

COVID-19 Cycling and Walking Emergency Response Measures - proposed temporary cycle segregation - Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route

Response from Spokes South Edinburgh, December 2020

This response considers the proposals shared by the Spaces for People Team on 24th November 2020

General comments

We greatly welcome the Spaces for People scheme to create a safe environment (Quiet Route) for active travellers, by introducing modal filters prohibiting general motor traffic between Greenbank & The Meadows.

The areas being connected are valuable green spaces but also the varied residential areas of Marchmont, Bruntsfield, The Grange, Greenbank & Buckstone. As such, this has the potential to be a game changer connecting areas previously poorly connected by safe cycling routes. Part of this route has been used by Blackford Safe Routes (Wee Unicorns) Bike Bus to James Gillespie Primary School, and Spokes has been pleased to support this group over recent years.

However we must state that the following comments are based upon the Braid Rd closure between Hermitage Drive and Braid Hills Hotel remaining in place. If this closure is to change then a reassessment of the Quiet Route would be required as the individual modal filters work together as a whole. For example, we note that the removals of filters from South of Cluny Gardens has opened up a possible drivers short cut from Midmar to Comiston Road (avoiding 2 sets of traffic lights) which will likely affect the quietness & safety of that section.

We also believe there should be clear information on the precise form the modal filters will take. It needs to be effective in preventing access by general motor traffic (incl. vehicles mounting the adjacent pavements). They also need to provide access to “non-standard” cycles. The information provided isn’t clear enough for a fully informed assessment.

We very much welcome the decision to introduce this in temporary form as part of Spaces for People, and urge that it is made permanent in due course, if found to be successful, together with any modifications which appear valuable on the basis of experience with the temporary scheme.

We are pleased by the proposals put forward, and we urge the council to review our detailed comments carefully.

Detailed comments

The Council proposals provided are outlined as “*modal filters (where the street is closed to vehicular traffic) are proposed at the following locations:*

- *Canaan Lane north of the Astley Ainslie hospital access;*
- *Whitehouse Loan immediately south of the junction with Strathearn Road;*
- *Whitehouse Loan immediately south of the junction with Bruntsfield Crescent; and*
- *Whitehouse Loan immediately north of the junction with Warrender Park Road.”*

From South to North our comments are as follows;

Greenbank Crossroads / Braidburn Terrace:

As this is the Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route, Spokes would like to see an improved connection to/from Greenbank. The cycle contraflow barriers should be redesigned to allow for left turning cyclist to proceed, without being forced to the right and into the path of late (right) turning oncoming traffic. The sequence of lights at Greenbank junction is counter intuitive and discourages use of the 2 stage right turn from Comiston Road.

At peak times drivers turning right from Comiston Road are slow to clear sandwiching cyclists between them and the following vehicles from Greenbank Crescent.

This form of right turn is also difficult for bikes with a wide turning circle (e.g. cargobikes) consideration should be given to a permanent light sequence directly after N/S lights for a crossing for all pedestrians and cyclists

Braid Rd:

Spokes would like to note that the closure of this section of Braid Rd combined with the Braidburn Terrace one way (w/ cycle contraflow) has radically altered the amount of traffic and therefore quietness of the Cluny area. It is now common to see children independently walking, wheeling and cycling up and down this section.

Hermitage Drive:

We would like to see this and the surrounding streets remain as calm as they are now, rather than when compared with those prior to the Braid Road closure. If the Braid Closure modal filters or Braidburn Terrace one way with contraflow were to be removed. The level of segregation on Hermitage Drive would need to be reassessed.

Hermitage Gardens:

Spokes SE is concerned that the previously proposed diagonal modal filter has been removed from the junction with Cluny Drive.

Cluny Drive:

Spokes notes that this has become a popular (east-west) rat running route since the recent gas works on Cluny Gardens. Therefore the diagonal modal filter would discourage this route for non-residents and would encourage this to be reinstated on a trial basis.

Braid Avenue:

When headed south (uphill) if cyclists are turning right onto Cluny Drive and there is no modal filter (on Braid Avenue or Hermitage Gardens junction) to prevent east west rat running it will be an added danger to navigate.

Spokes SE would like to note that the surface condition along this is poor for cyclists and should be prioritised for resurfacing if possible. The Cluny Gardens traffic lights ASL's etc are very worn and in need of renewal as soon as possible.

Woodburn Terrace:

Spokes would like to note the surface condition is very poor on this stretch and would like it to be prioritised for resurfacing as soon as possible.

