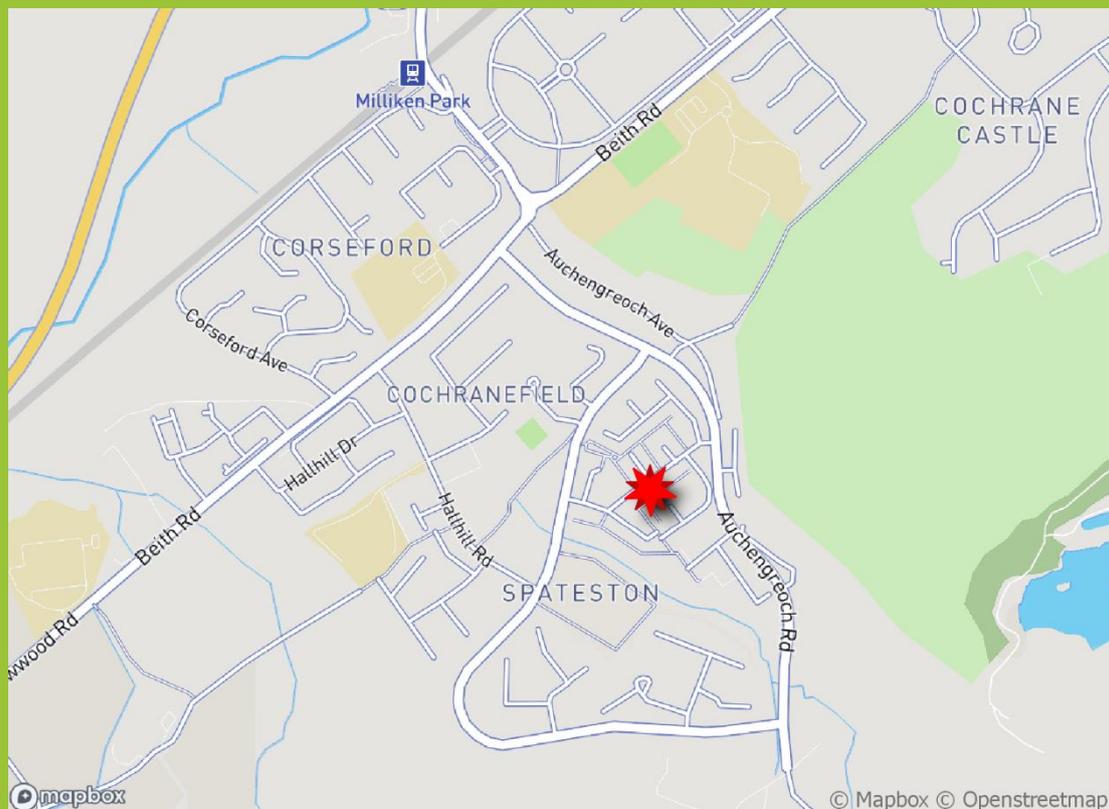


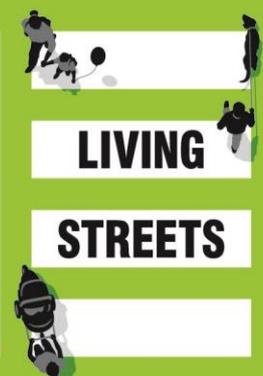
# Pedestrian conditions assessment

## Spateston (Linstone Housing)

### Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities 2020-21



We are Living Streets Scotland, part of the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday, local journeys.



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# Summary

## Key points for Registered Social Landlord

Our assessment of the Spateston area, which should be checked with residents and other stakeholders, leads us to conclude that pedestrians are disadvantaged by these key issues:

- The estate's internal path network may be unwelcoming, particularly after dark, because of its lack of connection to surrounding streets.
- Within the estate even where there is footway (pavement) beside the streets this is of very poor quality.
- Key facilities are some considerable distance from Spateston, with pedestrian routes relying on footway beside roads designed to prioritise vehicle speed and flow.

