

## Response from Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

To: sfp <[sfp@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sfp@westlothian.gov.uk)>

Thank you for this consultation about the schemes listed in 2 and 3 below. We have obtained feedback from members in West Lothian, and our comments are on the basis of members who have experience of particular schemes – we have not attempted a consistent and comparative analysis of schemes. Our members also raised additional related points, which are in section 4.

### 1. General points

In general, Spokes strongly supports the SfP schemes, though with the detailed comments below.

#### 1.1 Previous consultation

We were very critical of the earlier [Council official recommendations](#) to remove all SfP schemes on the basis of a consultation which appeared to be taken as a yes/no referendum, when it had major flaws as a referendum, albeit it gathered views from those who knew of it and chose to respond.

In that consultation, respondents *were not informed* of the apparent success of the project in reducing crashes and speeds, and so were not equipped with full information when responding. Furthermore, categories of people who are particularly vulnerable on the roads – the young and the old – were seriously under-represented amongst respondents..

only 0.1% of respondents were under 16

only 5.9% were 16-24

only 6.2% were 65-74

only 1.1% were 75+

This probably therefore greatly over-represented the wishes of car owners, despite the transport and responsibility hierarchies promoted by the Scottish Government and in the revised Highway Code. Our concerns were laid out in some detail [here](#).

#### 1.2 Timescales and Traffic Order procedures

We are therefore pleased that this new stakeholder consultation is now underway, following the [Council motion](#), but we are still not clear on the processes to be used. It is essential, for public confidence, for road safety, and to avoid waste of cash, that successful schemes *remain in place* until and unless they are rebuilt in improved materials. If temporary traffic orders (TTR) which legalise the schemes are expiring shortly, the Council should use the Scottish Government's revised Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO) procedure to keep schemes in place, rather than a standard TRO which might not come into force until after they had been removed due to TTR expiry.

#### 1.3 Quality of schemes

We fully appreciate that schemes had to be implemented quickly under the government covid guidance and funding. Nonetheless it is vital that schemes follow the new national guidance on cycling infrastructure, and this needs to be incorporated into improvements when schemes are made permanent. Not only will this further improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians but it will improve the general streetscape and feel of local streets.

## **2. SfP footway build outs**

### **2.1 A803 High Street, Linlithgow**

Apart from the quality of materials, etc, this is greatly welcomed. The previous footway was far too narrow for pedestrians, and there is also a significant benefit for cyclists in not having to move out to overtake parked vehicles (with the added danger of 'dooring') in this narrow section of road.

One person suggested replacing the footway widening by a cycle lane, but our view would be that the pedestrian benefit is particularly significant here because the original footway is ridiculously narrow - and also that a cycle lane would make more sense if extended for a much greater distance along the High Street., rather than just this short distance.

More generally, our members had a strong desire for reduced traffic, and reduced traffic dominance, in the entire High Street and its general layout.

### **2.2 A71 Main Street, West Calder**

We had no feedback from this area and so cannot comment

### **2.3 Main Street, Mid Calder**

This scheme should be retained and improved

### **2.4 B7015 Main Street, East Calder**

This should be retained and improved. In particular it helps reduce inappropriate parking, which delayed buses and causes danger for cyclists

### **2.5 B7031 Station Road, Kirknewton**

We had two responses from members, one supporting this specific scheme and one opposed. However, both were united in wanting a much wider implementation of both cycling and pedestrian space, together with 20mph limits physically enforced by traffic calming, throughout the town.

The specific objection to this scheme, from a parent who accompanies her children by bike, was that it significantly increases danger for cycling since cyclists are forced into the traffic lane (or are in danger of close passes) and this is particularly scary on an uphill where one cycles slowly and can hear traffic building up behind or attempting to pass. She would like it restored to a cycle lane, with bollard or other physical protection. It does seem very ironic that the sole SfP scheme in Kirknewton increased walking space by removing cycle space rather than by removing car space - particularly when there were many other locations in the town where car space could have been used to create wider pedestrian space and when cycling and walking conditions at the local school are particularly bad.

