

Edinburgh Park Arena: Planning application 24/00820/FUL

DRAFT Response from Spokes Planning Group, March 2024

This response considers the proposals for Edinburgh Park Arena. We wish to comment on the design put forward by the developer from the perspective of cyclists who will use the cycling routes venue already at the site, and from the perspective of Council transport and cycling policies.

We are extremely concerned that the designers of this massive (and very welcome) Edinburgh development appear to be unaware of Council policies on cycling. What little attention has been given to cycling infrastructure is wholly inadequate as well as being very poorly designed. The whole application needs thorough review by the Council's Active Travel team, and consequent revision, before it goes to Committee.

More generally, Spokes Lothian supports the principle of developing this site as an arena given its proximity to existing public transport at Edinburgh Park station. It makes sense to use this site like this to help minimise private car trips to / from the site.

The location on the edge of the city near the motorway / bypass should help to minimise through routes of HGVs towards the city centre.

Detailed comments:

Spokes have the following detailed comments on the proposals;

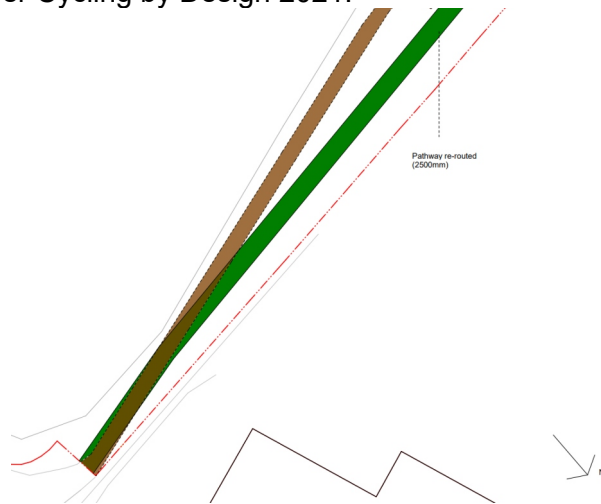
Impacts on Quiet Route 8:

The proposed site is bounded on 3 sides by the existing Quiet Route 8 which links the Roseburn (for the City Centre) to Edinburgh Park via mainly segregated cycleways / paths. This is a primary and high quality link that Spokes would like to see improved. Given the amount of housing due to be built at Edinburgh Park it is very important the capacity is adequate for this especially given the Council's own modal share targets.

The proposals appear to do nothing to improve the adjacent path under the railway apart from cutting back vegetation. Spokes is concerned that during event start and end it will be impossible for cycle users to use the underpass safely.

It is noted that access through the train station over bridge will be restricted to train ticket holders (rightly so) with crowd management likely as already seen at Haymarket during events at Murrayfield.

There seems to be a reliance on core paths and a lack of knowledge on the Quiet Routes network in the Transport Assessment. The proposed realignment of the path to the north of the Arena site is shown at an unacceptable 2.5m width. This should be 4m wide at minimum per Cycling by Design 2021.



The diagrams in the Transport Statement provide no reassurance that the realigned path connects to any meaningful routes further westwards. So as such we find it difficult to support this part of the proposal.

Hostile Environment:

Spokes are concerned by the visualisation of Lochside Court southwards which appears to show a inactive building frontage with no safe cycle provision.

We cannot tell if any thought has gone into how this street will be managed for car / taxi / private hire / coach / bus pick up and drop off before and after events. At peak times this could be a real issue for vulnerable road users.

Given there are no apparent restrictions proposed on access to this area it is very concerning what cycle users could face if using Quiet Route 8 after the arena has been built if no design solution is found.



Spokes believes all streets should be designed as per Edinburgh Street Design Guidance and Cycling by Design 2021. They should be conducive to safe quiet on street cycling at 20mph. If this isn't possible then a segregated off road route should be provided to allow safe access to and the station and surrounding sites by cycle users at all times.

Cycle Parking Provision:

Spokes note that the provision of 60 'Sheffield' type cycle stands is as per the minimum requirement of the Street Design Guidance. We note that a 1% modal share of trips is the factor that has determined the 60 no. cycle parking space provision. These seems to be contrary to the fact that in 2021 the Council stated it wanted ~4-5% target for 'other' trips by 2030.

Given the proximity to Quiet Route 8 and the train station we think it is inadequate. We also think it is likely that the spaces may be utilised by rail commuters given the proximity to the station entrance.

Cycle Parking Security:

We know that security at large gatherings is a concern and we note there is a secure bag drop for this purpose. We would request these are suitable size for bike bags / panniers.

Guests to the Arena who arrive by cycle would likely want to securely store their bike either in a monitored / observed area undercover. We would like to see sheltered and secure cycle storage provision for personal bikes integrated into the bag drop element of the proposal. This would encourage more cycle use of the venue.

Unsecure cycle parking is best suited for cycle hire bikes which would extend to the arena & station sites if reinstated in the city.

Staff commuting to the arena to work require secure and sheltered cycle storage given the length of shifts likely.

We ask that the developer & designers consider these matters to find a better solution taking on

In conclusion, Spokes PG would like to reiterate support for the principle of the Arena development however this is caveated by some serious concerns regarding the cycle provision at and around the Arena for which we advocate for detailed design consideration to be given prior to approving the proposal.