

Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)

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City of Edinburgh Council
VIA EMAIL

Date:
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Dear Sir / Madam,

CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL CYCLE-WAY IMPROVEMENTS – ROSEBURN TO LEITH WALK

While we support and welcome City of Edinburgh Council in improving the cycle-ways in Edinburgh city and making them safer and more user friendly in taking them out of the bus lanes this must not, and should not, be to the detriment of other road and pavement users, especially disabled people.

In that respect we would offer the following comments:

- Even though the Zebra type crossing only crosses the cycle path and not the complete road. This requires having tactile paving for uncontrolled crossings as specified in the Guidance for Tactile Paving. While being hit by a bicycle is not likely to be as serious as a motorcar it is still likely to cause serious injury to the pedestrian.

We would, therefore, recommended that the Zebra type crossing would have to be identified with 'give way' markings for cyclists and the appropriate tactile paving put in place for zebra crossings as laid out in the Guidance on Tactile Paving.

- We would point out that just because Copenhagen style junctions seem to work in Holland it does not mean that they are suitable for use in Edinburgh.

What does not seem to have been taken into consideration is that there is legislation in most other countries, in that, if an accident occurs between a vehicle and a pedestrian it is automatically assumed that it is the driver of the vehicle that is at fault. No such legislation exists in the UK or Scotland that rather defeats the principles of Copenhagen style junctions, in that, the pedestrian always has right of way and that drivers must give way to pedestrians at all times.

In that respect when any Authority introduces new road and pavement layouts in Scotland there is a need to educate society on any and all new proposals, especially when it is new road or pavement layouts that the public have not used before.

- With Wester Coates junction being a minor road MACS would agree to support narrowing the crossing and incorporating tactile paving and tonal contrast to simplify the footway area.
- There is a concern from MACS that using different proposals and standards in different areas could be problematic.
- Given that there is little evidence from people with learning disabilities and mental illness we would suggest that City of Edinburgh Council speak to other organisations such as People First, Capability Scotland, Barnardos and others to ascertain the views of people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and mental illness where there is a distinct gap in research. For instance, do people with learning disabilities relate red tactile paving with controlled crossings? Research into this area would not only help City of Edinburgh Council but also nationally.

We would further suggested that the City of Edinburgh Council speak to a project for older people in Edinburgh called 'I'd go too' to ascertain their views on the proposed developments.

- When designing roads and pavements they must be designed in such a way that people can have confidence in using them; otherwise, disabled people in particular will not venture out but will be inclined to stay indoors which will lead to isolation and health deterioration.

One of the most important briefs in any design should always be that users have confidence in using the facilities that the designs is trying to cater for.

- As we were informed that the relocation of the taxi rank to the opposite side of the road as Haymarket Station is the direct result in making way for the cycle track. The proposed site of the taxi rank is too far from the station for disabled people to travel so we would suggest that the proposed cycle lane be relocated to enable the taxi rank to be closer to Haymarket station.

Alternatively, that the line of taxis be turned around so that the first taxi in the queue was closer to the station. Although City of Edinburgh Council officers have informed us said that this would mean taxis would be continually crossing the road, we would suggest that some sort of turning area should not be out-with the realms of possibility thus making the walking distance from Haymarket station to the first taxi much closer.

- There are a number of areas on the shared cycle and pedestrian way where the delineation between cyclists and pedestrians are only superficial and they need to be distinctive by a barrier or preferably by a kerb so that the two are physically segregated.
- There are a number of areas where the cycle and pedestrian way turns into the junctions make it nigh impossible for anyone with a sight impairment to navigate across the junction. These junction areas need to be re-designed to enable a straight line of navigation indicated by directional tactile paving.

However, the same solutions for the Copenhagen style junctions may not be suitable for all junctions of this style where safety is somewhat dependent on the volume and direction of traffic and this should be reflected in the design.

- We also looked at the proposals for the east end of Princes Street where similar problems were found. Similar to comments already made there is a lack of a distinct delineation

between cyclists and pedestrians on the shared walk/cycle way. However, the pedestrian and cycle traffic is much heavier in Princes Street and areas of shared surfaces between cycles pedestrians should be avoided.

- We would also remind the Council that the most recent research for minimum useable kerb height for blind and partially sighted people is 60 mm. (Source – Guide Dogs)

Yours sincerely,

KEITH ROBERTSON

Roads Workstream Lead

Mobility and Access Committee Scotland (MACS)