Canaan Lane:

Spokes supports the removal of through traffic on Canaan Lane (southbound) from Whitehouse

Loan. The position of this new Modal Filter isn't clear but we assume it is north of the exit from the Royal Blind School.

The "Existing Modal Filter" on the west section of the lane is a school street closure also under SfP. In its current form it is not a modal filter and allows vehicle access incl. construction vehicles. During recent gas works the road was fully closed to all but pedestrians and cyclists showing a real modal filter can work.

Another area of concern is the west end which has an existing successful contraflow. From the proposal it is not clear if the west section will remain one way (with contraflow cycle lane) or be two way for vehicles. Spokes believes this increases conflict at the west end busy pavement beside the Canny Man's and should be avoided and remain exit only (with contraflow segregated bike lane).

We would also like to note the surface condition is very poor throughout Canaan Lane and would like it to be prioritised for resurfacing as soon as possible.

Newbattle Terrace:

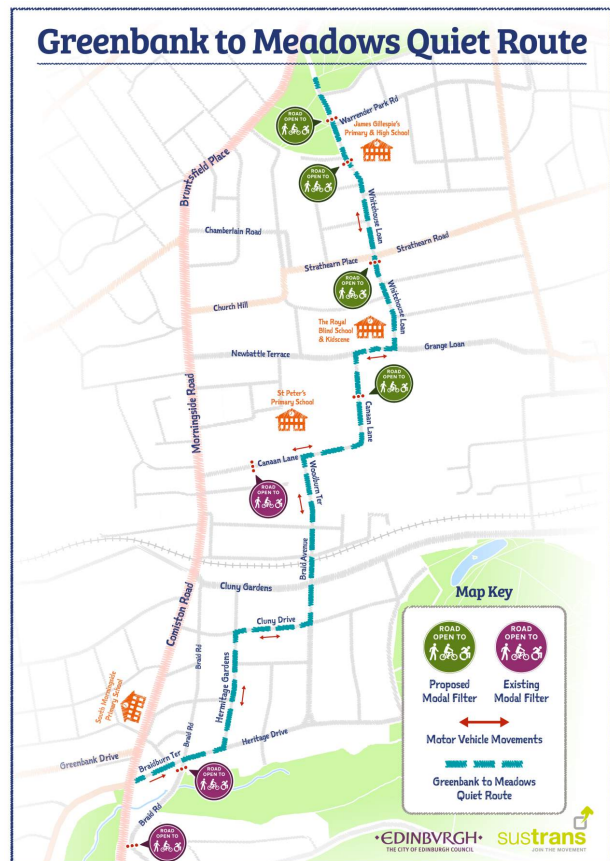
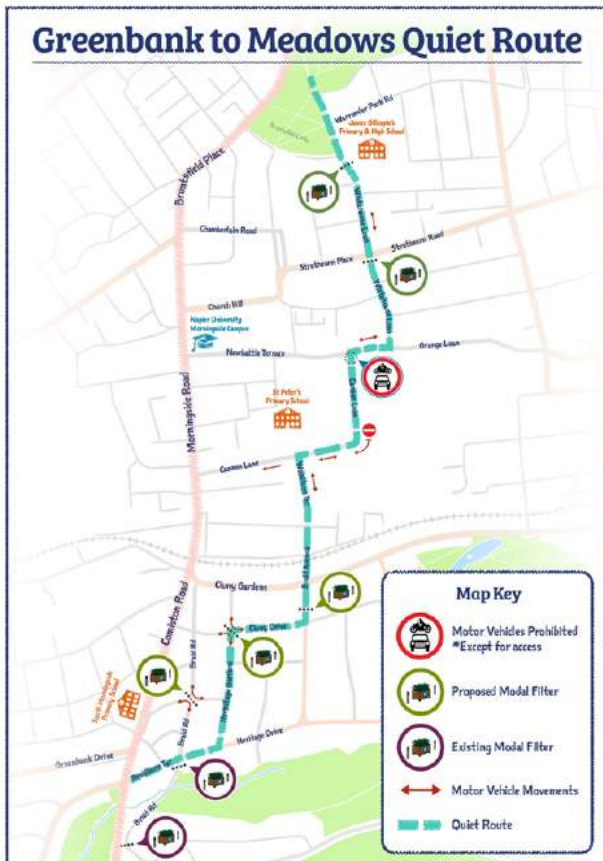
Spokes believes this could become the weakest link in the route if not filtered. The exit from Canaan Lane northbound is uphill and with restricted sight-lines. Also the planned public realm improvement scheme for the Pitsligo Rd junction needs to be taken into consideration which is also under consultation during the period of this consultation.