As the Registered Social Landlord, it may only be possible for Linstone Housing Association to lead action in connection with a small number of the issues and ideas described in this report. The most significant of these might be around:

- Connecting the internal estate paths to the estate's streets.
- Making changes to any paths in order to facilitate routes toward Auchengreoch Avenue.
- Wider improvements to estate footways (and junctions).

We report on wider issues because we consider that the better these are understood the greater the likelihood of change – whether locally and more generally.

## Background note:

Our urban environments are defined by interrelated features under the influence of many different bodies, and this report is about current conditions whatever their cause. Registered Social Landlords do not generally have control over the main factors which affect pedestrians in the wider areas around the properties they manage. Likewise local authorities - with limited resources and budgets, and facing numerous other constraints - do not have immediate control over many of the factors which affect pedestrians.

However, in the longer term it is helpful if problems are understood, and potential solutions are explored. Registered Social Landlords may be able to have a positive influence, making more immediate changes where they have the power to do so, supporting others to understand the issues their residents face, and playing their part in working toward change.

This report is based on an assessment which used mapping and information available from sources such as Google Streetview. As a check of the accuracy of this assessment we discussed our initial findings in detail with local staff from Linstone Housing Association and a representative of the local 'Tenants and Residents Association'. The intention is that the information in the report is used to support a longer informed discussion with local residents, as they are the real experts on the quality of the experience for pedestrians in the areas where they live.

*Map images in this document are copyright © Mapbox, © Openstreetmap contributors.*

# Introduction

Living Streets has received funding from the Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities, administered by Cycling Scotland. As part of this work we are assessing conditions for pedestrians around properties managed by Registered Social Landlords.

This report presents observations and suggestions for improving conditions, following an assessment of the area around the Linstone Housing Association property at Spateston, Johnstone.

## Key factors we assess

Our assessment looked at issues such as the following:

- **Footway (i.e. pavement)<sup>1</sup> and path provision:** the presence, surface quality, continuity, width, obstruction, and design of footways and paths.
- **Accessibility:** how far footways and paths, and their interaction with the carriageways of streets, have been designed to accommodate disabled people and others less able to deal with complicated or dangerous conditions.
- **General area design and character:** whether this is an area full of human activity and street life or one dominated by the movement of or parking of vehicles and the provision of roads designed primarily to facilitate these things.
- **Local area traffic-related safety:** looking at possibility of risk of injury from vehicles, and evaluating the likely effects of this risk on behaviour, not least in terms of how easily pedestrians cross streets or junctions, but also on how pleasant or otherwise a journey might be.
- **Whether streets and paths are welcoming to pedestrians:** both in and around an area, including focusing on how they will feel after dark or later at night – considering in particular what ‘passive surveillance’<sup>2</sup> exists, and to what level streets and paths are overlooked from buildings nearby.
- **Area permeability:** looking at whether paths and footways connect to provide convenient shorter routes for pedestrians, and longer routes for those driving – or whether routes for pedestrians are defined by following streets which have been designed around vehicle use, or by the necessity to negotiate these safely.
- **Entry and exit points and routes from an area:** looking at what boundaries around the area define these points/routes, and conditions for pedestrians here.
- **Likely destinations outside the local area and routes to/from these:** considering pedestrian journeys primarily for utility journeys – including for shopping, education, and work – and conditions for pedestrians along these, distances, and potential use of public transport.

