North Edinburgh Connections: Spokes Response June 2026

Spokes strongly supports the North Edinburgh Connections project. Apart from the section on Ferry Road, the project will deliver a safe, continuous cycle route, with the potential to connect to new and existing cycle routes within a significantly growing area of the city. Indeed, we would particularly like to commend the attention paid to connecting to existing infrastructure to the north: this is an example of good practice sometimes absent in other projects.

De-dualling Pennywell Road in particular will transform the streetscape and present an example for other urban dual carriageway sections within the city. This should greatly enhance the visual appearance and sense of place along this section, and is a second example of good practice that we would like to congratulate the project team for considering.

Project Comments

Cycleway levels are not shown but it is assumed that all crossings at bus stop bypasses and protected junctions are raised.

We are impressed by the ambition shown in the designs across Sheets 1-4. Indeed, in many respects these seem like exemplar designs for infrastructure on roads designated as part of the Primary Cycling Network (PCN), for which the intention is that cycling should be supported with segregated infrastructure. The Ferry Road (FR) section on Sheets 5-6 does not follow the same design principles, although that road is also designated as part of the PCN. We would ask that some further investigation of options for the cycling infrastructure is undertaken for this section with the aim to improve east-west connectivity for the future as more elements of the PCN are treated.

In our more detailed comments below, we would like to recommend two supplementary projects to increase network connectivity to the west of the scheme - although strictly out of scope of the current proposal, a relatively small amount of work in each area could add considerable benefit.

In addition, we think there is scope to evaluate further a range of options for the east end of the FR section to create easier east-west travel towards/ from Crewe Toll and to create enhanced access to the North Edinburgh Path Network (NEPN) (see Sheet 6 comments below).

We understand that a small number of suggested design changes have been made by the project team subsequent to the launch of the consultation. Our comments below will not reflect these, and apply to the plans as included on the consultation website.

Detailed Comments:

Sheet 1
We would recommend some attention is paid to the very eastern end of the northern cycle lane on West Granton Road (WGR), where eastbound cyclists have to rejoin the main carriageway - some measure of protection is needed here for a distance until they integrate into the traffic flow.

It is unclear how this project fits into the SWECO proposals for *Connecting Granton Waterfront*. Particularly on Waterfront Broadway (WB) where kerbed cycleways are proposed.

How do cyclists access WB northbound? This is QR12. For example, cyclists heading north on Waterfront Access would presumably have to execute a two-stage turn (turn left at the crossroads with WGR, then north across WGR). They would then struggle to access WB, as would cycle traffic coming east along WGR - the plans contain no easy connection to the north at this junction.

Overall, however, the approach taken here (which we would characterise as Dutch style design) seems a much better alternative to CYCLOPS-style provision, which seems to have been more common within Edinburgh so far.

Sheet 2 (Viewport 1)
How is access from the segregated cycleway on WGR to the toucan proposed? A dropped kerb appears to only be provided on one of four sides.

Sheet 2 (Viewport 2)
Early release cycle signals should be provided at West Granton Road/Waterfront Gait. We also strongly agree with the marked suggestion to consider a right-turn option for cyclists west-bound on WGR looking to turn right into Waterfront Gait.

Is the refuge island to the east of Waterfront Gait a suitable width here?

We would suggest looking at the pavement widths along this section (particularly around the bus-stop bypasses) to ensure that they are of a suitable size - 2m at a minimum. This will reduce cyclist-pedestrain conflict.

