

Living Streets Edinburgh

POSITION PAPER ON PICARDY PLACE DETAILED DESIGN

Following the regrettable decision of the City Council's Transport & Environment Committee on 25th January 2018 to back the traffic-generating gyratory roundabout design, Living Streets Edinburgh is now focusing on the need for significant improvements in the detailed design of the Picardy Place scheme. Incredibly, the latest Council design actually represents a net *deterioration* in the pedestrian environment compared to the current (pre-Leith Street closure) situation on the ground – as a result of, in particular, more circuitous road crossings, narrower pavement sections, and cycling /walking conflicts where new cycleways bisect footways. This is not acceptable.

As the Picardy Place plan is classified as a major scheme in the **Edinburgh Street Design Guidance** (SDG), it should incorporate the measures identified in the SDG for such schemes on special streets. Therefore:

- A. Footways: these should be (i) decluttered and (ii) resurfaced; (iii) with benches every 50 metres (not located on desire lines), plus (iv) trees to create shade, focal points and reduce perceived dominance of traffic; (v) there should be a presumption that cycle parking will be located on the carriageway, not the footway, avoiding pedestrian desire lines; and (vi) guardrails should be eliminated/minimised using the Council's guardrail assessment tool.
- B. Crossings: (i) the left to right width (not the distance across the road, but the distance between the silver studs) should be sufficient to cope with the volume of pedestrians; (ii) crossings should be gently humped/on raised tables to bring the road level to footway level; (iii) where the roadway is not raised, dropped kerbs should be actually flush with the roadway (not several inches above the roadway).

On **Picardy Place specifics**, and bearing in mind that the broad design endorsed by the T&E Committee on 25th January represents, in the details as shown in the Council plan, a net deterioration in the walking environment compared to the current situation on the ground, the following key points should be addressed:

- 1. Pedestrian crossings – there should be no increase in stages (ie separately signalled stages) at each crossing compared to the present situation; and waiting times for 'the green man' should be tolerable (at present, York Place at Elder Street can involve an entirely unreasonable four minutes' wait to cross a 22 metre wide street).
- 2. Footway width – all footways should meet the SDG 'minimum desirable' 4m wide.
- 3. Cycleways bisecting footways – as day-to-day enforcement to prevent dangerous cycling is not going to happen, the highest possible design standards must be applied, to minimise the impact on the safety and convenience of walking:
 - i. Cycleways should be kept beside the carriageway (except at 'Floating Bus Stops', see below) in order to minimise conflicts (ie no crossing over to the side farthest from the carriageway).
 - ii. Cycleways should be vertically separated from the footway, ie with kerbs (and tactile surfaces) on both sides (except at formal crossing points).

- iii. Cycleways should be coloured distinctly different from the footway.
- iv. We continue to oppose Floating Bus Stops, which introduce the risk of pedestrian/cyclist conflict. However, as the Council is determined to introduce more of them, it is essential that the following design features should be included on Leith Street:
 - a) Advance signs to warn cyclists that pedestrians have priority.
 - b) Anti-skid surfaces should be applied on approaches to formal crossings (not just at Floating Bus Stops).
 - c) Formal crossings (with distinct markings) should serve key pedestrian desire lines and should be at the same level as the cycleway.
 - d) The standard advert positioning on the Decaux bus shelters should be changed to allow all-round visibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - (e) Sufficient circulation space should be provided beside (and behind) Floating Bus Stops so that queuing passengers are not forced to stand around / on the cycleway.
- 4. There should be no 'shared space' between pedestrians and cyclists – where cyclists leave a segregated cycleway (see above) they should be required to dismount before entering the footway.
- 5. Roads bisecting footways – the proposed restricted vehicle access to Cathedral Lane bisects the pedestrian area in front of St Marys. Potential vehicle / pedestrian conflicts should be eliminated or minimised by creating vehicle access via Elder Street or by putting in place robust traffic calming arrangements which keep vehicle speeds down to walking pace in front of St Marys.

Living Streets Edinburgh has also objected to the TRO (traffic regulation order) / RSO (road redetermination order) for **the south section of Leith Street** on the following (summarised) grounds in particular:

1. The TRO removes all Greenways restrictions on Leith Street, eliminating bus priority.
2. 32 out of 67 sections of footway would not meet the 'desirable minimum' of '4 metres or wider' set out in the Street Design Guidance (SDG). Two sections would not even meet the 'absolute minimum' of 2.5 m laid down in the SDG, the worst of which is at the very south end of Leith Street (east side) near its junction with Waterloo Place – a key pedestrian pinch-point.
3. The proposed split footways on Leith Street north of the Calton Road junction would reduce their effective width and utility for pedestrians. This would be even more inconvenient and hazardous for walking on the section between the Greenside Row and Calton Road junctions, where it is proposed that the cycleway should switch, mid-block, from one side of the footway to the other. This is a recipe for pedestrian/cyclist conflict, with the most vulnerable street users (including people who are frail or have a disability) likely to come off worst.