

SPOKES

The Lothian Cycle Campaign

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Response by Spokes to the Powderhall Junction Consultation, February 2024

1. Introduction

Spokes welcomes the proposals to improve walking and cycling facilities at the junction and in the surrounding area and has found the stakeholder consultation process very constructive.

2. Comments on the current proposals

2.1 We have serious concerns about the new proposal to significantly narrow Broughton Road, which is a consequence of the proposal to widen the pavements north along Broughton Road (to 2 meters on the north-west side and between 2.6 and 4.2 meters on the south-east side).

2.1.1 Whilst some pavement widening would be beneficial, its extent is such that it will, unfortunately, have the effect of making cycling more dangerous - because of the substantially narrowing of the carriageway (to 6.5m). We are very concerned that there will be intimidation and/or dangerous close-passes in this narrowed space, because of driver impatience and the speed difference between cyclists and motor vehicles. That includes danger to school children cycling to and from Broughton Primary School.

2.1.2 This unintended consequence was acknowledged at the stakeholder walk-round and we strongly recommend that this be reviewed further to achieve a better balance, with an outcome more consistent with the design objectives and the CEC's Traffic Hierarchy policies. We recommend that consideration be given to:

2.1.2.1 Revised space reallocation between walking and cycling. It would, for instance, be logical to continue of the junction cycle lane(s) north along Broughton road to the existing pedestrian crossing, by use of some of the 4.6 to 6.2 meters of combined pavement width. Without this, northbound cyclists will be pushed out into a narrow carriageway, moving from a space with greater protection to a space with worse protection. In the southbound direction the funnelling effect is very marked, from the pedestrian crossing to the rail bridge

2.1.2.2 Otherwise, this section of Broughton Road should be traffic calmed. We note the successful use of single lane working/priority narrowing chicanes on McDonald Road and recommend that this section of Broughton Road should also have this feature. It has been stated that Broughton Road is too busy for such treatment as it

is a primary route into the City Centre, but that fails the objective of improving the active travel hierarchy balance, because it prioritises traffic flow.

2.2 We are concerned that cyclists using the segregated cycle lanes and wishing to turn right into St Marks Path from Broughton Road will have to cycle around 3 sides on the junction. However, we understand that this is currently being reviewed with the CEC AT team, to possibly include a 2-way cycle lane to give direct right-turn access to St Marks Path and we are keen that that be included.

2.3 We are pleased to note that the overall design of the junction layout has recently been adapted from that published, to better align the cycle lanes across the junction with the approach lanes, reducing awkward left and right turns. We were shown amended drawings at the walk-round, but have not yet seen this published and our support presumes that these improved realignments will be incorporated.

2.4 There are numerous locations where widened pavements will need to be protected by bollards or other appropriate street furniture to prevent pavement parking, which is already a problem at this junction. (A van servicing the apartments in the former High School building on McDonald parked on the pavement during the recent site visit and remained there for several hours!) We recommend that such protection is fully designed-in up-front.

2.5 We welcome that the all green cycle phase will be triggered automatically by sensors, with no use of push buttons. We understand that that will include the St Marks Path, such that cyclists approaching from there will see a cycling signal.

3. Conclusion

We are happy to answer any queries and elaborate on all of the matters raised and look forward to a successful implementation, which balances the safety of all active travel users.

Ewan Jeffrey, for Spokes Planning Group
15 February 2024