

# Spokes Porty deputation for TEC meeting - 11 January 2024

## [Agenda Item 7.1 Major Junctions Review Update \(King's Road/Portobello High St Junction scheme\)](#)

Spokes Porty is a local group of Spokes - The Lothian Cycle Campaign. We campaign to make walking, wheeling, and cycling safe, easy, and fun for everyone in and around Edinburgh East.

### Summary of our position

We are deeply concerned, disappointed, and frustrated by the lack of progress, despite the political will of TEC, to deliver the King's Road/Portobello High St Junction safety scheme, given the two fatalities and the subsequent amount of voluntary work put in by community members such as ourselves. We urge TEC to:

1. Explain in full why the timetable outlined in the June 2023 TEC paper has slipped so badly (from expected delivery in summer 2024 to potentially spring 2026).
2. Agree that the scheme should be prioritised and resourced immediately, ensuring the team responsible for it has the leadership, skills, capacity, time, and resource to deliver it to a high standard without further delays. This should include options of contracting out elements of the work if the work cannot be done in-house effectively.
3. Ask officers to revisit the option of the long-term solution and the benefits/risks of proceeding with that now rather than doing the work in stages as previously expected and report back to TEC and stakeholders in parallel to starting work on the medium-term detailed design. This is because the time now expected by officers to deliver the medium-term scheme could be as late as spring 2026.
4. Investigate funding options from this year's [Transport Scotland's 'Active Travel Infrastructure Fund'](#) for the scheme designs and delivery. The Fund closes on 2nd February.
5. Provide monthly written progress updates via email to Portobello communities starting in February (including ward councillors, the Community Council, and Spokes Porty).

### Background

Spokes Porty has been campaigning for years now for an urgent redesign of the junction following the deaths of Stuart Elliott (March 2019) and Heather Stronach (November 2020). Both Stuart and Heather were killed by HGV drivers as they cycled through the junction. Their deaths have been devastating for their families, friends, and colleagues, as well as for the local community. Nobody should face the risk of death in Edinburgh just for using a cycle to get around.

We worked hard with local councillors and other stakeholders to get the interim safety measures in place to temporarily ban HGV drivers from turning left into Sir Harry Lauder Road from Portobello High Street along with vital traffic calming measures on the diverted route through Northfield. The diversion was always intended to be short-term while alterations to the junction were progressed rapidly.

We also worked closely with the local community, ward councillors and council officers to produce outline design options for both this medium-term solution and a long term 'final' solution that had full agreement and support of all concerned.

We made a deputation on 15 June 2023 to TEC (Agenda item 7.5) supporting Option 3 as a medium-term measure and requested that all members of TEC support it. We also asked that the kerb lines be positioned correctly in this phase of work to allow future phases and connections on all arms of the junction. It's vital that the scheme is future proofed.

It is, therefore, frustrating and disappointing that several months have been wasted when real progress could have been made over the second half of 2023, and that nobody from the Council contacted ourselves, or as far as we know, other local stakeholders, to discuss the significant delay to the project or the reasons behind that delay.

In the June 2023 TEC paper (Agenda item 7.5) under 'Next Steps' it was stated that 'If Committee approve the recommendations, detailed design work will be undertaken for the preferred option and a contractor will then be procured to undertake construction. It is expected that delivery of the improvements would take place in summer 2024'. The paper went on to say that the scheme would be funded from the block allocation for Road Safety within the Council's Transport Capital Investment Programme.

The junction in its current state remains a hostile environment for everyone who walks, wheels and cycles despite the clear need for people to move between the various communities that surround the crossing without having to rely on a car. We have had recent reports of near misses by cyclists heading straight over the junction from Portobello by drivers turning left onto Sir Harry Lauder Road. Fishwives Causeway cannot be considered a viable alternative route for all as it only suits some routes and is not considered safe by many women in the dark given its isolation.

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