



*The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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**25/03979/FUL | Installation of 2x artificial sports pitches, associated warm up area, floodlighting, fencing, areas of hardstanding and infrastructure. | 79 Myreside Road Edinburgh EH10 5DB**

## Objection from Spokes Planning Group, September 2025

Submitted online and emailed to Case Officer Lewis McWilliam & copied to Morningside & Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart Ward Councillors

Spokes Lothian Planning Group (PG) would like to **OBJECT** to the proposals submitted under the planning application by George Watson College for artificial sports pitches at 79 Myreside Road.

Spokes PG feels an objection is justified given the complete disregard by the applicant in relation to the City Plan 2030 missing link Active Travel Route Safeguard numbered 'ATSG14' and the fact this application may prevent it ever being completed. This follows contact at the Pre Application Consultation stage with yet no acknowledgement in the planning application now submitted.

The ATSG14 is a key missing link for a safe direct low gradient route for walkers, wheelers and cyclists from the Union Canal at Meggetland through to Millar Crescent in Morningside via the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. This would achieve many aims of the City Mobility Plan, Car KM reduction targets and help people achieve healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

Spokes Planning Group wants the City of Edinburgh Council to ensure the applicant has factored in the route safeguard into the proposals and how it could be completed. This needs to be evidenced and will need to involve Network Rail as the adjacent landowner.

Spokes is aware there may be alternative ways to address any inability to deliver the shared use path. This could be through road space reallocation on Myreside and Colinton Roads or to the southside of the railway on land under the ownership of the same applicant. We would be happy to discuss these with the applicant and the City Council but it should be that the applicant contributes towards these if they prevent the path from ever being completed by building on the route safeguard already in the City Plan.

If the path will take yet more years to deliver this then raises the issue of active travel access to that whole area and means the City Plan safeguards are meaningless.

Spokes PG has the following detailed comments. If you wish to discuss any of these concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch.

# Detailed comments:

Spokes have the following detailed comments on the proposals;

## City Development Plan - Active Travel Route Safeguard:

We believe there should be mention of the path parallel to the southern edge of the site in the application, as this would make a difference to active travel locally. This route is an existing safeguard numbered 'ATSG14' in the [City of Edinburgh City Plan 2030](#) documentation.

This would link the Union Canal (NCN 75/754 & John Muir Way) at Meggetland (also Slateford Railway Station) to Morningside via the already built east-west route through the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and onward to Morningside via Millar Crescent. The aim of this safe guard is to create a safe active travel link to/from the school and to/from the Union Canal to the west & Morningside to the east as can be seen in Extract of City Plan 2030 South East Proposals Map.

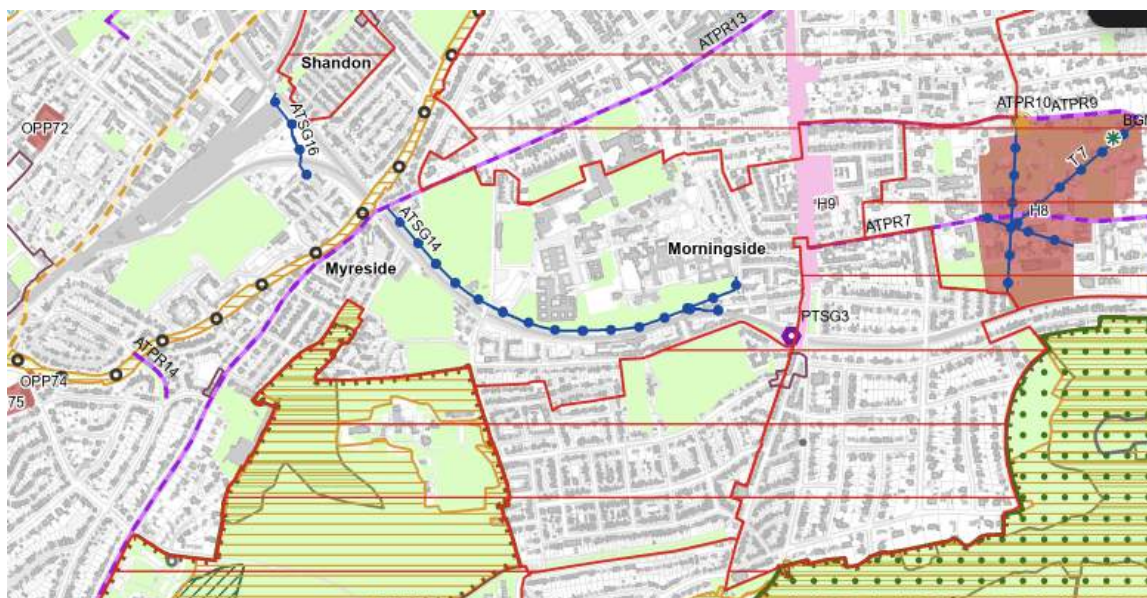


Fig 1: City Plan 2030 Extract

The current route is just a footpath with an unsealed surface and is very narrow. To widen it for shared active travel in line with Cycling by Design 2021 guidance, even taking standards to their narrowest extent there are sections which would either require build out over what we assume is Network Rail land to the south or building it on George Watsons School (GWC) land to the north. As far as we can tell this application would indeed stymy any hope this path would be completed to the north.