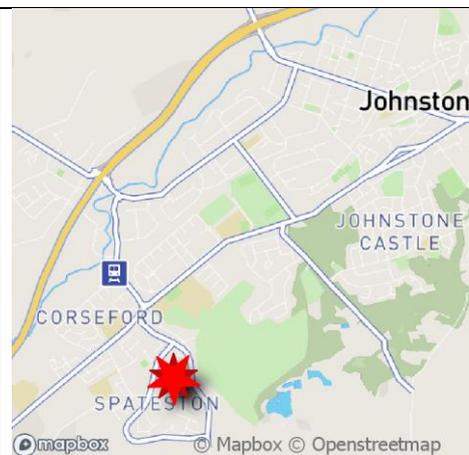
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<sup>1</sup> For clarity this report uses the word term ‘footway’ rather than the phrase ‘the pavement’ to describe the space for walking on beside a road. We do this because the word ‘pavement’ is also used in technical discussion to describe the actual material a road or path is constructed from.

<sup>2</sup> We use the term ‘passive surveillance’ to describe the way in which it feels safer to be on a street where there are other people nearby who may be able to see activity, including those who might look out from the windows of a building – even if nobody is currently actively doing so.

# Location

Spateston is at the west edge of Johnstone.



**Location**

The boundaries to the Spateston estate seem primarily to be defined by:

- Spateston Burn to the south, which can only be crossed at Spateston Road or Auchengreoch Road;
- Auchengreoch Road on the northeast and Spateston Road to the west, which are designed for vehicle speed and flow, in most places at some distance from buildings (lacking passive surveillance for much of their lengths).
- An area of open grass to the west of Spateston Road, fenced off from this for much of its length.
- An area of open grass/park to the southwest of Spateston Burn, and alongside the east side of Spateston Road.

A separate estate exists to the south of Spateston Burn. This may technically be part of 'Spateston' but there is a clear division between the areas - created by the burn and associated area of grass.



**A = Auchengreoch Rd**  
**S = Spateston Road**  
**B = Spateston Burn**  
**g = areas of grass (undeveloped land or park)**



Footway (i.e. 'pavement') provision and quality beside the estate roads (i.e. within the estate) is very poor. In many places footways are very narrow, are obstructed by overgrown greenery, and are interrupted. It seems likely that many pedestrians will instead use the carriageway. While the carriageway may be relatively quiet in terms of traffic movement it looks to be of a design which will ensure that those driving assume priority (and pedestrians feel to be in space not intended for their use).

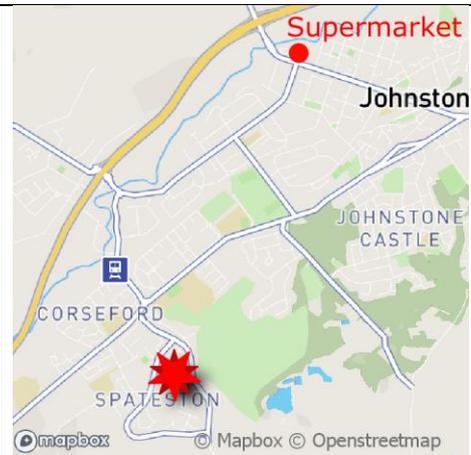
Carriageways are probably not designed to slow vehicles sufficiently, given that pedestrians must walk on them.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Finch Place narrow/interrupted footway](#)

Key facilities are some considerable distance from this estate. There are what we assume to be important local convenience-style shops on Hallhill Road, however the nearest larger shop/supermarket is the Morrisons store beside Johnstone town centre. This is around 3.5 km from the estate, which seems likely to be a distance few will walk for shopping. The site for this supermarket seems to have been chosen primarily for ease of access by vehicle from the nearby major junction on the A737 dual carriageway.

Although 3.5 km would be more easily covered on a bicycle there is no clear route to the supermarket which would be of sufficient quality so that many people would consider cycling.



**Nearest supermarket**

Auchengreoch Road, and Spateston Road, appear both to have been designed to prioritise vehicle capacity, flow and speed over other considerations. These have what might usefully be called a 'distributor road' design. Buildings are set back from these roads, or are designed with their backs turned to them. They are wide, with gentle curves, and are generally clear of parked vehicles.

