TEC meeting 12 November 2026

Item 7.1 - Petition: A Trial of New Bus Lane Operating Hours between East Milton Road and London Road

Written deputation from Spokes

We are writing primarily to wholeheartedly support the written deputation on this topic by Edinburgh Bus Users Group.

Although segregated bike lanes are the gold standard for cycling on main roads, and are the most likely to attract families, nervous and novice cyclists, etc, bus lanes are nonetheless generally safer for cyclists than general traffic. They have many fewer motor vehicles in them, and those vehicles usually have professional drivers – and in the case of Lothian Buses, drivers with on-bike cycle awareness training. The benefits reduce substantially when cyclists have to leave the bus lane and enter the main traffic flow. Reducing the number of times this happens, by restricting driving, parking and loading in bus lanes, makes Edinburgh safer to cycle in, and more likely to encourage modal shift to cycling. Importantly, many utility journeys which can be undertaken by cycling (including almost all journeys home from school) currently happen *outwith peak hour*s (and thus at times when loading will still be permitted by the ETRO).

Spokes has consistently, from as far back as 2014[1], argued strongly for extended bus lane hours of operation, throughout the city.

In 2016, jointly with Living Streets Edinburgh[2], we unsuccessfully asked TEC councillors to reverse their inexplicable decision to reduce bus lane hours, including scrapping them entirely at weekends and reducing all weekday bus lanes to peak period only.

In 2019 we were delighted[3] when TEC, perhaps recognising the folly of their 2016 decision, decided to go ahead with a 7-7-7 trial (although we would have preferred 24/7).

Whilst we are now very happy to see the current trial at last underway, it is shocking that it has taken over 6 years from that 2019 decision to reach the point where one stretch of route is being trialled. We would certainly have hoped back then that by now the experiments would be long complete and the Council would be in process of converting all bus lanes to 7-7-7.

However, we are also pleased to note that the earlier consideration to allowing private hire vehicles in the bus lane has not been adopted.

We are however concerned at the extensive loading exemptions in the Experimental Order, and we trust that the trial will attempt to identify whether this is causing delays to buses and/or additional dangers to cyclists who will have to move out into the main traffic lane to pass parked vehicles – a risk which may deter some families or novices from choosing bike for journeys involving this route.

We will not go into further detail here, since we are happy to endorse the contents of the EBUG submission, and to reference again our own evidence at previous TEC meetings.

1 https://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/1404-CEC-Bus-lane-survey-response.pdf
2 https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/1610-TEC-cttee-SpokesLS-letter.pdf
3 https://www.spokes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/1911-Bus-lane-7-7-7-Spokes-response.pdf