

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 31 March 2022

Call for Action on Zebra Markings for Side Streets – Motion by Councillor Neil Ross

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	16, 17, 18

1. Recommendations

- 1.1. It is recommended that Transport and Environment Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Notes the correspondence between the Convener and the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights;
 - 1.1.2 Notes that Council officers have held discussions with Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland regarding the potential to undertake trials of low cost zebra crossings and have also escalated the issue through the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland;
 - 1.1.3 Notes that Transport Scotland has advised that this type of crossing is not permitted on a public road under current legislation and that Scottish Ministers have no powers to authorise their use, even on a trial basis;
 - 1.1.4 Therefore, approves proceeding with a study to monitor the operation of existing low cost zebra crossings in Edinburgh, at locations that are not on the public road network; and
 - 1.1.5 Notes that the Council will continue to engage with Transport Scotland, Ministers and other Scottish Local Authorities to build support for changes to legislation that would permit the use of this type of crossing on public roads.

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 25 November 2021, The City of Edinburgh Council approved a Motion entitled Call for Action on Zebra Markings for Side Streets.
- 2.2 This report addresses the motion by updating Committee on the outcome of the correspondence and provides details of subsequent discussions by officers with Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland, who were already liaising on the potential to undertake such a trial, and also the escalation of the issue through the [Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland](#) (SCOTS).
- 2.3 Based on the feedback received, it is proposed to undertake a study to monitor the operation of existing low cost zebra crossings in Edinburgh, which already operate at many locations that are not on the public road network. This study will provide useful data that could be used to support the case for changes to legislation to allow the use of this type of crossing on a public road.
- 2.4 The Council will also continue to engage with Transport Scotland, Ministers and other Scottish Local Authorities to build support for changes to legislation.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council is keen to explore low cost but high impact ways of helping to move rapidly towards a net zero carbon, healthy and inclusive transport system.
- 3.2 Available forms of pedestrian (and cycle) priority street crossings, either signal controlled or zebras, are relatively expensive; with significant infrastructure needed over and above the necessary road markings. Many mainland European countries use much cheaper variants of the zebra, relying either on road markings alone or on markings supported by fixed signs rather than flashing beacons.
- 3.3 There has been a national call for authorisation from central government to use this type of zebra crossing for side streets. A joint statement has been signed by Living Streets, British Cycling, Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Campaign for Better

Transport, The Ramblers, Sustrans and Playing Out, as well as by motoring body the AA.

- 3.4 The use of such crossings could also help to reinforce recent changes to the Highway Code that increase priority for crossing pedestrians.
- 3.5 Trials of this type of crossing were recently conducted in Manchester. Early results of the trials appear encouraging, with large increases in drivers' propensity to give way to pedestrians recorded.
- 3.6 On [25 November 2021](#), the City of Edinburgh Council received a motion from Councillor Neil Ross entitled Call for Action on Zebra Markings for Side Streets. The Council approved an amendment by Councillor Macinnes which included the following actions:
 - 3.6.1 Requests that the Convener of Transport and Environment writes to the Scottish Government ministers responsible for Transport and Active Travel to:
 - 3.6.1.1 Highlight the benefits to pedestrians of zebra markings for side streets;
 - 3.6.1.2 Ask for authorisation, if necessary in conjunction with the UK Government, for the Council to implement zebra markings for side streets; and
 - 3.6.1.3 Report to the Transport and Environment Committee within two cycles to provide details of the correspondence with the Minister, including the response received from the Minister and details of any progress made.
 - 3.6.2 Requests that officers investigate the potential to set up a trial of zebra markings on side streets in Edinburgh, learning from the trials in Manchester and Aarhus. Suitable trial locations should be identified by taking into account other planned road changes and related aspects of the City Mobility Plan, with engagement with local Ward Councillors and Community Councils. Officers should report their recommendations to the Transport and Environment Committee in three cycles.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Convener wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights on 15 December 2021, seeking their support in principle for a proposed trial of low cost zebra crossings.
- 4.2 A response on behalf of the Scottish Ministers was received from the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights on 6 January 2022.

- 4.3 This advised that the Minister could see merit in exploring this idea further and advised that Glasgow City Council and Transport Scotland were already liaising on the potential to undertake such a trial.
- 4.4 The response also noted that there is currently no legislative framework that enables the installation of this type of crossing on a public road. However, Transport Scotland officials are keen to pursue alternative options in the legislative framework for enabling trials of innovative measures.
- 4.5 Council officers subsequently met with officers from Glasgow City Council on 23 February and with Transport Scotland on 17 March. Council officers also escalated the issue through SCOTS to establish whether other Scottish Local Authorities are considering similar trials. This confirmed that there was interest from several other Local Authorities in the potential use of low cost zebra crossings.
- 4.6 Transport Scotland advised that this type of crossing is not permitted on a public road under current legislation and that Scottish Ministers have no powers to authorise their use, even on a trial basis.
- 4.7 To permit this would require a change to be made to secondary legislation, namely the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. While Transport Scotland appreciated that the use of low cost zebra crossings on public roads might be a useful tool to encourage and prioritise active travel, they do not consider that a compelling case for changes to legislation to permit this has yet been made.
- 4.8 They estimated that, should such a case be successfully made, the likely timescale for any resultant change to legislation would be several years.
- 4.9 It is therefore proposed to undertake a study to monitor the operation of existing low cost zebra crossings in Edinburgh. These already exist at many locations that are not on the public road network; such as within retail parks or large supermarket car parks. Such a study would be subject to agreement with the owner/operator of the private road. Consideration will therefore also be given to whether there are any suitable crossings at locations within public sector ownership, such as within the grounds of hospitals or secondary schools.
- 4.10 The study will provide useful data, such as the levels of use of these crossings and compliance levels by vehicles and will also allow an analysis of incidents where vehicles do not comply to be undertaken. This information could then be used to develop the case for making changes to legislation to allow the use of this type of crossing on a public road.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If Committee approves progressing the study of existing crossings, officers will:
- 5.1.1 Identify suitable low cost zebra crossings in Edinburgh, at locations that are not on the public road network;

- 5.1.2 Seek agreement from the owners/operators of private roads (where necessary) and undertake a study to monitor their operation.
- 5.2 In addition, officers will continue to engage with Transport Scotland, Ministers and other Scottish Local Authorities to build support for changes to legislation.
- 5.3 Further updates will be provided to Committee as the above is progressed.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The study will be funded from revenue funding already allocated towards Active Travel.
- 6.2 Discussions will also be undertaken with Sustrans around the potential for them to provide funding towards the cost of the study.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 None.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Reports relating to trial of side road zebra crossings undertaken in Manchester](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.