

Business bulletin

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 17 June 2021

Virtual Meeting, via Microsoft Teams

Transport and Environment Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Councillor Lesley Macinnes (Convener)</p>  <p>Councillor Karen Doran (Vice-Convener)</p> 	<p>Councillor Scott Arthur Councillor Eleanor Bird Councillor Gavin Corbett Councillor Graham Hutchinson Councillor David Key Councillor Kevin Lang Councillor Claire Miller Councillor Stephanie Smith Councillor Iain Whyte</p>	<p>Alison Coburn, Operations Manager 0131 529 3149</p> <p>Veronica MacMillan Committee Services 0131 529 4283</p> <p>Martin Scott Committee Services 0131 529 4237</p>

Recent news	Background
<p>Update on Edinburgh’s Air Quality Action Plan (Nitrogen Dioxide)</p> <p>Air Quality Action Plans are a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2005 as a mechanism for local authorities to address the areas of poor air quality identified in their air quality management areas (AQMAs). Edinburgh currently has six AQMAs, five of these for the pollutant nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).</p> <p>Edinburgh’s current Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for NO₂ was developed in 2003 and revised in 2008. Progress on actions in the plan and other measures the Council is undertaking which affect air quality, have been reported</p>	<p>Ruth White Acting Team Manager</p> <p>Wards affected: All</p>

annually within Edinburgh's Air Quality Annual Progress Report.

All these measures have been successful in reducing and maintaining the levels of NO₂ to below statutory objectives in some areas. The Council is set to amend the AQMA at St John's Road this year as the Hourly Objective for NO₂ has been met for the past four years. The Annual Mean remains breached. Revoking the AQMAs at Inverleith Row and Great Junction Street will also be considered. These were declared for breaches of the Annual Objective only, which has been met for two and three years, respectively.

However, although there is a general downward trend in levels of NO₂ across Edinburgh, there remains hotspot areas of poor air quality which a new AQAP will address.

Resourcing and Funding

A realignment of resources to support delivery of the Low Emission Zone project and progress on the Council's City Mobility Plan, has meant work on the Action Plan is now progressing. This will be supported by additional resource and expertise from external consultants experienced in devising local authority AQAPs, to alleviate pressures on officers' time to deliver other statutory air quality work.

The Council has been awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Air Quality Action Plan 2021-22 grant scheme to cover the cost of consultancy work to support the revision and update of the Action Plan and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment. The procurement process for this is underway.

Action Plan Stages and Timescales

Writing a new AQAP is a multistage process and must follow statutory technical guidance.

The initial role of the consultant will be to undertake a review of the actions in the existing Plan. The review will consider the success or otherwise of these actions and help identify those which remain relevant going forward into the updated AQAP. This will be part of a wider review of all relevant national, regional and local policies, plans and programmes which have the potential to impact air quality in the AQMAs. Committee will be provided with a summary of the findings of the initial review in late Autumn.

Implementation of the Low Emission Zone scheme will be the principal action in the Plan; however, this will be supported by additional measures which will contribute to improving air quality within the AQMAs. These supporting measures will be developed with the assistance of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), whose modelling assessment work under the National Modelling Framework for LEZs, will be important. SEPA have been experiencing technical difficulties due to their system's cyber-attack last December and supporting work has been affected.

Following the development and evaluation of measures to support the improvement in air quality, a Draft Air Quality Action Plan containing the shortlist of proposed measures will be available for Committee consideration in early Spring 2022, prior to public consultation.

Review of Safety for Vulnerable Road Users at Major Junctions

On [12 November 2020](#) Transport and Environment Committee approved an Emergency Motion requesting that officers urgently consider how to improve safety for vulnerable road users at the city's major junctions, by reducing the risk of conflict between vehicle drivers and other road users.

Initial information on key considerations and next steps for undertaking such a review was provided as part of the Business Bulletin on [28 January 2021](#).

Since then, a review of the city's transport network has been undertaken, in partnership with key stakeholder groups Spokes, Living Streets Edinburgh Group and the Edinburgh Access Panel, and an initial long list of around 130 junctions has been drawn up for potential inclusion in the review. This list is being reviewed against existing Council work programmes, to identify those junctions where improvements are already planned, the scope of these improvements and their expected delivery date.

This information will be used to agree a significantly reduced list, of perhaps around 30 junctions, for more detailed investigations. Surveys will be undertaken at these junctions to gather data on pedestrian, cyclist and traffic behaviour and a more detailed review of each junction's layout and features will be undertaken.

[Andrew Easson](#)

Road Safety and Active Travel Manager

Wards affected – **All**

The resultant information will be used as part of a formal assessment and prioritisation process, which is currently being developed in consultation with the above key stakeholder groups. This is expected to include assessing and scoring each junction against a number of factors, to identify around 10-15 junctions that are considered to be the most in need of improvement.