It is clear that it was originally envisaged that pedestrians would be kept away from these roads. A pedestrian subway exists beneath Spateston Road.

It seems very likely that people drive on these roads at speeds well in excess of the speed limit. Conversations with local people appear to confirm this – and suggest that the junction between the two roads may be known by local people who drive as a risky point on the network.

It is striking that these roads lead only to the small residential area at Spateston.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview:](#)

[Auchengreoch Rd north of estate](#)

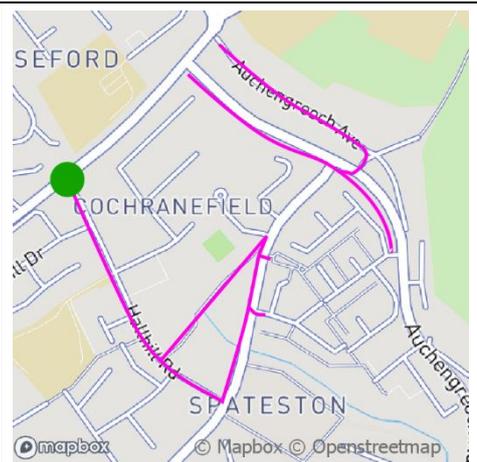
[Spateston Rd northwest of estate](#)

All routes for pedestrians into and out of the estate mean walking along or crossing either Auchengreoch Road or Spateston Road. As noted above, these routes are not overlooked due to their intentional vehicle-orientated design, meaning pedestrians may feel quite isolated. This effect may be powerful after dark, and later at night.

There are two potential routes avoiding more substantial stretch of these roads. The first is across (or under) Spateston Road and then along a path through the poor quality grassland to its northwest. Users of this route will be hidden not just from those in surrounding buildings but also from those passing in vehicles.

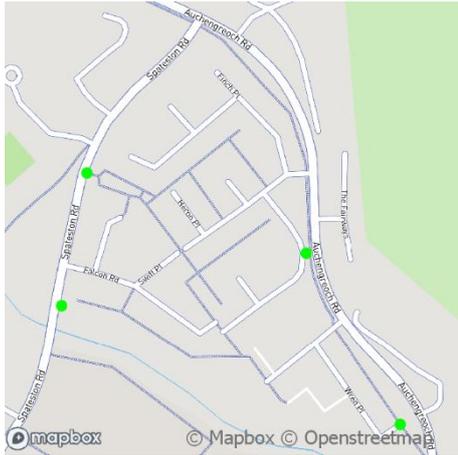
The second involves use of Auchengroch Avenue (rather than Auchengroch Road). The crossing point of Auchengroch Road is not well overlooked from neighbouring buildings, but once reached Auchengroch Avenue offers a substantially better environment for pedestrians.

Unfortunately for journeys northwest of Beith Road the only signalised crossing (i.e. with traffic lights) of Beith Road is at the junction with Hallhill Road.



**Pedestrian routes (purple) to areas outside the estate. Green dot indicates only signalised crossing of Beith Road (at end of Hallhill Road)**

## Secondary observations

<p>All routes (other than to immediate neighbours) for pedestrians which do not use the internal estate path network generally involve immediate accessing either Auchengreoch Road or Spateston Road.</p>	
<p>Positively, the estate is designed to prevent through traffic, with all through journeys past the estate being on either Spateston Road or Auchengreoch Road.</p>	
<p>Despite the issues with footway design, most pedestrians are likely to be able to use the streets (avoiding the internal estate paths) to reach the same access/exit points from to/from the estate as those driving. Routes to these points are relatively short.</p> <p>Residents of Finch Place using the streets to reach Auchengreoch Road, must first walk away from many likely destinations.</p>	
<p>Users of the internal estate paths can enter/exit the estate at additional points:</p> <p>One is on Spateston Road, usefully taking users toward Hallhill Road or other journeys by that route.</p> <p>One is to an area of Auchengreoch Road to the southeast on the boundary of the urban area – which will be of little use for utility journeys.</p> <p>An additional worn desire line can be seen on a sloping section of grass beside Spateston Burn to the south of Falcon Road. This indicates that some people use this route – which makes a journey toward Hallhill Road shorter for residents of Tern Place or Wren Place, and avoids the use of what we assume are less pleasant sections of the internal estate paths.</p>	 <p>Additional exit points (green circles) from extate for users of internal estate path network</p>
<p>It seems relevant that the site is on a hill. This means that both Auchengreoch Road and Spateston Road are at a lower level than many of the nearest houses, increasing the perception that the road and the residential property are quite separate.</p>	
<p>The density of the property in the estate suggests that people may know their immediate neighbours, at least by sight. There is green space around the buildings, contributing positively to the streetscape – without creating larger ‘green desert’ areas.</p>	