Fig 2: The existing poor quality walking path.

Therefore delivering the enhanced shared use path along the route safeguard proposed by CEC would need to be a partnership between GWC, CEC, Network Rail and partners like Sustrans or Paths for All. If routed south of the wall it could be overly complicated, technically challenging, and expensive. An alternative and pragmatic approach needs to be sought, with this planning application as catalyst to resolve the matter for once.

Given the NHS were made to build the route on their land to the east (north side of the railway boundary wall) and therefore we assume the same rule should apply to GWC.

#### **NHS & Lothian Greenspace Trust Existing Parts of ATSG14:**

The NHS Royal Edinburgh Hospital site had the [Greenspace Management Plan](#) of 2023 has built on the masterplan proposals that were part of the construction of the new Royal Edinburgh Building. Refer to approved and constructed path which was part of planning application 13/04232/FUL. This provided a full sealed tarmac shared use path from Myreside Road eastwards. It also included a costly toucan crossing to Myreside Road for the cyclists to be able to cross the road safely when the west section through GWC Playing Fields was to be completed.



Figs 3 & 4: The existing east section of the active travel route as installed by NHS

This has recently been enhanced further by NHS investment in the route to apply self binding material to sections of the proposal Canal to Morningside Route. This material does not preclude sealing of the surface when funds arise.

The NHS clearly sees the benefit of active travel of addressing health inequality issues and providing safe routes is part of the future of the site. Spokes PG believes GWC should see the same benefits.

### **Transport Statement:**

The transport statement makes no mention of the active travel route safeguard. It is very thin on detail and clearly desk based and doesn't recognise the mayhem that is around GWC on Myreside Rd and surrounding roads at peak school 'pick up drop off' (PUDO) times. Myreside Rd often becomes log jammed and can be jammed even on weekends with various sports with visiting teams.

Driver behaviour is notably bad at these peak times, due to frustration, and then this is all exacerbated by a particularly poor road surface along Myreside and narrow footways.

The shared use active travel path can be part of the solution to this PUDO congestion providing a safe and direct alternative to motor vehicle use for those who can walk, wheel and cycle.

The transport statement also makes no mention of GWCs own Bike Bus schemes; <https://www.gwc.org.uk/about-us/news/news-article/~board/school-news/post/watsons-is-head-over-wheels-for-cycling-to-school> and how this development could help facilitate further growth in active travel to the school and the wider community.

### Boundary & Missing Context:

The application Location Plan and other drawings in the planning submission appear to show the existing path within the scope of the site boundary and therefore part of the application. See extract below;

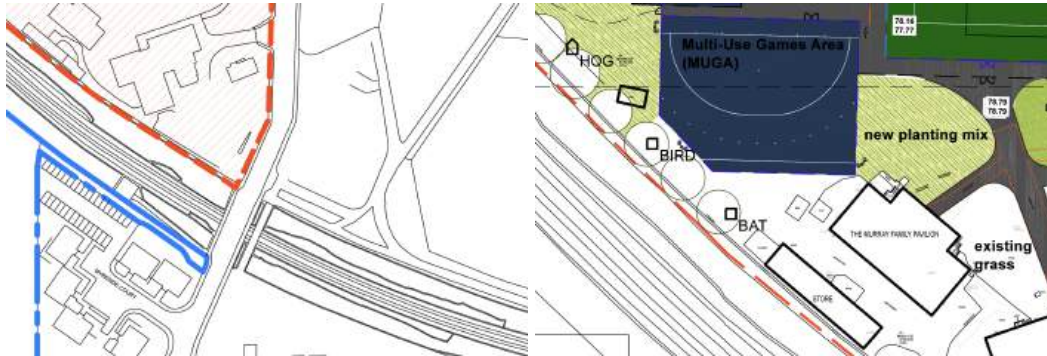


Fig 5 & 6: Extracts of drawings showing site boundary incorporating path

The location plans also don't show the correct context without the new Royal Edinburgh Hospital Building, including the shared use path to the east and the T junction road access into the REH. Therefore it is no wonder that the applicant hasn't considered active travel and the safeguard as part of the application if the drawings don't even show them. This is misleading and should be corrected.

There are no sections showing the boundary wall at the adjacent path in the application. These should be provided to show how the boundary wall is affected and how the path can be routed through the GWC site now or in the future.

Spokes PG would like to see clarification regarding both these matters.

### Lighting:

There is no assessment as to how the floodlighting will impact users of the existing path or cyclists who use Myreside Road. This needs to be carefully considered to ensure safety of vulnerable road and path users is not compromised by the extensive floodlighting proposed. Glare and shadow can make the difference between being seen or unseen and should be assessed.

### Cycle Parking:

Spokes encourages installation of additional Sheffield type cycle stands at the destination for participants and spectators to sports events at the artificial pitches. There is no indication from the information provided if any cycle parking is included. This should be provided as per Cycling by Design 2021 and Edinburgh Planning Guidance.

In conclusion, Spokes PG would like to reiterate our OBJECTION for the principle of the proposals in planning application 25/03979/FUL as currently submitted.