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Dear Mr Mathews,

**RE: Leith to Portobello cycle route - Links path improvements - Joint Greener Leith/SPOKES consultation response**

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to give comment on the latest proposals to improve the Leith to Portobello cycle route. Having considered the plans, we found that both Greener Leith and SPOKES members have reached similar conclusions and thus we wish to submit the following comments on behalf of both organisations.

**St Mary's Primary School**

We understand that at the December Leith Links Steering Group it was suggested that a 'cycle bypass' should be built into the park along the stretch of path in front of the school. This is a solution that we would support, but we would urge that further consideration is given to path markings and alternative path surface treatments in order to encourage all path users to take care. This approach seems to work effectively in The Meadows.

We would prefer a single loop to the two suggested by the Steering Group: the latter might tempt cyclists to go straight across the grass between the loops.

The blind entrance to the allotments is also a potential conflict point. One solution would be to extend the segregated section of the path past St Mary's to the junction with the Seafield path.

**Links Gardens Lane**

We note the two options on offer and believe that a 4m wide segregated path should be specified.

However, given that the south side of Links Gardens is often used for car parking, we suggest that the design could consider narrowing the road to make space for a 4m path, rather than chopping down a tree.

## **Links Gardens**

The section of path along Links Gardens needs little modification, however, we query whether the turn into Leith Links is the highest priority path connection at present.

Public responses we received to these plans saw most people keen to see the connection between Leith Links - Queen Charlotte Street - Tollbooth Wynd and onto The Shore improved.

It was subsequently clarified that a further phase of work is to be undertaken to improve this vital connection.

We would urge the authorities to take forwards work on this connection as soon as possible.

We would like to see, at a minimum:

- (1) a contraflow cycle lane in Tolbooth Wynd;
- (2) improvements to the right turn from Tolbooth Wynd into Queen Charlotte Street;
- (3) control of parking of bins and vehicles in the contraflow lane in Queen Charlotte Street.

This said, given the importance of this link in joining significant sections of the “family network” together, we would expect a far greater level of segregation for cyclists traveling in both directions - in order that this link is perceived as safe for children and less confident cyclists to use.

This would require segregated, shared use pavements wide enough to accommodate cyclists travelling in both directions on Tollbooth Wynd, and Queen Charlotte Street. The most straightforward way to achieve this would be to widen and improve the pavement surfaces on the south side of these streets, in order to provide the necessary room.

This approach could also provide a safe link into a route through the Kirkgate that would connect with the Foot of the Walk. Given that it is looking increasingly likely that trams may make an appearance in Leith somewhat sooner than some had anticipated, and that this may see cyclists banned from Constitution Street, we feel that this alternative north-south link is also an important one to begin considering now.

## **Leith Links**

We think that some of the corners on the path across Leith Links are a bit sharp for cyclists, notably the turn from Links Gardens to the path by the bowling green and the western approaches to Duncan Place. The corners ought to be rounded a bit, so that cyclists do not have to slow down to wobbling speed or cut across the grass, but not to encourage excessive speed.

Whilst there is nothing else wrong with the proposed path upgrades within Leith Links, we would like to see more consideration of whether a North East Edinburgh active travel loop could be created that would link the existing path that reaches Easter Road at Thorntreeside, with Leith Links at Vanburgh Place.

Such a loop would help to link most of the local schools together with a safe path that would encircle much of their local catchment area.

Whilst the roundabout at the northern end of Easter Road is undoubtedly a barrier, a path could possibly be forged via Academy Park and Lochend Road. This would require the upgrading of some pavements (on Lochend Road, for example), but could integrate with the two existing, signalised pedestrian crossings at Vanburgh Place and Lochend Road.

Most of the streets and pavements are already wide enough to accommodate segregated shared use pavements.

If this option is viewed as a useful long-term aspiration then it would suggest that the appropriate path to upgrade as part of this phase is the one that runs across Leith Links from Links Gardens to Vanburgh Place, not the path that runs from Links Gardens to Wellington Place/Duncan Place, as proposed.

Yours Sincerely,

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Greener Leith/SPOKES Volunteer.

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SPOKES Volunteer



