NTBCC

NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON
COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Objection to TRO/24/27 – Proposed introduction of one-way exemptions for cyclists – various roads, Edinburgh

The New Town and Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) has serious concerns about the plans to introduce contra-flow exemptions for cyclists to use various city centre one-way and pedestrianised streets. In particular, we consider that the impact on the safety of pedestrians has not been properly considered. **We therefore strongly object to the planned changes to Rose Street and Thistle Street included in the proposed order on the basis of road safety.**

When the changes to Rose Street and Thistle Street were initially advertised, it was stated that this work was required to provide a temporary route for cyclists during the planned redevelopment of George Street. Since that time, the Transport and Environment Committee has agreed to retain two-way cycling access along the entire street throughout any future redevelopment of George Street. There is therefore no justification for proceeding with the planned changes to Thistle Street and Rose Street, especially given the adverse impact on pedestrians as outlined below.

Rose Street
This is largely pedestrianised area with restrictions on its use by vehicles and cyclists. Increasing cycle usage to this shared space will create additional hazards for all pedestrians but particularly for the many visitors who may be confused by the presence of cycles travelling in the opposite direction to other traffic. It is designated in the Council's Circulation Plan as a Primary Place location and part of the Primary Walking network. It is not designated as being part of either the primary or secondary cycling network. Although vehicles are allowed to use the street at certain times, the one-way nature of this access reduces the risk to pedestrians. We also note that the surface of much of Rose Street is in very poor condition creating hazards for cyclists and pedestrians seeking to avoid potholes. **The introduction of a two-way cycle route in an already very congested pedestrianised area will increase the risk for pedestrians and is contrary to the travel hierarchy.**

Thistle Street
This street is relatively narrow with pavements widths well below the expected Edinburgh Street Design Guidance minimums so requiring pedestrians to step into the street to avoid other pedestrians or obstacles. The one-way nature of the street reduces the risk to pedestrians when stepping into the road. The setted road surface is in poor condition in many areas, which creates additional hazards for cyclists using this narrow street in the opposite direction to other traffic. **The proposal is contrary to the travel hierarchy and fails to recognise the adverse impact of these plans on the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.**

No information has been provided on whether a Road Safety Audit or other assessment of the risks to pedestrians and cyclists has been conducted. Given the nature of the proposed changes, a proper assessment of risks and understanding of the necessary mitigations should be available now to allow the consequences of these planned changes to be clear.

Mike Birch
Transport and Environment Convenor – NTBCC
29 July 2025