

Report 7.1 [Potential Retention of Spaces for People Measures](#)

Spokes Deputation text – Caroline Brown & David French

Note – this written submission was verbally modified to express our strong disagreement with the last-minute [Coalition amendment](#) which, amongst other things, scraps the Lanark Road protected cycle lanes.

Spokes welcomes the report on Spaces for People (TEC 17 June 2021), and offers the following comments:

1. Spaces for People was a national initiative funded by the Scottish Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The schemes made possible by this funding are echoed in many other locations in the UK and the rest of the world including: Berlin, London, Paris, Athens, Bogota, Madrid, Sydney and Budapest. Those cities are also discussing the retention of temporary measures recognizing the benefits of expanding cycling and walking infrastructure to support public health goals (increased physical activity rates, lower body weight, improved air quality) as well as climate and carbon reduction targets. In other words Spaces for People is not an Edinburgh eccentricity, it is in line with national policy and parallels other capital cities worldwide.
2. As noted in the report, the Spaces for People schemes in Edinburgh contribute to other policy goals, including Council priorities on net zero carbon and wellbeing, the City Mobility Plan, Active Travel Plan and City Centre Transformation programme. The potential policy interactions go further, and Spokes notes the obvious links to the city's air quality objectives, the Low Emission zone, Vision Zero Road Safety Plan [\[1\]](#), 20 minute neighbourhoods as well as national outcomes in the National Performance Framework ¹ including: health – we are healthy and active; and, community – we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.
3. While there is much to say about the volume and representativeness of the consultation responses, **none of this feedback** appears to include the voices of any children who live in the city. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have rights to participate in decisions which affect them, and to be protected and kept safe from danger. These rights are now enshrined in Scottish law. We are pleased to see broad support for the School Streets schemes and a wider programme of retention and development in the report. What do children say about Spaces for People? Evidence from James Gillespies Primary School quiet route shows that there are more children cycling and walking to school – voting with their feet – and we **strongly support** extended measures around individual schools, as well as safe (low-traffic) routes through each school catchment.
4. In the report, the technical assessment of impacts on businesses focusses on the arrangement of customer parking and delivery bays. We note that businesses in Edinburgh can and do use bikes and cargobikes for deliveries/servicing [\[2\]](#) and this possibility is not mentioned either as a potential benefit of SfP measures or within potential future delivery/servicing options. We suggest that consideration is given to further cargobike schemes/support for businesses similar to the scheme currently operating on Leith Walk. This is particularly pertinent to the arrangement on George IV bridge where servicing difficulties have been noted.
5. It is very disappointing that most of the shopping street measures are suggested for removal. Many footway widenings are well used, as are the few cycling measures in shopping streets, such as the uphill cycle lanes in Broughton St and Morningside Road. We suggest giving officers flexibility to assess and retain those shopping street measures which are useful. These should be seen as stepping stones towards the broader vision and policy goals for place-making in those locations, so that SfP is seen as interim/temporary intervention rather than a final design.

¹<https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>

6. The report notes some locations where there are practical challenges for wheelchair users parking or using taxis, for example where it is not possible to gain direct kerb access. We agree that this is an important issue and support some of the suggested mitigations, e.g. widening of the buffer/door zone between parking bays and cycle lane. However, we are concerned that the report mentions the possibility of relocating the cycle lane between parking and the running carriageway (parag 4.101.3). Instead workable design solutions should be sought which would not involve the removal or rerouting of cycle lanes, and we suggest that the council works with relevant partners and considers best practice from other cities – after all such questions are not unique to Edinburgh.
7. . Finally, many of the Spaces for People schemes are already well used, as is shown by recent Spokes counts and feedback from individuals. Of course, they were of necessity introduced rapidly, and many improvements are possible on the basis of experience and public feedback. Specifically on cycling, combined with other Council existing and planned cyclistoutes, the SfP main road cycle lanes form the basis of a hugely valuable future network connecting local communities to the city centre and to other local centres by sustainable and active means. All these issues - usage, improvements and opportunities - are covered in much more detail in a Spokes website report [\[3\]](#).

[\[1\]](#) Full council voted unanimously (25 August 2020): “that a new Edinburgh 'Vision Zero' Road Safety Plan - which aims that 'all users are safe from the risk of being killed or seriously injured' on the City's roads - is developed to replace the existing plan and is reported to the Transport & Environment Committee.”

[\[2\]](#) Farrout Deliveries offers a cargobike service for businesses in Edinburgh, and works with a diverse range of clients across the city. Uber Eats and Deliveroo use bike couriers to deliver food/takeaways. And, ZedifyUK – a cargobike business have secured investment of 50K to set up an Edinburgh delivery hub (March 2021).

[\[3\] www.spokes.org.uk/2021/05/growing-edinburghs-cycle-network-beyond-spaces-for-people/](http://www.spokes.org.uk/2021/05/growing-edinburghs-cycle-network-beyond-spaces-for-people/)

Spokes Response to stakeholder consultation on SfP

<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2104-Spokes-SfP-supplement-to-stakeholder-consultation.pdf>

