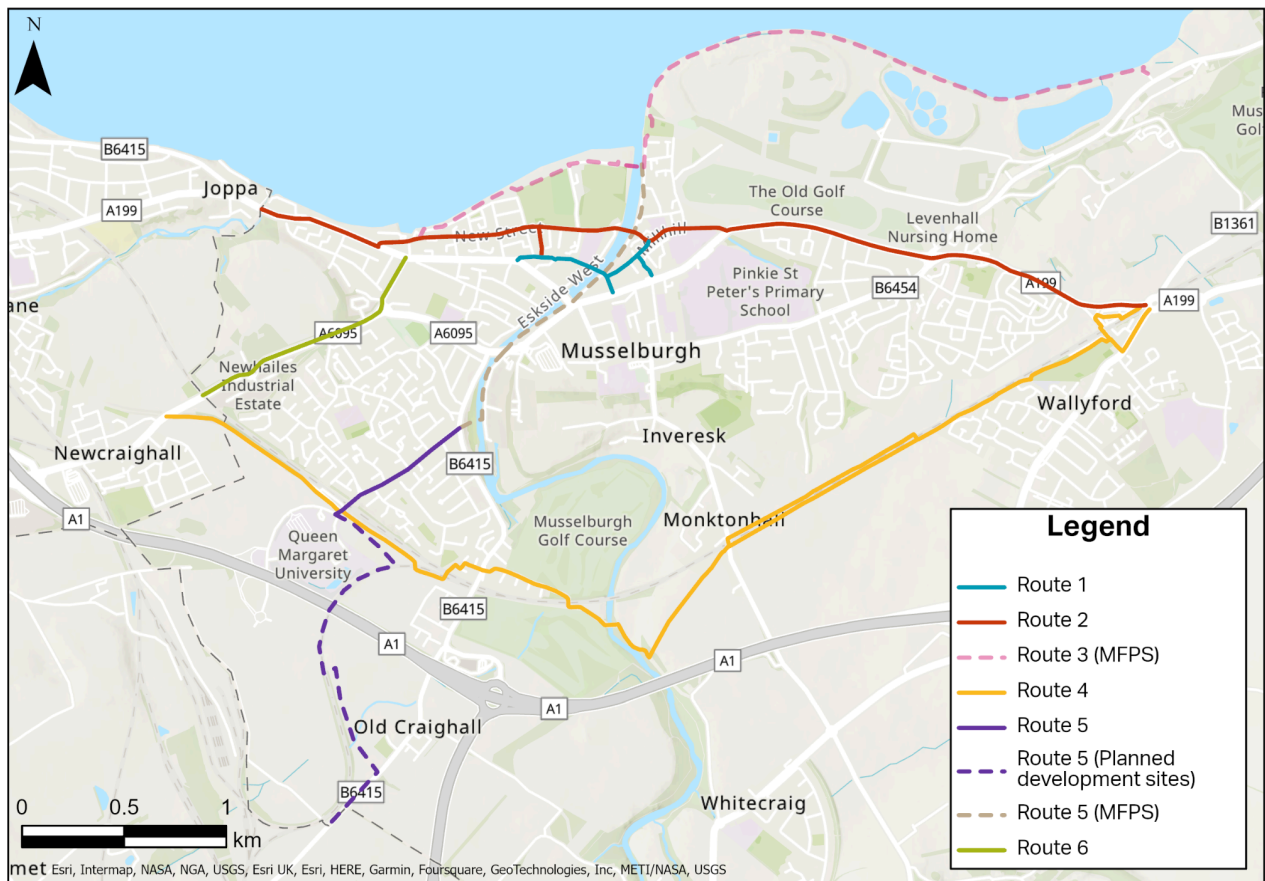


Musselburgh Active Toun

Response from Spokes Planning Group, January 2024

This response considers the proposals for Musselburgh Active Toun routes 1, 2, 4 & 6. This also provides comments on Routes 3 and 5 between Stoneybank Terrace and Goose Green that are being delivered by the Musselburgh Flood Prevention Scheme (MFPS).



Musselburgh Active Toun is being funded by the Scottish Government through Sustrans Scotland's Places for Everyone programme and National Cycle Network Development fund.

East Lothian Council wants to improve active travel in Musselburgh (the fastest growing town in East Lothian) with key cross boundary connections into Edinburgh and Midlothian. It is a unique opportunity to transform the transport network sustainably and bring economic growth to the town and its communities.