<p>Footways (i.e. pavements) within the estate stop at parking areas and driveways. There are no dropped kerbs, even at junctions. These issues seem likely to make passage difficult or impossible for many people using mobility aids (e.g. wheelchairs or mobility scooters). There are also obstructions to movement on the footways, but in comparison to the other issues the problems this creates are probably secondary.</p>	
<p>There is spare unused carriageway space in a few locations which could be reclaimed for footway without having any effect on those driving (other than in encouraging slower speeds).</p> <p>The most obvious example is at the junction of Heron Place with Auchengreoch Road – which is designed to support traffic flow and speed, enabling smoother entry/exit from the estate. Better design would intentionally seek to mark a distinct transition between slow speed (pedestrian friendly) and high speed (vehicle focused) carriageway.</p> <p>Sketches suggesting how differently such a junction could have been designed are provided later in this report.</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a> <a href="#"><u>Heron Place at Auchengreoch Road</u></a></p>
<p>The lack of priority markings at some junctions may be helpful in slowing driving speed, but in general it seems likely that the expansive carriageway widths at these locations support (some) speed and flow. Alternative designs, at the internal estate junctions, could substantially slow vehicles while supporting pedestrian movement and accessibility.</p>	
<p>A playpark is available locally, but access to this must be on the footway of Spateston Road – which may feel unsafe for some children due to vehicle speed.</p>	
<p>Routes to both St Anthony’s school and Fordbank Primary seem likely to be via Hallhill Road – crossing Beith Road (for Fordbank).</p> <p>Beith Road has a helpful signalised crossing (i.e. a crossing using traffic lights) at the junction with Hallhill Road. We assume that the gate at the south corner of the schools is opened to facilitate access from this direction.</p>	
<p>The easiest route for pedestrian journeys to Milliken Park station, for many people, could also be via Hallhill Road. The only signalised crossing (i.e. with traffic lights) of Beith Road is at the junction with</p>	<p><a href="#">Links to representative images on Google Streetview:</a> <a href="#"><u>Beith Road at Cochranemill Road</u></a></p>

Hallhill Road. Beith Road may be busy with vehicles moving fast enough to create substantial risk.

There are no good crossing points aligned with a journey using Auchengreoch Road – which brings pedestrians to a point very close to a roundabout at the junction of Beith Road and Cochranemill Road.

This roundabout is designed to support high speed flow of traffic rather than to slow it down. There are small traffic islands with standard keep-left style signs separating traffic lanes entering and leaving the roundabout, but these do not align with points on the footway designed to support pedestrians to cross (nor are they of an adequate size or design to support this successfully).

It seems likely that this issue will most strongly effect residents in Heron Place, Finch Place, and Kestrel Place who can only access Spateston Road directly using the internal estate paths (with issues noted above). Routes via ordinary footways must involve exit from the estate onto Auchengroch Road (with its own issues, also noted above).

If Beith Road is busy enough to justify a roundabout designed to support speed and flow then it seems difficult to justify the lack of a properly protected crossing here.

