

SPOKES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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Spokes comments on the Charlotte Square Interim Scheme

Spokes welcomes that the actions to link CCWEL to George Street across Charlotte Square and are pleased to submit these comments.

1. We are concerned about the the use of “cycle lane defenders” to demarcate pavement extensions, because

- cyclists associate them with cycle lanes, because of their widespread use on arterial routes.
- there have been many complaints about these lane defenders not being appropriate for areas with pedestrian crossings.
- these measures would be more legible if more appropriate materials had been used to define the pedestrian and cycle spaces.

2. Arising from this, there are several locations which look inviting for cycling (and will very likely be so used), but are designated as pavement extensions.

2.1 Two of these spaces are easy to access, but harder to exit. We suggest that there are safety benefits to, either, adaptations to making cycling legal, or for informal cycling use not being unnecessarily obstructed by very close spacing of the temporary defenders. There is not likely to be any conflict with pedestrians at either of these locations:-

- On the west side of North Charlotte Street, where the space provides a valuable *de facto* northern extension of the cycle lane almost all the way to the ASL at St Colme Street junction. Note that that would facilitate easy northbound continuity via the existing dropped kerb access to Forres Street and quieter New Town residential streets.
- On the NE corner of gardens, where very likely to be used as a shortcut.

2.2 There is a third location, on the south side of the Square, which may well be mistaken for the official CCWEL route by eastbound cyclists – see 3.1.1– or by cyclists arriving via Hope Street from Shandwick Place or Lothian Road heading to George Street.

3. We are concerned that the routings are not intuitive for anyone unfamiliar with the area:-

3.1.1 Eastbound cyclists, emerging from the CCWEL link alongside West Register House, will see cycle lane defenders to their right but nothing to their left. The painted left turn

arrow will wear away quickly and some cycles may turn right towards the defenders - which don't actually permit access for cycles.

3.1.2 If they do turn left, then they're welcomed with a sea of tarmac with no protection, so may guess you'll have gone the wrong way. Why can't the cycle lane defenders continue around the middle of the square forming a continuous and segregated bidirectional link around the north side?

3.2 Southbound cyclists on the new cycle lane must cross into George Street. Please advise how it is intended for them to continue south into South Charlotte Street.

3.3 How will southbound cyclists on North Charlotte Street access Charlotte Square?

3.4 Northbound cyclists on North Charlotte Street heading for George Street will need clear guidance to use the cycle lane, which may not be intuitive when their desire is to turn right ahead. There is the risk that they could find themselves trying to turn right out of the traffic lane - it's not clear if that remains legal, but it would certainly not be safe.

4. There is currently conflicting *no right turn* signage at the George Street junction.. Will these be clarified as part of this scheme implementation? The sign on the west side shows that cyclists can turn right into George Street, whereas the sign on the east side of the road just shows "no right turn".

5. 1 We welcome that you have noted that alterations are necessary on the west side of the Square, at the junction with CCWEL. The exit point from the lane beside West Register House is narrow and located hard between heavily used bus bays for tour coaches and a disabled parking bay. As well as regular coach encroachment, these block the view to the right when cycling east. Nor is the routing very clear to westbound cyclists following CCWEL. We look forward to seeing the proposed improvements. These could perhaps include a clearly painted lanes across the pavement, leading to a box with give-way lines on the carriageway, flanked by "defenders".

5.2 We understand that traffic orders are necessary to move the bus stop. Can this process we started now?

6. The painted advisory cycle lanes on George Street are significantly worn off and it would be great if any refreshing of these could happen during this scheme's implementation works.

7. We request that there is a review of how well this interim scheme is working before the longer term plans are finalised.

Please come back to us with any questions or clarifications.

Kind regards

Ewan Jeffrey
for Spokes Planning Group
10 June 2024

If cycle users do make it to the George St crossing I assume cycles get their own crossing phase otherwise if shared with pedestrians they'll conflict at right angles. Cycles will likely cross diagonally on the desire line.

East to West it also seems odd as these wide crossing markings (that will wear away quickly) lead into narrow bidirectional lanes. Surely more space could have been provided given the extended pavement opposite?