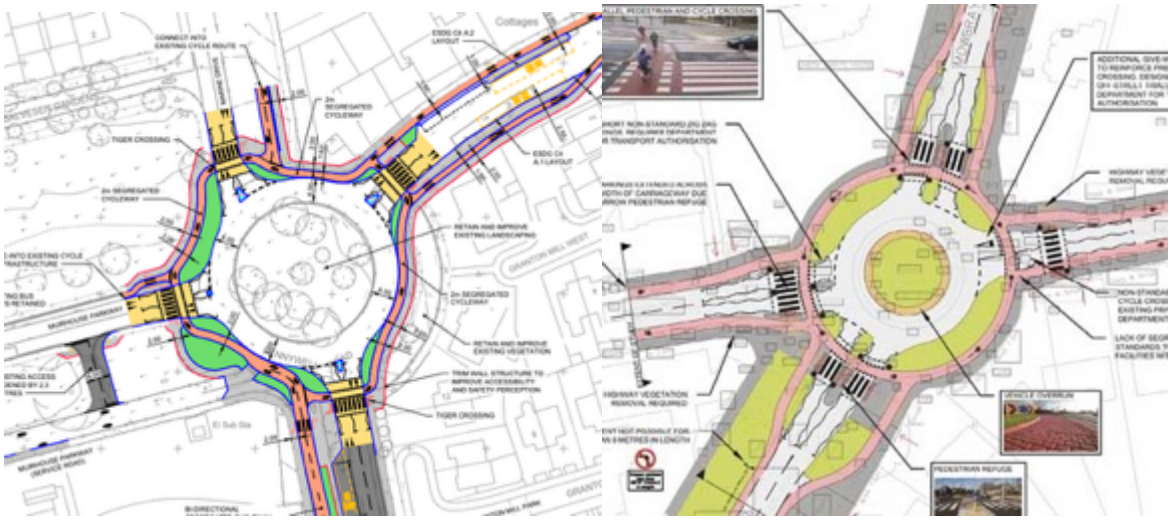
Sheet 3

The proposed arrangement at this major roundabout is a significant improvement and we support the principle embodied by the design here. Raised crossings are key and should be installed at each of the exits, as we are concerned that the 30mph speed limit and wide radius of the junction will lead to relatively high traffic speeds approaching the tiger crossings. One simple adjustment would be to ensure that the alignment of the exits forces vehicles to turn at close to 90 degrees to exit from the roundabout: this is generally accepted to reduce traffic speeds. For example, the exit to Marine Drive appears to be much less acute than this, which may encourage a higher approach speed to the crossing there.

Although we are aware of the need for Lothian Bus vehicles to use this roundabout, the radius of the roundabout would seem to encourage higher vehicle speeds. Please see the scale of the Cambridge 'Dutch Style' roundabout which has a 15m diameter island and 38m diameter cycle track. For the NE Connections proposals the existing roundabout of 36m diameter is retained unchanged. This roundabout could fit within the central island at Muirhouse.

Google Maps measurements of the Cambridge 'Dutch Style' roundabout

It appears the roundabout is too large for the type of cycle friendly design and existing road space should be reallocated for walking and greening via SUDS etc and allowing for a continuous circular cycleway geometry without unnecessary turns for cycle users. The roundabout has not really changed since the 1950's when it was first built apart from trees growing within it.



Drawings of Muirhouse proposal compared to Cambridge

As can be seen in the comparison of drawings (not to scale) the Cambridge roundabout cycleway is a continuous circle (like for motor vehicles) whereas Muirhouse this is not the case and cycle users have to slow to cross junction arms and it will be hard for drivers to tell if a cycle is continuing around or exiting the roundabout.

The mix of bidirection and unidirectional cycleways at various points around the roundabout at Muirhouse contrasts starkly with Cambirdge where there is a consistent unidirectional entry and exit (even if the roads adjoining do not have unidirectional segregation). Spokes has concerns this variety may lead to wrongway cycling around the roundabout which would be especially dangerous given the novelty of the design in Scotland.

Reduction in overall diameter will also reduce crossing times for pedestrians by shortening the distances and also any loss of central inaccessible vegetation would be gained by having more accessible greenspace to the perimeter closer to people walking and wheeling.

We would strongly recommend a follow-on project to connect the cycle infrastructure on the roundabout to the west-bound cycle infrastructure on Muirhouse Parkway, which would connect to Silverknowes and Cramond, as well as the high-rise buildings in Muirhouse itself. The use of the service road,

as currently indicated on the plans, seems to be the correct (and low-cost) option for beginning this, so we would highly recommend that work being prioritised to connect with this project. We would note that some remedial work on the current Travelling Safely infrastructure would be valuable here, and a move towards bolt-down kerbs or similar infrastructure units for the longer term would be highly desirable.

Sheet 4 (Viewport 1)
As Pennywell Gardens is used by a reasonable amount of traffic in addition to buses, a parallel crossing should be proposed here.

The tiger crossing at Macmillan Square is a very useful and sensible piece of connectivity to West Pilton.

Sheet 4 (Viewport 2)
At the right hand edge of this plan (south-end of the section of Pennywell Road), we feel that a parallel/controlled crossing would be more cost effective than widening the carriageway for the proposed refuge island, while providing greater active travel priority and connectivity to West Pilton.

Sheet 5 (Viewport 1)
The tiger crossing of Pennywell Road just north of the junction with FR would benefit from a raised table to provide a gateway feature to the 20mph area, which would enhance safety at this location.