There is a bus service available which loops around the estate using Auchengroch Road/Spateston Road. This provides for journeys to the supermarket mentioned above (with a trip of around 15 minutes, at a frequency up to every 20 minutes). Journeys to Glasgow are also possible, taking around an hour and a quarter.

Pedestrian journeys from this area of Johnstone toward the centre of Johnstone would most naturally be via one of two routes.

The first uses a path to the southeast of Johnstone High School. The second, would be along the footway of Beith Road. The path is relatively isolated, and it seems likely that it is unwelcoming at after dark or at night. Beith Road at this point is designed, (for substantial stretches), for vehicle speed and flow, lacking neighbouring buildings completely.

Neither of these routes offer a good environment for pedestrian journeys.

[Links to representative images on Google Streetview](#)

[Path to southeast of high school](#)  
[Beith Road around high school area](#)

# Potential improvements

This section lists some ideas for change. These are intended to prompt discussion, and are not necessarily recommendations. We've separated the ideas into three rough categories. The first ideas are about changes which might more easily be led by the Registered Social Landlord. The Registered Social Landlord may be able to have a strong influence in connection with the second group of ideas. The third group of ideas are generally for the longer term, or of a nature which means that a much wider group of agencies would need to be involved.

## **Led by the Registered Social Landlord:**

The Registered Social Landlord might consider trying to take a lead on the following issues, although the cooperation of other bodies might be required:

### **Connecting the estate paths**

As described above, the Spateston internal estate paths are poorly connected to the estate streets. It seems likely that they could be connected at very low cost in some of those places where they are only separated from the neighbouring streets by a wall. Doing this would increase route options for pedestrians.

It would be important to engage with estate residents before making changes. As we note above, it is difficult to assess how these paths currently work, and what effect such changes might have, without asking local people.

Linstone Housing may be able to consult with estate residents, and to lead on making the physical changes required. It may be that these changes could be paid for through some of the smaller available grant funds.

### **Connections towards Auchengreoch Avenue**

Because it is overlooked by nearby houses Auchengreoch Avenue (rather than the vehicle-focused Auchengreoch Road) should be considered to offer a higher quality route northwards from the estate for pedestrians. If this route was easier to access it might be part of a much higher quality route to a number of destinations, not least of which is the local station.

As things stand, access to Auchengreoch Avenue feels to be unobvious and indirect – for all residents in Spateston. Also problematic is that Auchengreoch Road must be crossed at one of two points where it is designed so it could support very high driving speeds, and heavy traffic flow, even though it seems likely that it will only carry small volumes of local traffic. It seems unlikely that vehicles are driven within either the advisory 20mph limit, or the legal 30mph limit. The visibility of fast moving vehicles (or of pedestrians from such a vehicle) may be restricted by the grass embankment.

It would be possible to significantly improve access from Spateston to Auchengreoch Avenue. Some of the initial work to do so involves ensuring that pedestrian connections

within Spateston lead directly toward what in future could be convenient crossing points of Auchengreoch Road.

Changes to the internal estate path network could be part of this work, particularly facilitating the connection of residents in Falcon Road, Swift Place and Thrush Place.

Linstone Housing might lead on work to investigate such improvements.

### **Improving footway provision/quality, slowing speeds**

Footways (i.e. pavements) within Spateston are generally of a very low quality, or aren't provided where required, and it is likely that many users may need to resort to use of substantial sections of carriageway. This would be particularly true of anyone using a wheeled mobility aid (e.g. wheelchair or mobility scooter).

The housing association could lead on investigating options for improvements, not least in supporting discussion of these issues within the community. It might also commission a feasibility study (or equivalent) formalising a range of improvement options. These should include not only the widening of footways, but also reconfiguration of the estate's junctions to prioritise pedestrian movement over vehicle speed and flow.

It may be possible to reconfigure the estate junctions, and junctions with Spateston Road/Auchengreoch Road, with temporary ('bolt-down') infrastructure, or with more aesthetically pleasing options such as planters. If planters are used care must be taken not to block views of children or those using mobility aids such as a wheelchair.