Whitehouse Loan

Spokes supports the installation of these modal filters on Whitehouse Loan outside James Gillespie PS & HS. In addition to its 24/7 safety benefits, this scheme will avoid the need for voluntary parent manned road closures to protect pupils. The barrier should be constructed of robust materials and designed appropriately for the setting.

Hopefully this resolves the issue of conflicting left turning cyclists and right turning cars at the south end when headed north. However we would like to ensure there is no increased conflict of cars turning left into Clinton Rd over slower uphill cyclists if they cannot proceed north to Strathearn Rd.

Comparison to an earlier version of the Quiet Route proposal:



November 2020 proposal for Quiet Route; source City of Edinburgh Council / Spaces for People


Additional comments

Design, Signage & Materials:

Modal Filters:

The modal filter proposed to each site needs to be considered to ensure it can't be adjusted by those not intended to use it, or bypassed by mounting the pavement adjacent (as has been recorded on several occasions at Braid Rd since closure) endangering pedestrians and non-motorised traffic.

Spokes is concerned there are no detailed drawings provided for any of the proposed modal filters. We don't know if these will be assembled from planters, barriers, cones or bollards, and as the "Existing Modal Filters" which are basic traffic management materials (cones & barriers) which can be easily manipulated by those wishing to break through the filter.

Spokes would encourage the use of clearer signage on any modal filters. For example simple "ROAD CLOSED" can be discouraging for walkers, wheelers & cyclists. Whereas "ROAD OPEN TO...  " is better. The circular sign shown below is from the illustrative diagram of the Quiet Route proposal, so we presume you are intending to use this sign. However we suggest you should instead use a sign similar to that in the left-hand diagram, which is now in frequent use in London and becoming an informal standard (albeit there is an arguably better variant with the bike having a person on it).



Modal Filter London - Source: <https://twitter.com/citycyclists/status/1288749040994267136?s=20>



ROAD OPEN TO... sign from route diagram. Is this to be used?











Modal Filter at Waverley Bridge SfP without ROAD OPEN signage - Source: Author

These filters should also be arranged so as not to force cyclists right (as is currently the case at the Braidburn Terrace) and into conflict with other users. There could also be road markings that can't be vandalised as easily as signage. The locations outside schools are also an opportunity for creative proposals that reflect the proximity and encouraging more pupils (& parents etc) to walk, wheel and cycle to school.

Finally we would like to confirm that the modal filters will be designed to allow for the use of "non-standard" cycles. These are as per Edinburgh Street Design Guidance.

As a route to schools it should enable cargo bike or long tail use as these are popular for transporting children.

| Indicative dimension of typical 'non-standard' cycles | |
|---|--|
|  Cycle with trailers for children or deliveries L 2200-2500mm / W <850mm |  Hand cycle L 1650-2050mm / W <860mm |
|  Cargo cycle / Box bike L 2000-2300mm / W <870mm |  Tricycle, including wheelchair-friendly model L 1400-2100mm / W <850mm |
|  Recumbent cycle L 1700-2240mm / W <750mm |  Tandems, including steer-from-rear tandem L 2100-2500mm / W <750mm |
|  Tandems, including steer-from-rear tandem L 2100-2500mm / W <750mm |  Side-by-side tandem L 1800-1950mm / W <1070mm |

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/24956/c1-designing-for-cycling>

Quiet Route Signage:

Spokes considers signage as a key part of the Quiet Route proposal. As per others in the City a number / colour and network signage is needed showing connections (even if temporary) and attached to existing street furniture. Also a wider map showing connections could be provided to local households so they are able to see new safe cycling connections made possible by this and the Comiston Road Spaces for People scheme. This could include average journey times by bicycle to show how these compare to car and bus journey times.



Existing Street Signage on Quiet Routes



Existing "Quiet Route South" PDF map extract sketch

Compliance & Enforcement:

Measures to maximise awareness of and compliance with the changes should be taken. For example:

- Temporary signs should be erected to give warning of the road closures ahead of implementation, and signs guiding drivers away from the filters should remain in place for a few weeks after this (e.g. "No through road (except cycles)" or "Local access only").
- Commercial sat-nav system providers and online maps should be given notification to update their maps with the closures.
- Liaison with the police should be carried out so that officers can be present on the first day of school following implementation. Ideally this would be maintained for one week at both morning and afternoon drop-off/pick-up.