At the very southern termination of the bi-directional cycle track at Ferry Road (FR), we would recommend adjusting the alignment of the track here to meet FR at 90 degrees - this would facilitate entry to the lane by cyclists on the main road approaching from the west, for example. This location forms our second suggested follow-on project - there is a need to link this project to the west along FR to connect with Drylaw, Davidson's Mains and Silverknowes (from the south). There may be a relatively low-cost opportunity to do this by using the set-back road sections on the south side of FR, with the main additional requirements being safe crossings of FR to reach this (we would suggest evaluating a signalised crossing at this point), followed by Groathill Road North, Wester Drylaw Place and Wester Drylaw Drive, with a connection back

to FR around Silverknowes Neuk (at which there is also a useful connection to NCN1).

Use of the set-back section of Ferry Road is perhaps understandable from a cost-efficiency perspective, but does remove the route here from the broader east-west desire line along FR as part of the PCN. We would encourage the project team to consider this within the wider strategic perspective of the PCN, and consider whether alternative designs might future-proof the scheme for longer-term development. For example, if the cycle route was a path set at the southern edge of the open space (perhaps with the proposed pedestrian paths moved more towards the northern edge), it would be closer to the desire line for west-east travel by cyclists from (say) Drylaw or Davidson's Mains and thus more direct, efficient and likely to be used more frequently. Other possible designs might also achieve these goals, and we would encourage some exploration of the possibilities here.

The entry/ exit point onto the set-back section of FR has good sightlines to the north for eastbound cyclists, but not for westbound. The double yellow lines would likely help to keep cars approaching from the north away from the latter, but this would rely on compliance with the markings, and would not completely remove the possibility of a wide-radius turn from a car causing a collision. We would suggest a possible solution in the form of a modal filter at the corner to remove the motor vehicle movement.

The density of car parking usually observed from here eastwards does mean that the road here is effectively a single lane. Use of more double-yellow lines or marked parking bays might allow more opportunities for vehicles of all types to pass each other easily.

Sheet 5 (Viewport 2)
At the motor vehicle entrance close to Ferry Road Grove, it would be desirable to create a pedestrian (and possibly a cycle) crossing with a raised table.

If a more southwards solution for the cycle route were to be adopted, the cycle route could either continue within the park area or return to the main road after that access road. As the width of FR increases along this section, full segregation would be much more feasible, and may offer some

advantages in terms of streamlined design, support for west-east movement towards and from Crewe Toll and access to the NEPN (see Sheet 6).

At the east entry/ exit point from the set-back road section, there is an awkward and possibly dangerous right turn for eastbound cyclists across two traffic lanes at a blind corner. Again, correctly-observed double-yellow signage as proposed should help in improving visibility, but this end poses greater risk than the west access point, in our view, and therefore there is a stronger case here for a modal filter to protect the cyclist movement on to the path that leads to the two toucan crossings towards the NEPN.

Sheet 6
We would suggest that at the main FR/ West Granton Access (WGA) junction, there is scope to consider a number of different layouts (including on-road segregation and marked cycle lanes) and traffic light phases that would give greater prominence and priority to cyclists, as well as strengthening the quality and ease of access to the NEPN.

For example, we think it is very likely that east-west travel (both sections of FR) represents the major desire line for both motor vehicles and cycles at this location (perhaps some monitoring would be useful here to check this, if not already known). If the junction was treated as a T-junction, with FR west to FR east being treated as one arm, there would be an elegant solution for main road cycle movement to be at the same time as motor vehicle movement, with an easy left turn on the east side of the junction to either the bidirectional WGA lane or NEPN without further waiting or toucan crossing use. Subsequent phases would then allow vehicles to access WGA, again with cycles and motor vehicles moving simultaneously. East to North access to the WGA lanes might be better accomplished via the toucan crossing, however, so some provision for a holding area might be necessary. Some use of cycle-priority phases might ensure all directions of movement are possible.

The above is not intended to be prescriptive, merely as a prompt to further consideration. It does assume to some extent that cyclists have returned to the main road earlier than proposed in the current plans, but this may be quite achievable under a number of different possible layouts for the connection from Pennywell Road. We think there is scope to think broadly and creatively here within what is a large area of roadspace, and this might enable

substantial enhancement to NEPN access, as well as increasing the safety of cycle movement through this junction.

There is currently a dropped kerb allowing westbound cyclists at the east of the junction to access the NEPN (bypassing the junction itself). However, it is a relatively poor installation, with an excessive stand-height for something that needs to be crossed at a very shallow angle. This section needs to be re-installed and have better/ more signage to indicate its intended use.