## **Influenced by the Registered Social Landlord**

These more complex changes might require a much deeper involvement from other bodies, but we guess that the Registered Social Landlord ought to be able to provide strong encouragement or strong influence:

### **Replacing 'desire line' path beside Spateston Burn**

The worn desire-line path beside Spateston Burn, linking to the path to Falcon Road, could be replaced with a formal surfaced path. This might be a simple improvement, but it would demonstrate that pedestrian routes are important. As a key stakeholder it seems likely that Linstone Housing could play a key part in working toward this improvement with the local authority.

If it is made possible for residents in Heron Place, Finch Place and Kestrel Place to access Falcon Road then the addition of this path would gain much of the estate a more direct route toward the shops on Hallhill Road.

### **Changing the character of Auchengreoch Avenue/Spateston Road**

We comment above on potential changes within Spateston to improve pedestrian links toward Auchengreoch Avenue. To create decent routes via the Avenue it would also be necessary to make improvements to support pedestrians to cross Auchengreoch Road.

Changes here need not be limited to the provision of formal (or informal) crossing points. They might also seek to change the overall character of a road which seems (unnecessarily) to be focused on traffic volume, speed and flow.

Similar changes could be sought on Spateston Road.

Linstone Housing would not be able to itself implement such changes, however it seems likely that it could exert considerable influence, highlighting the need for this work. Initial steps could also include the commissioning of feasibility studies (or an equivalent). The association might also play a key part in facilitating community discussion around this. Options considered should improve measures to support cycling as these could be used to narrow the available carriageway space.

## **Longer term or more complex change**

The potential improvements listed here are of a nature meaning that change is likely to take much longer, and that the Registered Social Landlord is likely to have much less influence:

### **Improvements at Cochranemill Road/Beith Road roundabout**

The design of the roundabout at the junction of Cochranemill Road and Beith Road is focused on supporting traffic speed and flow, and there is no support for pedestrians to cross the roads here (in any direction).

If streets in this area of Johnstone are to become more friendly to pedestrians and people cycling, rather than being designed around a wish to support and prioritise car use, then improvements here seem key.

At one time this junction was on a primary route from Ayrshire to Glasgow, but new sections of the A737 replaced this function in the early 1990s. Most longer journeys in this area by pedestrians or by bicycle, not just from Spateston but many surrounding estates, to many predictable destinations, will involve negotiating this junction.

Linstone Housing might highlight these issues to the local authority, and may be in a position to support residents to have their voice heard.

### **Focusing new development on improving pedestrian conditions**

In future the area between Spateston and the shops on Hallhill Road might be re-developed. If so, housing should be designed to better support uses of the local streets by pedestrians.

Factors that should be taken into account include the directness of routes for pedestrians (and indeed people cycling), but also whether routes are well overlooked (remaining attractive after dark).

