

PE1595/BBB

Scottish Borders Council Email of 2 February 2016

I have been asked to respond to this petition by Ian Aikman, Chief Planning Officer for Scottish Borders Council.

In general, 'shared space' schemes in the Scottish Borders are implemented as part of new development and are encouraged on lightly trafficked roads where most of the traffic is local in nature. Our 'shared space' schemes will usually feature a shared or level surface. As per 'Designing Streets', the absence of defined areas for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists is intended to indicate that the street is to be shared by all with drivers expected to adapt their behaviour to that of other street users, driving slowly and giving way as appropriate. Our aim is to create an environment in which pedestrians, including vulnerable users, can walk, or stop and chat, without feeling intimidated by motor traffic. It is essential that the whole 'Designing Streets' ethos is fully incorporated and that speed controlling features at intervals of around 60-80m are built in to the design. Public consultation is through the planning and RCC process.

In consenting to shared space schemes, the Council is mindful of 'Designing Streets', 'Designing Places', the 'National Roads Development Guide' by SCOTS, the 'Manual for Streets' and we have our own SPG on 'Placemaking & Design'. In this SPG we have a section on 'Pedestrians v's vehicle' which reads:

“Shared surfaces and removal or reduction of *grade separation* (the conventional separation of pedestrians and vehicles through an upstand kerb) can help encourage responsible driving by a heightened sense of risk. This helps calm traffic speeds naturally, facilitating the use of the streets by pedestrians and cyclists. The incorporation of *home zone* measures such as narrowing of carriageways, use of speed tables and using on-street parking as a naturally occurring traffic calming element, should also be explored. Shared surface streets and spaces can be used where appropriate and should be sensitively designed: without careful consideration vulnerable road users, including those with visual impairments who tend to rely on a kerb line can feel insecure or unsafe. There is also a self-limiting factor on pedestrians sharing space with motorists of around 100 vehicles per hour.”

The Council is also mindful of such publications as: PAN 78' Inclusive Design'; 'Roads for All Good Practice Guide for Roads' by Transport Scotland; Department for Transport 'Inclusive Mobility'; Local Transport Note 1/11 'Shared Space'; 'Street Design for All' by Department for Transport etc.; 'Scotland: Street Charter toolkit Part of our 'Who put that there' campaign' by RNIB Scotland; and 'Access for Blind People in Towns. SS1401'.

Scottish Borders Council supports the concept of 'shared space' schemes so long as they are properly designed in the right situation and have the best interests of all users in mind including those of vulnerable users. We are of the opinion that they can contribute to the six qualities of successful places as set out in 'Designing Places' and such we are not generally supportive of a moratorium for shared space schemes. We have consented to a number of these types of street designs and I am not aware of any negative feedback from residents.

Kind regards

Derek Inglis IEng MICE
Lead Roads Planning Officer