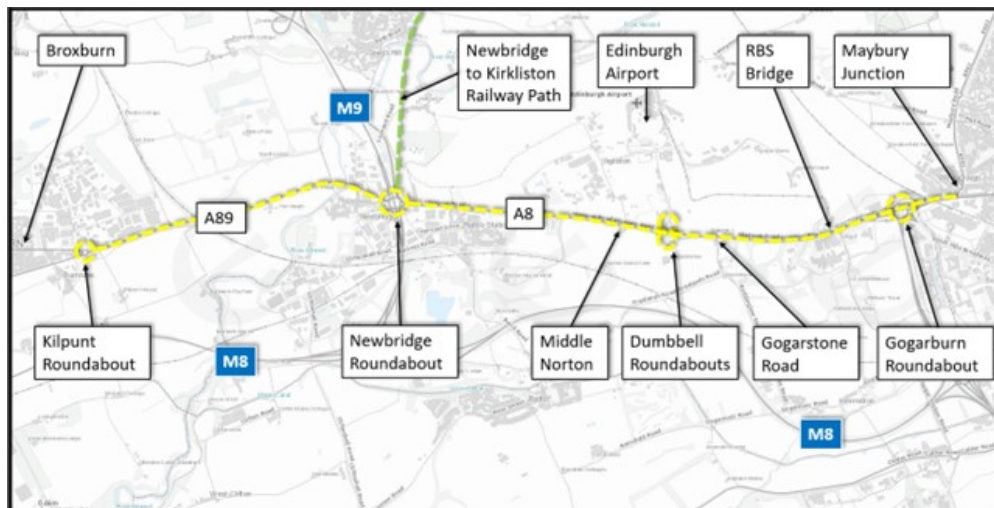


Broxburn to Maybury Public Transport and Active Travel Improvements

Response from Spokes Planning Group, September 2023

This response considers the proposals for Broxburn to Maybury Public Transport and Active Travel Improvements.



Working with West Lothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council want to improve travel along the A8/A89 between Broxburn and Maybury by:

- prioritise bus and reduce bus journey times
- increase bus capacity, better connecting growing communities
- deliver faster more direct services to key communities.

Spokes have the following general comments and some detailed specific comments.

General comments

We welcome the intent of the proposed A8 corridor improvements to increase active and public transport use from Maybury to Broxburn by the City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with West Lothian Council.

However, the proposals seem to be a missed opportunity given the Scottish Government's 20% car km reduction commitment and City of Edinburgh Council's 30% car km reduction target as well as the documented issues cycle users on the corridor. In particular, around Maybury, Gogarstone Rd, Ratho Station and the Airport junction. Given the equivalent housing for the current population of Falkirk and Livingston is being built in the short to medium term in West Lothian, we believe a radical redesign of the road network must be considered.

Spokes Lothian is very concerned that there is a fundamental flaw in expanding the A8 by adding a bus lane rather than reallocating road space and possibly filtering the A8 at the airport junction to allow public transport priority. Given this section of the A8 (Gogar Stone - Gogar Park) was dualled in 1974 before construction of the M8 in 1995 to alleviate congestion on the A8, local authorities and consultants would be foolhardy in expanding this road when previous road expansion has clearly not reduced congestion. It's a 'carrots-only' plan, with major improvements for bus and minor improvements for cyclists, but for drivers it just as convenient as now - indeed part has an extra car lane - so no real prompt to drivers to consider switching

Spokes Lothian is also concerned about the long term vision for the Quiet Route 9. There is no clear indication of the route proposed to be followed due to the 'missing link' (between Gogarburn & Gogarstone Rd (north side of A8) and how the airport dumbbell junction is traversed now and in the future. Can officers please provide this plan for consideration as the missing link makes the full route unclear?

In addition to the maintained or increased road capacity provided by this project, there are also no attempts to manage demand through the dense area of Corstorphine. An area that is also part of CEC's 20 minute neighborhood proposals. Given the significant challenges that will be presented by the large numbers of housing proposed, we feel more ambitious proposals such as a bus gate in Corstorphine are due consideration.

Enabling more people to use the bus and walk / wheel / cycle here will require reducing motor vehicle space allocation along the A8, not just within the new developments being constructed. Making active travel safer will actually help to reduce the need for motor vehicles not using the A8 corridor. This will help to prioritise / encourage modal shift to public and active transport.

We would urge the City of Edinburgh Council to prioritise the reallocation of road space to public transport and active travel along the corridor rather than encouraging more motor vehicle use.

We therefore object to several elements of the proposals put forward, and we urge the council to review our detailed comments carefully.

Detailed comments

The following attending the public forum on 24.08.2023 with Consultants and CEC Officers

Please find below Spokes Lothian Planning Group (Spokes PG) comments;

There is no indication as to how the proposed toucan crossings would work or be controlled. Spokes would like these to detect cycle users to avoid prolonged delay and waiting at 'beg buttons' common on many routes. This inconvenience makes the route of lower utility to active travelers.

The fact there is no upgrade to Newbridge cycle/footbridge or Airport crossing leads Spokes to conclude there is no serious ambition or target for modal shift along the corridor. These pinch points are well documented and will become even more of an issue if the route is not improved in tandem with the pinch points.

Spokes is very concerned there are no real changes to the blind crossings nearer the Airport or Highland Show Centre, such as at Gogarstone Road. How is cyclist safety improved and access encouraged to events at Highland Show Centre by bike?