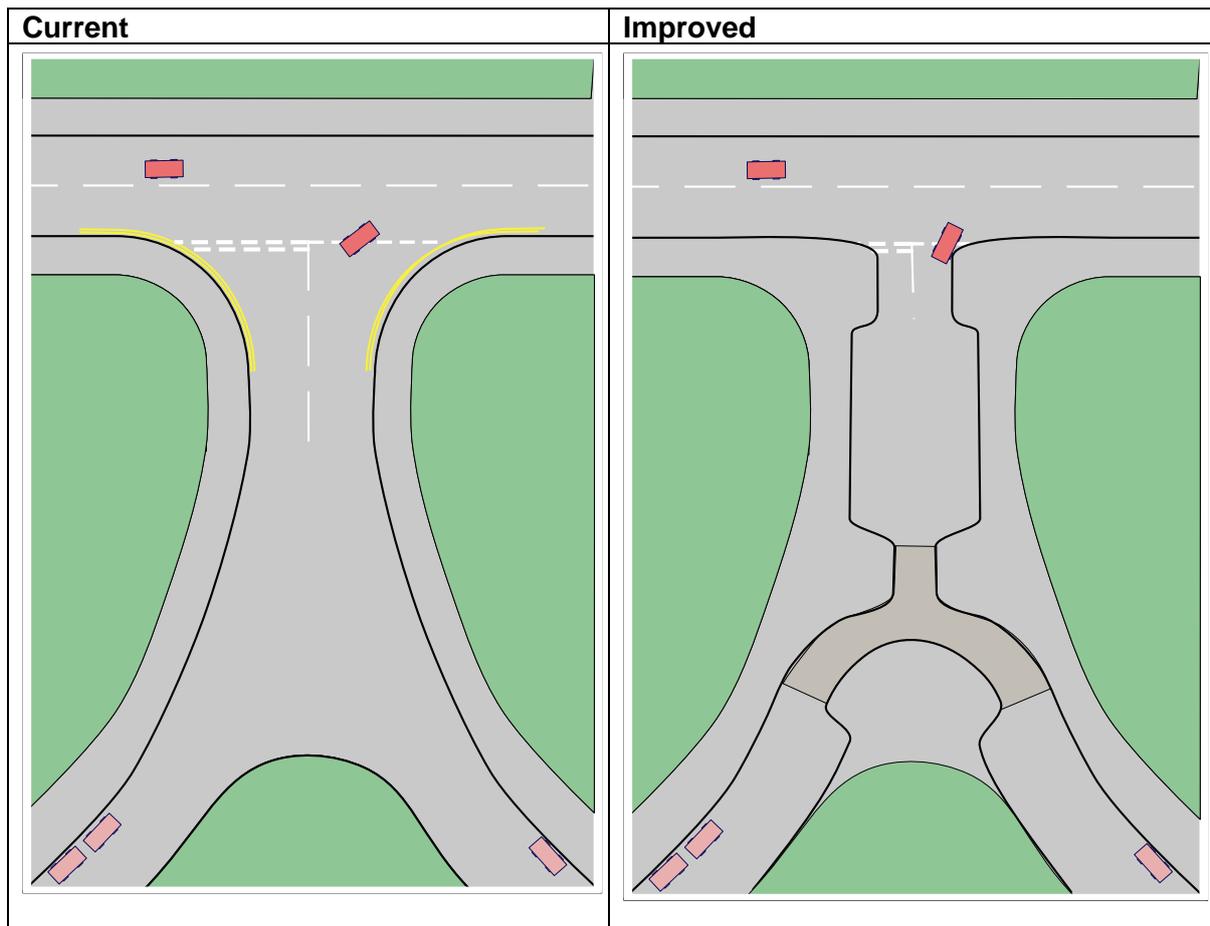
# Further information

## Illustrative sketches

Below are greatly simplified sketches intended to highlight how current junctions within the estate are designed to facilitate traffic flow to and from Spateston Road/Auchengarroch Road.

While priorities are not marked at junctions within the estate the width of the carriageway is likely to facilitate rather than control speed – despite these junctions only carrying a few vehicles to local houses.

It seems reasonable to suggest that junctions within residential areas should be designed to create a slow speed environment. Ideally traffic should be slowed *before* entering the slow speed residential area. Both Spateston Road and Auchengarroch Road are within the urban area, may be used by pedestrians and people cycling, and there seems little justification for their current design – redesign of these junctions could play a part in calming speeds on both roads.



## Potential funding

Funding for improvements to the urban environment might be available from a number of sources, including:

- Places for Everyone:  
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2019/scotland/places-for-everyone/>
- Awards for All:  
<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>
- The Social Housing Partnership Fund for Improved Cycling & Walking Facilities:  
<https://www.cycling.scot/what-we-do/cycling-friendly/social-housing-fund>