The project comprises the following routes and they are being delivered as part of the Active Toun and MFPS.

- *Route 1 - links to town centre and High Street destinations & connects adjoining routes at the Esk & Route 2*
- *Route 2 - East - West: Cross-town link extending from Wallyford to Joppa.*
- *Route 3 - Route 3 is being designed and delivered alongside the MFPS*
- *Route 4 - Cross East Lothian Active Freeway (part of) to / from Edinburgh*
- *Route 5 - Queen Margaret University (QMU) campus & Musselburgh train station sites to the town centre. Route 5 is being designed and delivered alongside the MFPS*
- *Route 6 - Musselburgh to Newcraighall Station and beyond.*

Spokes have the following general comments and some detailed specific comments on the route designs / proposals.

General comments

We welcome the intent of the proposed Musselburgh Active Toun improvements to increase active transport use in and around Musselburgh by the East Lothian Council. This alongside the Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme (MFPS) project could be a real game-changer in making Musselburgh an exemplar settlement for retrofitting active travel in Scotland.

However, there are some points that remain unclear which need further design development such as widths of lanes and arrangements to minimise conflict between all road users.

Also the fact these are being delivered by two separate schemes in tandem means there could be inconsistencies that mean routes aren't as legible or continuous as should be.

Finally links to / from neighbouring local authorities, especially Edinburgh at Joppa & Newcraighall and Midlothian at Millerhill & Old Craighall. These are essential to be developed as this is critical for the Active Travel Freeway needs to provide direct high capacity routes between population centres facilitating real modal shift.

We therefore support the intent of the proposals put forward, but we urge the council to review our detailed comments carefully.

Detailed comments

The following attending a meeting with Consultants and ELC Officers please find below Spokes Lothian Planning Group (Spokes PG) comments;

Of the information provided

Route 1 - links to town centre and High Street destinations & connects adjoining routes at the Esk & Route 2.

Spokes Planning Group has the following comments on the specific drawing sheets provided for consideration;

SHEET 1A

Spokes PG is encouraged to hear that there is a 'journey hub' proposed at the Brunton Theatre.

If car parking still allowed on North High Street then access is restricted for cycles. It would be good see removal of some parking and link via a dropped kerb to allow continuous cycling along N High St.

Is the contraflow cycle lane entrance beside Links Street to be segregated to prevent parking in the cycle lane? Or are double yellow lines proposed?

SHEET 1B

Where North High St meets Brunton Court is an island (defender) physical barrier being provided to protect exiting cycles from turning vehicles?

SHEET 2

It is unclear if the existing Esk footbridge is being retained as the existing alignment would be preferable for connecting Brunton Court and Shorthope Street. Could the new bridge proposed be realigned like existing to avoid sharp turns for cycle users?

Chicane barriers at the new bridge should not be used. Central bollard with chevron below and then the left turn will be enough to safely slow cycles (if that is desired).

For the north south river path connection (Route 5?), it seems a shame this alignment means felling of trees north and south of the existing bridge. There is an existing carriageway that could be repurposed and linked southwards (Eskside East). To the south currently there is severely restricted headroom here at the Bridge Street road bridge. Please provide more detail how more headroom is achieved and safeguarded during periods of high river levels.

At Millhill could narrowing (physical or visually) as per Cycling by Design 2021 be better for cycle safety than road markings. e.g. Albert Place in Stirling.

At Stanhope Street, we consider a cycle contraflow suitable as long as the speed limit is 20mph retained and intrusive through traffic to Millhill is minimised. A

continuous pavement across the junction of Shorthopre Street and High Street should be provided. Aside from the benefits to High Street for pedestrians, this will further indicate the low traffic / mixed use status of Shorthope Street.

Spokes PG would like to see improvements to cycle parking provision on the High Street to encourage cycling to the shopper and workers in this area. This needs to be secure and suitable for various cycles including non-standard cycles.

SHEET 3

Spokes welcomes the improvements to Kerr's Wynd & Millhill Lane.

Route 2 - East - West: Cross-town link extending from Wallyford to Joppa.

This provides the best opportunity to give continuous cross boundary links for cycle users to/from Edinburgh's Quiet Route 10 from Portobello Prom to Leith. There is a gap in safe cycle provision through Joppa on Musselburgh Road which Spokes would like to see developed as soon as possible.