Factors that will be considered as part of the assessment process are likely to include:

- Long term casualty records;
- Pedestrian and cyclist numbers and types;
- Traffic speeds and volumes;
- Potential hazards for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities;
- Potential to act as a barrier to walking and cycling journeys;
- Condition of current infrastructure; and
- Opportunity for public realm improvements.

A further update will be provided to the Committee once the assessment process is complete and the junctions that this prioritises for improvement have been identified.

School Travel Plan Review Update

Work commenced in November 2020 on a review of the school travel plans for every school cluster in the city.

Information on the review was provided to the Committee as part of the Business Bulletin on [28 January 2021](#). The Committee requested that updates on progress be provided at every second Committee meeting.

The subsequent closure of schools and older children undertaking home learning, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has prevented the direct engagement with schools and, in particular, pupils necessary to ensure the success of the review. Work was therefore temporarily suspended following the survey of the James Gillespie's school cluster.

The review will re-commence in August when the schools return after the summer break and an updated programme will be uploaded onto the Streets Ahead website by mid-July. The updated programme will prioritise those

Following a review of the Road Safety programme, it was identified that a systematic review of all school travel plans was required, to ensure that resources allocated to improving routes to school are targeted at locations where they have the potential to deliver the greatest benefits.

Contact:

[Stacey Monteith-Skelton](#)
Senior Engineer (Road Safety)

Wards affected – All

schools where Spaces for People measures have been implemented.

Edinburgh South Suburban Railway

A Coalition motion on [19 February 2021](#) asked that Council officers liaise with Transport Scotland and Network Rail on the possibilities surrounding the reopening of the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway (ESSR) for passenger use.

The potential for reopening (ESSR) to passengers has been kept under review for a number of years, including detailed feasibility work in 2008, discussions with Network Rail and Transport Scotland in 2019 and, more recently, analysis undertaken as part of [Edinburgh's Strategic Sustainable Transport Study Phase 1](#) for its potential as a transit/metro type service.

Following the motion further discussions were held with both Transport Scotland and Network Rail.

Network Rail is happy to work with passengers and freight to help achieve their rail aspirations but confirmed several considerations to reopening of the line to passenger traffic, including:

- The need for a business case (STAG) to determine the transport problem(s) that opening the ESSR would address;
- They have a number of immediate priorities including the decarbonisation of the network and further electrification, in order to meet the decarbonisation of domestic traction target in Scotland by 2035 as well as making the railway more affordable to passengers and taxpayers;
- The local rail network is already at, or near capacity, particularly at Waverley and Haymarket stations;
- The ESSR is currently used by the rail industry for freight and as an emergency diversionary route for East Coast Main Line and West Coast Main Line services; and
- Previous station locations may no longer be suitable due to, for example, changes in accessibility legislation. Potential station locations would need to be considered as part the business case.

Transport Scotland suggested that the use of the ESSR for passenger transit may feature in the Strategic Transport

[Ruth White](#)

Acting Team Manager

Wards affected: TBC

Projects Review 2 (STRP2) Phase 2 due to be published in Autumn 2021 but were unable to provide details ahead of publication. If the potential to reopen the ESSR for passengers features as a commitment in STPR2, this will be explored further at that stage.

George Street and First New Town (GNT) Public Realm Project

The George Street and the First New Town (GNT) project is nearing the completion of a finalised Concept Design which will determine the layout and operational principles for the associated streets. A full report on the finalisation of the Concept Design is planned for Committee in August 2021.

Now that the end of the Concept Design stage is approaching, the project will soon advance to the next design stage; Royal Institute British Architects (RIBA) Design Stage 3 (Spatial Co-ordination). This will include preparation and commencement of all statutory processes, including Traffic Regulation Orders. These necessary consents are required to be promoted during Autumn this year to enable the construction of the project to commence during 2023 (in line with the Sustrans funding agreement).

In order to progress the next phase of the programme (RIBA Stage 3), a procurement exercise to secure the necessary technical consultancy support to deliver the Stage 3 design and consultation and engagement tasks has been undertaken and is nearing conclusion. This most recent procurement also offers the potential to retain consultancy support for the remainder of the project as appropriate.

The delivery of Stage 3 and all associated internal project management costs will be 100% funded via Sustrans' Places for Everyone grant funding.

Construction of the project is due to commence in 2023 and to be completed by end of 2025.

[Jamie Robertson](#)

Strategic Transport
Planning and Projects
Development Manager

Ward affected – 11

City Mobility Plan

The Council has received a Petition from two private hire vehicle companies to judicially review the decision to approve the [City Mobility Plan](#) (CMP).

The Committee is asked to note the position; that officers will keep the Committee informed; and that if as a result of this

[Ruth White](#)

Acting Team Manager

Wards affected: All

petition any amendments to the CMP are ordered, are thought to be required or are otherwise advisable, the matter will be included on the agenda of the Committee for its August 2021 meeting.

Forthcoming activities:
