

# HOLYROOD PARK ROAD TO RATCLIFFE TERRACE WALK AND CYCLE LINK QUIET ROUTE 30)

## RESPONSE OF THE BLACKET ASSOCIATION

This is the response of the Blacket Association to the consultation about the proposed potential improvements for cycling between Holyrood Park Road and Ratcliffe Terrace. Given the responsibilities of the Association our concerns relate mainly to implications for the Blacket Conservation Area.

### **General point**

The plans are focused only on the cycleway and take no account of the consequent impact on vehicle traffic flows, congestion and safety: for example, by forcing more traffic through fewer entrances and exits to the Blacket area and by creating more congestion at the Salisbury Place/Minto Street junction.

### **Entry from Dalkeith Road to Blacket Place**

If this entry point is barred to vehicular traffic, it will result in all traffic turning into the Blacket area being pushed to the other two junctions, which have no lights and two-way entrance/exits through narrow pillars. This is less safe, especially when turning right from the north into Blacket Avenue.

The pillars at all the entrances into the Blacket area are listed and are an important feature of this conservation area.

### **Junction of Blacket Place and Blacket Avenue**

There is a safety issue around the change of priority at the junction of Blacket Avenue and Blacket Place with cars going straight across on Blacket Place having priority as part of the discouragement of the use of Blacket Avenue as a rat run.

At the consultation at Newington Library one consultant said that they were thinking of adopting a 'Danish system' with the raised speed bump – in other words, change the priority but not put up signs to this effect – i.e. ensure that drivers approach the junction uncertain about priorities so they all slow down.

Currently a few cars travel along Blacket Avenue and across this junction at some speed (we have seen some drive over this junction at well over 30 mph). Unless, at least in the short term, there is some obvious signal that priorities have changed there is a risk of an accident caused by these drivers not realising there has been a change.

We welcome the surfacing of the junction being made cycle friendly by removing the current granite setts and replacing these with high-quality smooth 'setts'. However they must have a high-quality finish and not be, for example, concrete setts.

## **Blacket Avenue shared-use footpath and cycleway**

We think that there is not enough space for a safe shared pedestrian and cycleway at the end of Blacket Avenue, especially with cyclists going both ways. This is a very busy spot for pedestrians, including parents with buggies going to the nursery entrance in Blacket Avenue.

The road for vehicles, which will be one-way, should be narrowed and the footpath/cycleway widened in order to ensure the way is sufficiently wide for cyclists and pedestrians to use in both directions. In order to do this it may be necessary to move one of the pillars and (potentially) give up some of the shrubbery to the south of Blacket Avenue.

As mentioned above, the pillars are listed.

## **Entry from Minto Street to Blacket Avenue**

Blacket Avenue is (and will be under the current proposals) the only entry into the Blacket area from the west.

At present there is a restriction on vehicles turning right into Blacket Avenue from Minto Street. This restriction can be overcome by vehicles, instead, approaching from the west along Duncan Street and crossing into Blacket Avenue. With the proposed change of direction for vehicles in Duncan Street this manoeuvre will no longer be possible.

It is essential therefore that the right-turn restriction from Minto Street into Blacket Avenue is removed. Alternatively Duncan Street needs to remain in its present eastward direction for vehicles.

The plans propose only a pedestrian and cycle crossing at Minto Street, not a proper junction with lights to control access to Duncan Street and Blacket Avenue. If north-bound vehicles are to be allowed to turn right into Blacket Avenue, and south-bound vehicles to turn right into Duncan Street, surely there should be a proper four-way crossing? Having right-hand turns across two lanes of heavy traffic is pretty dangerous otherwise.

## **Exit from Mayfield Terrace to Minto Street**

The proposal to prevent the exit from Blacket Avenue into Minto Street will have a big impact on lower Blacket Place and the west end of Mayfield Terrace as all cars crossing from Dalkeith Rd, or coming from Blacket Avenue (where there is a busy nursery) or Blacket Place, will have to exit out of Mayfield Terrace to reach Minto Street. This will increase

traffic a great deal in lower Blacket Place and Mayfield Terrace, causing extra noise and pollution.

There are a lot of young children in the area, some of who walk to school from there, and safety may be compromised by the increased level of traffic.

The current proposal will also add to the problems for those wishing to turn right from Mayfield Terrace onto Minto Street as this manoeuvre is already not at all easy. A yellow box should be installed to make exit easier.

In addition, pedestrians walking north or south on Minto Street often cross that narrow Mayfield Terrace junction without looking, and this has caused near misses in the past. This is obviously a significant safety issue for both drivers and pedestrians.

Finally, only cycles are currently permitted to enter Mayfield Terrace from Minto Street. Given the increased traffic levels (due to the above proposed changes in Blacket Avenue) and the narrow and winding nature of the Mayfield Terrace entry/exit it would seem advisable to prohibit cycle entry into Mayfield Terrace.

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