

Comments from Spokes to Edinburgh Council re Leith Walk cycleroute 13 Dec 2021

We are concerned that Trams to Newhaven is being allowed to implement infrastructure which is deemed unsafe by Access organisations, with whom we concur.

RNIB Scotland has confirmed that the 25mm kerb that has been constructed will be inadequate as a separator between pedestrians and cyclists. Also, Guide Dogs recommend 60mm, as adopted as a guideline in Transport Scotland's Cycling by Design (Page 73 Cycle tracks adjacent to carriageway 3.6.3).

Furthermore the very low kerb, combined with sharp turnings, brings the prospect of some cyclists, including those with longer or cargo bikes, straying onto the footway. Other issues for cyclists include cut-outs (for drains) in the buffer/safety zone and the use of hand-laying rather than machine-laying, when the latter is known to provide a more comfortable cycling surface, particularly on this long stretch

We have recently discovered that the northbound cycleway along almost the entire length of Leith Walk has now been constructed to the same unsafe specification in relation to the kerbing and other points above. We had no idea that works had been continuing at this pace since we first raised objections in October. This is particularly disappointing given that Trams to Newhaven were clearly pressing ahead despite not giving any substantial responses to our concerns.

There has been no explanation as to why stakeholders were not at any time appraised of the proposal to use this design of cycleway, which departs from the successful design used in all other segregated cycleroutes in the city.

We feel strongly that a revised design, similar to other existing segregated cycleroutes in the city, is required for the cycleway on the east side and that the west side construction is revised, particularly given that the west side is the downhill section and so pedestrian/cycle separation is of added importance.

Whilst we accept that some compromises may be necessary at specific places, we believe that with discussion and improved design these can be minimised.

Finally, we are also aware of other issues being raised by the Community Councils Together on Tram re Elm Row and by Living Streets Edinburgh with regards to narrow sections of footway.

In conclusion, Spokes was delighted when the Council decided to implement segregated cycling provision in Leith Walk. Sadly, the design and the lack of engagement, are damaging this good intent. It is essential that safe cycle and footways are delivered on Leith Walk (and onwards to Ocean Terminal and Newhaven) by the Trams to Newhaven project and that these improve upon the current works.