cycle storage within common stairways, or the lack of it, has been a subject of friction and frustration for many years. On-street storage has the potential to transform cycle ownership and ease of use for such flat owners and again this will be an important element in helping to promote increased bike use by commuters.*

** (Glasgow 72%, Edinburgh 64% - 2011 Census, Aberdeen 55% - 2016 Estimates of Households and Dwellings.)*

Having said the above we are unclear why it is being proposed given that on-street cycle stores are currently installed using Traffic Regulation Orders. If the proposal does indeed include the on-street 'CycleHoop' stores recently introduced in Edinburgh, and extensively used in London, then the PDR criteria must certainly accommodate these designs.

68. If such PDR is introduced, do you agree with the proposed maximum size for the stores, and the proposed restriction on the number allowed in a particular street or block?

Yes No

If you disagree, please suggest alternatives

Proposed answer: With reference to size, see previous answer to question 60 on the proposed dimensions being unworkable in respect of cycle enclosures and also question 67 regarding the need to accommodate existing CycleHoop on-street storage.

With reference to numbers, the provision in any street should be lead, so far as practicable, by demand but may be restricted by the length and geometry of the street, so prescriptive measures may prove very inflexible and limit expansion of cycle usage.

Furthermore we strongly oppose any restrictions on numbers or size of street cycle stores unless accompanied by equally strong restrictions on street car parking. The sizes, shapes and colours of cars and vans parked on the street are far more intrusive visually (and in terms of pollution and noise) than discreetly coloured cycle stores. To ensure citizen acceptance it is essential that government rules are consistent and fair and are seen to be so.

69. If such PDR is introduced, do you think it should it be allowed in Conservation Areas and, if so, should it be subject to any other limitations on size, materials etc?

Yes No

Please explain your answer

Proposed answer: We support PDR in Conservation Areas as such areas represent a significant proportion of our cities. They are areas where we believe that a reduction in car use in favour of active travel would be particularly welcome. In many cases, we find that the pressure to have a convenient cycle store comes from residents in Conservation Areas who wish to adopt a greener life style and, in some cases, give up their car in favour of regular cycle travel. This feeds directly into aspirations for city transformation, reduced congestion and less pollution.

70. Is there any other amendment to the General Permitted Development Order that you think we should consider in order to encourage active travel further?

Please explain your answer

Proposed answer: Nothing occurs.