## **3. SfP cycle lanes**

### **3.1 A706 St Ninian's Road, Linlithgow**

There was support from several people to retain this scheme, but redesigned to physically enforce the car parking bans. Furthermore, the cycle lane should be extended to and over the motorway bridge.

### **3.2 B9080 Edinburgh Road / Back Station Road, Linlithgow**

This is a highly valuable and successful scheme in terms of cycling safety and confidence and, unlike several of the schemes, it has been observed almost 100% correctly by drivers. Previously the cyclist had to move well out into the traffic stream to avoid parked cars and the danger of 'dooring', whilst on a fairly steep uphill, and with traffic accelerating behind, emerging from the blind corner at the railway bridge. A secondary, smaller, benefit is added safety and confidence for pedestrians emerging from the pedestrian railway underpass onto the narrow Edinburgh Road footway, who now have a good view of traffic, rather than it being obscured by parked cars.

However, several people said the cycle lane needed to be extended further up, past the east station car park entrance, at least to the top of the incline, as the present arrangement still requires moving out past parked cars on an uphill, albeit a decreasing gradient. This extension should possibly be with double yellows rather than bollards, so faster cyclists can easily pass those traveling uphill at more modest speeds. Car parking could then be moved to the other side of the road, as has been done in the original scheme.

### **3.3 A899 East Main Street, Broxburn**

One member wrote to us in support of keeping this, which he found a useful route out of the town. Another felt it would be more appropriate to use a white line on the wide footway (however generally Spokes argues for onroad protected lanes rather than shared footways which reduce pedestrian space).

### **3.4 A89 Main Street, Blackridge**

This should be retained – the road is wide, so there is plenty space, and the area is built-up so there is significant cycling potential for local trips.

## 4. Other SfP and non-SfP related measures

### 4.1 Linlithgow Loanings pavement parking

This scheme was wonderful for pedestrians for the first few days, but was rapidly abused by drivers, and to work effectively requires physical measures to enforce banned parking. The scheme gives a feeling of improved safety and much more pleasant town-centre ambience on what is otherwise a very narrow footway, sometimes so obstructed by vehicles that a wide pushchair or wheelchair had difficulty – and two could certainly not pass each other. Furthermore, crossing the road becomes much more feasible as views and walking space are not obstructed by the parked vehicles.

Finally, a survey by a Spokes member some years ago found that these spaces were often occupied by the same vehicles all day; and if that is still the case then they have no value at all in terms of providing shopper-spaces.

This scheme is so beneficial that it should not be delayed until the Scottish Government pavement parking legislation is brought into force, a date which is postponed every time it comes into view!

### 4.2 Speed limits

Many speed limit reductions were implemented under Spaces for People. The Council is not at present consulting on these, and there is talk they may be reconsidered in a wider speed strategy at some unknown point in the future, but will be removed meantime when their temporary legal orders expire. We believe it would be a mistake to remove these schemes in advance of that review, especially at a time when the Scottish Government (and the Highway Code) are highlighting the hierarchy of traffic and of responsibilities, to give great protection and prominence to walking and cycling.

Although clearly there is some abuse of the limits, [the Council report \[Appendix 3\]](#) made clear that speeds have reduced – and, more important, crashes have also fallen significantly. In view of the reduction in crashes, it seems *reckless* to remove the limits now rather than retaining them until a county-wide review goes ahead. Furthermore, it would be simple to retain them meantime, by use of the [revised Experimental Traffic Order rules](#) introduced in November 2021 by the Scottish Government for the very purpose of easing the continuation of SfP measures when Temporary Traffic Orders expire.

Finally, it may well be that some of the 20mph limits are inappropriate – one of our members thought so. However, under the Experimental Traffic Order procedures people could comment and limits could be modified during the lifetime of the Order and before the eventual scheme becomes permanent.

### 4.3 Falkirk Road, Linlithgow

The long-standing cycle lanes here are most welcome and are extensively used but, as you will know, were very badly laid, resulting in frequent patching and continuing pothole appearance. Furthermore, SfP-type bollards, or some other physical segregation method are vital as vehicles occasionally encroach, and there is also occasional parking on the lanes. We urge an approach to Sustrans for match funding to implement this scheme.