Spokes Planning Group has the following comments on the specific drawing sheets provided for consideration;

SHEET 1A

Could visual narrowing along the length of road be better at reducing motor vehicle speeds and / or a modal filter provide a 'road cyclist' alternative from the coastal route 3 which will be more for leisure trips and avoid conflict with pedestrians. See Gogar Station Rd for example.

Please provide information on what is proposed for the link to Joppa / Porty (CEC Quiet Route 10) via Edinburgh Road.

SHEET 1 B

Are advisory lanes best practice given they encourage close passes. Is a visually narrow cycle street a better design like recent works on Albert Place, Stirling? We are concerned that some of the cycle logo markings seem quite close to parked vehicle too, possibly encouraging cyclists to ride in the Door-zone.

SHEET 2 A

Would a modal filter on New Street removing through traffic be better here than multiple speed humps / raised crossings?

SHEET 2 B

Please keep the current alignment of the Electric Bridge as it is a very good to link from east-west away from main motor traffic routes. Also the current obvious segregation of bridge users should be retained in any new bridge design to avoid conflict as the current arrangement works much better than before Covid when the Electric Bridge was opened for cycles.

SHEET 3 A

Is the cycle provision on Millhill eastbound (near the racecourse) soft or hard segregated? What happens at peak times like at frequent events like school pick-up / drop-off or on less frequent events like on race days? It seems unreasonable for cyclists to have to cycle around parked vehicles and then over to the left of the road when they get to the double yellows area shown on the drawing to get through the pinch-point.

The “segregated area” looks as though parking is allowed at the start of it – b) The junction with the cycleway on Linkfield Rd looks horrendous – difficult to navigate, dangerous to cross the main road and unsafe for accessing Millhill.

SHEET 3 B

Is there a way to ease eastbound cycle access geometry from Millhill into Linkfield Rd. Spokes welcomes the removal of these island pinch points. However we are concerned about the narrowness of the segregated cycleway throughout and especially here on Linkfield Road where the bidirectional route should be at least 3m wide (as per Cycling by Design, 2021) rather than the proposed 2.1m / 2.5m.

SHEET 4 A

Please clarify what the existing vehicle activated sign is.

SHEET 4 B

No specific comments. See 4 A.

SHEET 5 A

Spokes is encouraged to see improvements to cycle infrastructure at the roundabout. However it is complex due to the mix of uni and bidirectional cycle user routes. So we query whether these should be signalised toucans where bidirectional as it isn't a typical 'dutch roundabout' arrangement.

Would it be better to have a concentric circular cycleway to minimise navigation of the roundabout by cycles? This arrangement is not as per the only UK 'dutch roundabout' at Fendon Rd, Cambridge (see GoogleMaps satellite image)

Two of the busier of four crossings are single stage at Fendon Rd, Cambridge allowing a refuge in the between the two live lanes and allows visibility in one direction at a time especially when busy. Means if in doubt cycles can stop and take refuge. On the GoogleMaps satellite image below these are the top and lower crossings with pink central refuges.



The exit onto Ravensheugh Rd looks like a very awkward for cycles.

Uni / Bi-directional transition westwards also be provided onto the roadway or west of the pedestrian zebra crossing to preventing cycles clearing the crossing suddenly then having to give way to pedestrians. We fear this could lead to cycles being forced to wait on the roadway without adequate space being provided.

Finally what speed limit is proposed for motor vehicles using the roundabout. The Fendon Rd roundabout speed limit drops to 20mph for the roundabout and we would deem this essential if this was a first in Scotland.

SHEET 5 B

No specific comments.

SHEET 6 A

For southbound cycles headed to The Loan, what is safest crossing point? Ideally would be on right side before corner? Could a toucan crossing be provided or signalised junction?

SHEET 6 B

Good to see East Lothian Active Freeway plan to Tranent, Haddington & Dunbar being developed.

Route 6 - Musselburgh to Newcraighall Station and beyond.

No drawings are provided for consideration of these proposals.

Online survey also available here;

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/f2007e90-1902-4dd5-ae16-62b96ccc282a>

- Option A - two-way cycle track on the north side of Newhailes Road.
- Option B - one-way cycle tracks on both sides of Newhailes Road.

Given the lack of active frontages along A6095 Newhailes Road Spokes Lothian Planning Group supports Option A for Route 6. However there needs to be easy access from the residential areas accessed via Clayknowes Crescent & employment destination at the Industrial Estate.