The section of A8 west of the airport is becoming more urbanised; if more signalised crossings were put in, that would slow the traffic and make the road safer. Spokes supports the replacement of the overbridge at Ratho Station by at-grade crossing(s) of a safe and appropriate design.

A89

Pedestrians and cyclists should have clear priority at the crossing of Peniel Place. This could be achieved through a parallel crossing. Raising the crossing will also reduce vehicle speeds on the approach to the A89.

Pedestrians and cyclists should have clear priority at the entrance to West Haugh Cottages. This could be achieved through a continuous treatment, maintaining the level of the shared use path.

A8 (Newbridge to Ratho Station)

The A8 would be 30mph from Newbridge towards Maybury but then increases to 40mph after the 2nd toucan crossing point. So it is unclear if the two further east toucans towards Maybury are also 40mph. It looks like the Gogarstone Rd toucan crossing is 40mph and three lanes wide, as a new bus lane is being added eastbound. Spokes are very concerned about the suitability and safety of this given the lack of guidance in Cycling by Design 2021.

The shared use path to the south of the A8 is below the absolute minimum width in CbD.

A8 (Ratho Station to Ingliston Road)

Width should be taken from the Central Median and/or the buffer to widen the shared use route to the recommended four metres. 1.6 metres is clearly not acceptable for a shared use route.

To prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, crossings of the shared use route should be made

continuous. In particular, but not exclusively, Hallyards Road and Norton Mains House Access. If this is not possible, a raised table should be introduced.

Ingliston Road (60619782-SHT-CON-DD-0105-P2-005)

To prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, crossings of the shared use route should be made continuous. If this is not possible, a raised table should be introduced.

Although cross-sections and widths are not provided, more width appears to be available for the shared use route. A target of 4m should be used.

A8 (Ingliston Road to Maybury)

Width should be taken from the Central Median and/or the buffer to widen the shared use route to the recommended four metres.

To prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, crossings of the shared use route should be made continuous. If this is not possible, a raised table should be introduced. The crossing of Gogarstone Road in particular still appears to provide a low level of service. Signal design at the Maybury junction should take into account wait times for pedestrians and cyclists, preventing significant waits - particularly on the Quiet Route 9 alignment.

Kirkliston - Newbridge Path

Given the relative simplicity of the majority of this proposal, we feel an ambition towards early delivery of this component would deliver faster benefits to active travel users as well as a reputational win for the project.

Spokes welcome the proposals to improve the railway path link to/from Kirkliston and South Queensferry to a sealed surface with lighting making it usable for many, but we would like to note that this is most appropriate as a leisure rather than utility cycle route given concern by some vulnerable groups about use at night.

Additional comments

Two-Stage 3 Lane Toucan Crossing Concerns

Spokes Lothian Planning Group have found only 3 similar examples of toucan (& puffin) crossings of 3 lane roads in Scotland.

Springburn Road in Glasgow; <https://goo.gl/maps/iqhnY9kJ2B5LDcMu7>

Aberdeen; <https://goo.gl/maps/iGDxgxVpwujMMK5JA>

Aberdeen; (not a toucan) <https://goo.gl/maps/7FedYM6jGYzeoeMVA>

We cannot find these represented in best practice guidance documents such as Scot Gov's Cycling by Design 2021 and UK Gov's Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1-20.

The key reference is;

Cycling by Design 2021

Signal Controlled Crossings:

“Signal controlled crossings can be provided to enable cycle users to cross a road. In many cases pedestrian crossing facilities will also be incorporated. Where cycle users and pedestrians both have to cross a road, the crossing may be arranged as follows:

- In a shared crossing, where the cycle users and pedestrians cross together (as in a Toucan arrangement)*
- In separate facilities. Separate facilities can provide a better level of service by reducing conflict between Signal-controlled cycle crossings different users, but potentially require a larger area and greater crossing width.*

Crossings are designed as a single stage without the need for users to wait on refuge islands. Push button or demand units have to be positioned where waiting pedestrians and cycle users can reach them easily, including by cycle users who are low to the ground (recumbent cycle users) or seated well back from the front wheel. If a nearside signal aspect for pedestrians and cycle users is used, it should be positioned so that users look towards approaching traffic when looking at the signal.”

Spokes would therefore like to know why the use is deemed safe / appropriate in this situation and whether analysis of other examples or precedents can be provided so we can compare like-for-like. Whereas on the B800 junction to the west of Newbridge and two-stage crossing is being simplified to a single stage crossing.

Alternative Crossing Types

Spokes PG has tried to identify different design approaches to cycle crossing of multi lane roads that are grade separated.

One example referenced in UK Gov's Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1-20 is [Hambrook Junction near Bristol](#) of a single stage cycle (and 2 stage pedestrian) crossing across 6 lanes of 50mph traffic.



As LTN 1-20 notes 10.4.20 *Where it is necessary to stagger pedestrian crossing facilities, a **separate single stage crossing for cyclists should be provided** (see Figure 10.9), or alternatively an angled crossing on a wider central refuge (see Figure 10.10).*

The image adjacent is of Hambrook Junction; Image from [GoogleMaps](#)

Spokes has approached the local cycle group (Bristol Cycling Campaign) who've asked their membership and commented that the Hambrook Junction cycle crossing "was positive regarding making crossing quicker & easier. And that perhaps it could be replicated at other wide crossings."

Therefore Spokes would like to liaise with consultants and / or Council Officer's regarding these suggestions and whether it could be appropriate for use along the A8.