

# SPOKES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

St. Martins Church, 232 Dalry Road, Edinburgh EH11 2JG  
spokes@spokes.org.uk

0131.313.2114 [answerphone]  
[www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)

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***If replying by email, please use...*** [ewan@navyblue.org.uk](mailto:ewan@navyblue.org.uk)

## ***Spokes response to the:***

### **Queensferry High Street Town Centre Public Realm Revised Project - January 2020**

#### **Overview**

Spokes welcomes many of the planned improvements to Queensferry High Street contained within the Revised Project. Queensferry High Street has long been place which was very difficult for cycling, because of previous poor design choices of surface treatment, with rounded setts, some of which are also laid parallel to the direction of travel; made worse by subsequent deterioration.

However, we are disturbed to see that the plans for the Waterfront Area, particularly the narrowing of the west end of Newhalls Road bad the introduction there of additional parking bays, will make cycling less pleasant and less safe. In our view, it would be preferable to concentrate on the High Street now and postpone this part of the project until funding becomes available to allow an improved scheme to be developed.

Furthermore, given the fact that Spokes had been included in earlier consultation on this project, and given that we had submitted detailed comments, it is of very great concern that we were not then given the opportunity to comment on the revised proposals. We would be concerned if the unsatisfactory consultation model used for Queensferry High Street is to be used for other projects around Edinburgh,

Spokes would normally make a submission on such projects so, notwithstanding the apparently finalised status of the plans, we have carefully reviewed the recently supplied detailed drawings and prepared these constructive comments and questions. We ask that the issues we raise are discussed, considered and be taken into account to the greatest extent still possible.

#### **Our comments are grouped as follows:**

1. The Loan Junction.
2. High Street
3. Waterfront Area/ Newhalls Road
4. Construction Period
6. Consultation Process

## 1. The Loan Junction

1.1 What will the arrangements be here for cyclists? For instance:

1.1.1 Will there be Advance Stop Line zones with long lead-in lanes?

1.1.2 Will the signals allow early release for cyclists, as is now CEC policy for new or upgraded signals?. This will be particularly important because there is an uphill start from the High Street and because it is long way to the mid point of the junction when arriving from the west.

1.2.1 We are concerned that if there is a bus using the bus stop located (unusually) within the signalled junction:

- that it will create a pinch-point for eastbound cyclists, should following traffic attempt to overtake.
- that when a bus is stationary in the bus stop, that this will result in traffic backing up through the traffic signals, creating a hazard for all road users. This is likely to be a regular occurrence given that this is the main bus stop serving the town centre.

1.2.2 It may therefore be preferable for this bus stop to be located at the bottom of The Loan before the traffic lights, where the road is wider, visibility better and removing the inevitable queueing of traffic through the signalised junction.

1.3 What is the purpose of the area of "S7" paving in the left hand lane approaching the signals from the High Street?

## 2. High Street

2.1 We welcome the proposed big improvement in surface quality that this project will bring, especially the use of flat-top setts. This will make an enormous difference for cycling.

2.2 Sadly, these road surface improvements will also make driving easier, such that a 10 mph speed limit would be appropriate here. Given that the street will effectively be a shared space with no delineation of the kerb, has the use of traffic calming measures, such as speed tables been considered?

2.3 We welcome that the "one-way" proposal has been dropped.

2.4 We note the detailed complex use of different surfacing materials and are please that the Key refers to them being laid flush. For instance the various highlighted areas follow a sequence of surfaces:

S1/K5/K5/S2/K9/S4/K9/S2/K5/K5/S1

which makes for a lot of joins to lay flush. We would ask that this is closely monitored during construction.

2.5 It will very likely prove to be necessary to introduce bollards to stop rogue parking; this should be considered at the outset.

2.6 We presume that a generous amount of bike parking will be included?

### **3. Waterfront Area/ Newhalls Road**

3.1 Whilst recognising that funding and timing constraints have resulted in the need to concentrate the Revised Project's resources on the High Street, we are disturbed to see that these plans for the Waterfront Area, particularly the narrowing of Newhalls Road, will now make cycling less pleasant and less safe. In our view, it would be preferable to postpone this part of the project until funding becomes available to allow a significantly improved walking and cycling led scheme to be implemented to high place-making standards.

3.2 This is a very important and iconic place, is part of *National Cycle Network* Route 76 and is very popular with visitors. It deserves to be more than a giant car and coach park. Instead, there should be a widened pedestrian promenade alongside the waterside along its full length, provided with protected crossing points to the shops and cafes; flanked by a high quality two-way segregated cycle route running continuously from the High Street to Longcraig Road (the Dalmeny Estate access road), along the Newhalls Road Waterfront .

3.3 We are very concerned that the proposed narrowing of the western end of Newhalls Road, as well as the introduction there of the parking spaces, will increase the danger of 'dooring' and may introduce new risks for cyclists from cars manoeuvring in and out of spaces.

3.4 We are also concerned that the new coach turning area at the west end of the Hawes Car Park and coach manoeuvres generally, creates hazards for cyclists.

3.5 The full length of Edinburgh Road/Newhalls Road/High Street is already a 20mph zone with speed cushions. However, the existing signage could usefully be upgraded and supplemented; the 20mph sign on the left side of the road approaching the Waterfront from Hawes Brae is missing and the one on the right hand side is dirty and illegible.

3.6 We presume that a generous amount of bike parking will be included?

### **4. Construction Period**

4.1 The work should be planned in such a way as to allow cycling access through the site at all times during the construction work.

4.2 Have you considered a cargo bike scheme to support local businesses, on the City Council's Leith Walk tram work model?

### **5. Consultation Background and Process**

5.1 We have a major concern about the way that the whole process has been handled, with four rounds of consultation then the abandonment of the original scheme in favour of a completely different one, on which no proper consultation was carried out.

5.2 We are very concerned that if the unsatisfactory consultation model used for Queensferry High Street is used for other projects around Edinburgh, then Spokes' voice and the voice of other key stakeholders, will not be heard and the opportunity to improve schemes and ensure that all needs are properly catered for, will be lost. This could affect various users as well as cyclists.

5.3 Spokes is routinely invited to comment on public realm consultations and we have been surprised and disappointed that this has hardly happened here:

- In April 2019 Spokes was contacted by the Council's consultants, *Ironside Farrar*, with a significantly more ambitious set of plans. Surprisingly, that was the fourth Consultation

Event We submitted a comprehensive set of comments in May 2019 response, which are on the Spokes website here:

<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1905-Spokes-response-to-the-Queensferry-Consultation-23-May-2019.pdf>

- We were surprised that there was nothing about this project on the Council's Consultation Hub website, other than the Queensferry Placemaking page, last updated in 2015.
- In June 2019 CEC published a Project Update, announced an additional £1 million pounds from the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund award. This Update announced a layout for the High Street, but was silent on Newhalls Road and although it stated that a Public Exhibition would be held later in the summer to convey the detail of the proposals, we are unaware of that taking place.
- In September 2019 the Transport Report to *Queensferry & District Community Council* stated that CEC and *Ironside Farrar* had recently held meetings with 'local business and Heritage Trust reps' on the revised proposals for the High Street.
- In November 2019 we asked *Ironside Farrar* for an update and they replied saying that they were awaiting CEC's approval before sending us on a copy of the update.
- In January 2020 we received a copy of *Project Update No.1 - December 2019* (and subsequently a set of detailed drawings), described as being the final scheme and out to tender. It would appear that only selective consultation was carried out before going out to tender on these revised proposals.

JEJ/NU/27 January 2020