However we would like to note concern that the crossing at the entrance to Newhailes House can be busy at times (infrequently weekends & events) so a safe crossing is essential at the exit / entry from the roundabout. A zebra with parallel cycle crossing would be preferable to give clear priority to walkers, wheelers and cyclists.

We would also like to see detail of the crossing of Edinburgh Road (A199) to/from Harbour Road where the existing contraflow cycle provision needs to be enhanced.

Spokes also note that Network Rail (not just City of Edinburgh Council) need to be engaged at the southern edge of Route 6 given the bridge crossing the East Coast Mainline railway is a notorious pinch point

Additional comments: Active Freeway & MFPS projects

Route 3 - Coastal Route NCR 76

Route 3 is being designed and delivered alongside the MFPS.

Spokes Planning Group welcomes further enhancement to the coastal path which incorporates NCR 76 and the John Muir Way.

An additional crossing of the Esk at the northern edge should help to provide uninterrupted segregated cycle access from Prestonpans to Fisherrow Harbour. This will be an important leisure route for many cyclists (as it is already) and also enable local access to the Ash Lagoon nature reserve and beach linking with the Routes 2, 5 & 6.

Route 4 - Cross East Lothian Active Freeway (part of) to / from Edinburgh

Spokes Planning Group welcomes the development of the proposals to form an Active Freeway

Spokes Planning Group has the following comments on the indicative route 4 proposal provided for consideration;

- It would be preferable for route 4 to maintain the level of the ECML over the Esk at this point (perhaps providing a maintenance access route for Network Rail). The existing bridge is inadequate in width and the gradient on the eastern bank will be too steep.
- There is an opportunity to link to Whitecraig via the old railway path bed (which forms NCN route 1 from Dalkeith. This might be a better option than disturbing the Scheduled Monument area on this site.
- At the east end the route parallel to the rail line to Wallyford joining with the existing path is sensible for onward links to Tranent and Haddington.
- At the west end the route would need to be over the road at Whitehill St / Newhailes Road given how busy that route is. This could also link to Route 6 proposals. We would like to see CEC / SESTRANS proposals for how this links into Edinburgh City Centre.
- We would like the council to remove the existing chicane barriers between Monktonhall Place and Mayfield Park opening up access for residents in these areas and beyond. Especially those using any non-standard cycles.

Route 5 - Queen Margaret University (QMU) campus & Musselburgh train station sites to the town centre.

NOTE: Route 5 is being designed and delivered alongside the MFPS

Spokes Planning Group has the following comments on the specific drawing sheets provided for consideration;

SHEET 1

Sinusoidal humps proposed to Stoneybank Crescent. Spokes welcome traffic speed calming measures.

SHEET 2

Spokes PG welcomes the use of a bus gate along with visual narrowing to improve Stoneybank Terrace for cycling.

Spokes PG would like reassurance the cycle lanes outside of parked cars on Whitehill Farm Road is safe for cycle users. We feel that painted cycle lanes outside parked cars are not safe, cyclists should be at least a metre out from the parked cars and the lanes are not wide enough to accommodate this.

More detail is needed for the link to the northern section of Route 5 and the cycle crossing of Monktonhall Terrace.

SHEET 3

Thank you providing this extra drawing. It is good to see the unnecessary roundabout replaced with a T junction. Shuttle working over the bridge is much better but can ELC confirm if a separate cycle phase would be provided? A widened bridge would be preferable in the long term.

This is especially needed when headed south for cycles as the cycle lane disappears before the ASL box.

More detail is needed for the link to the southern section of Route 5 and the cycle link to Monktonhall.

At Musselburgh train station the junction with the existing shared paths on NCR 1 is unclear. This area is often busy with pedestrians (from the University or Train Station). Ideally, cyclists could stay on the road but there is currently a barrier, could it be replaced with a rising bollard or similar to allow cyclists to remain on the road instead of being in conflict with pedestrians?

Other Comments - Inveresk Road

NOTE: Spokes members have already been in discussion with Councillor Shona McIntosh regarding this item.

Spokes Planning Group would like to formally request that the two halves of Inveresk Road (which meet at a right-angle just east of the big Tesco), are properly connected as a through route for cyclists, as they used to be before Tesco was built. This existing modal filter is very hard to navigate and should be made more permeable as per Cycle by Design standards.

This route is a useful 'bypass' for the town centre, as eastwards it takes you right through to Levenhall, and westwards out to Newhailes and Newcraighall. This route avoids a nasty junction at the main road bridge, and the busy town shopping centre.