

# Business Bulletin

## **Transport and Environment Committee**

**10.00am, Thursday, 12 October 2023**

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

# Transport and Environment Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Councillor Scott Arthur (Convener)</p> 	<p>Councillor Aston            Councillor Bandel            Councillor Cowdy            Councillor Dijkstra-Downie            Councillor Dobbin            Councillor Faccenda            Councillor Lang            Councillor McFarlane            Councillor Munro            Councillor O'Neill</p>	<p><a href="#">Alison Coburn</a>            Operations Manager</p> <p><a href="#">Rachel Gentleman</a>            Committee Services</p> <p><a href="#">Carolanne Eyre</a>            Committee Services</p>

Recent news	Contact for further information
<p><b>Trams to Newhaven Project</b></p> <p>Hard landscaping works are now completed at Blenheim Place, Elm Row and Bernard / Baltic Street.</p> <p>A programme of snagging and defect resolution is underway along the route, which includes the cycleway on Leith Walk. These are scheduled to be completed by the end of October 2023.</p> <p>Soft landscaping, including the planting of trees and grass will take place during October / November 2023 as part of planting season. This includes trees and shrubs being planted in planters on Leith Walk and Constitution Street.</p> <p>A formal handover plan for the ongoing administration of the project is being finalised and will be presented to the project board in November 2023.</p> <p>The project won the award for best project over EUR 50 million at this year's Global Light Rail Awards.</p>	<p><a href="#">Hannah Ross</a></p> <p>Wards Affected:</p> <p>11 – City Centre            12 – Leith Walk            13 – Leith</p>
<p><b>Supported Bus Services Review</b></p> <p>On 7 September 2023, a workshop was held with Community Councils, Councillors and bus operators to discuss supported bus services in the west of the city.</p>	<p><a href="#">Stuart Lowrie</a></p> <p>Wards Affected:</p> <p>1 – Almond</p>

This included discussions on existing connectivity and their aspirations for the future of the network. The workshop also covered initial network concepts for future services.

19 people (including Council officers and representatives from Jacobs) attended.

The key discussion points included:

- Some positive feedback on the initial network concepts, but some challenges too;
- The desire of Ratho residents to have a direct service to/from the City Centre;
- Services are not reliable or frequent enough, nor do they have enough operating hours (particularly in the evening);
- There are some important connections, particularly to Health Services, which need to be retained; and
- The success of future services will depend on services being reliable and at times to suit, and therefore building resident confidence in services.

Development of the procurement Prior Information Notice (PIN) is underway. Engagement with operators continues and a workshop will be held with interested parties once expressions of interest are received.

2 – Pentland Hills

### **Petition to Pedestrianise Elm Row**

Following on from the previous [update](#) to Committee in March 2022, the Trams to Newhaven works at Elm Row were completed on 29 September 2023, including removing all of the fencing and opening the footways and new parking areas.

Now that this work is completed, officers will begin to work with businesses and residents in the area to investigate options to pedestrianise Elm Row at least one day per week.

[Gavin Brown](#)

Wards Affected:

12 – Leith Walk

### **George Street and First New Town Public Realm Project**

On [15 June 2023](#), Committee approved all aspects of the latest design and operational plan proposals for George Street with the exception of taxi access for disabled people outside of the exemption window.

In response, a specialist accessibility team has been commissioned to undertake a detailed accessibility audit.

[Daisy Narayanan](#)

Wards Affected:

11 – City Centre

This team has established a George Street Accessibility Forum which includes representatives from Edinburgh Access Panel, RNIB, Sight Scotland, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS), Disability Equality Scotland and the local Community Council.

The inaugural meeting of the Forum took place on 5 September 2023, with a site visit to George Street for Forum members due to take place at the end October.

Initial feedback from Forum members and New Town Broughton Community Council have highlighted concerns relating to any restricted access for disabled users who require taxi access to George Street. Additionally, Essential Edinburgh and the George Street Association continue to express opposition to restrictions on taxi and licensed private hire car access for all users.

An assessment of the approaches that other UK cities have adopted to provide access for disabled people to traffic-restricted streets has been undertaken. The report highlights a wide variety of methods, for example, Bath City do allow controlled access to restricted streets for taxis carrying disabled passengers while other cities like of Glasgow do not.

The accessibility specialists are currently preparing an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) and the Accessibility Forum will continue to help inform the conclusion of the assessment. The EQIA will complement the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment.

### **Ground Penetrating Radar**

A detailed Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was undertaken by Atkins Consultants and a specialist sub-contractor in June 2023. The survey identifies the location and depth of major utilities and other underground features including basements. Due to the presence of onsite temporary food and beverage structures and illegally parked cars during the initial survey, some residual survey work will be undertaken later this year. In addition, during Q1 2024 trial pits/ground cores will also be taken to establish ground conditions. These investigation and survey results will be used to finalise the detailed technical design and determine the required utility diversion works. Initial survey results have identified the location of numerous basements which will be further investigated during the Stage 4 design process.

### **Interconnected Streets**

Detailed plans for Frederick Street, North Hanover and North Castle Streets are nearing completion. The plans have been developed from the current concept design for the George Street and First New Town area and will provide an updated proposal relating to parking, bus stops, loading and servicing, taxi ranks, pedestrian crossings and walking, wheeling, cycling improvements. The plans will be subject to local resident and business engagement prior to a final recommendation being presented to Committee in early 2024.

### **Hostile Vehicle Mitigation**

Discussions continue with relevant Council officers and Police Scotland to finalise Hostile Vehicle Mitigation plans for George Street. Recommendations will be presented to Committee at the earliest opportunity.

### **CEC Recovery Ltd**

CEC Recovery Ltd is a non-operational arms length external company of the Council which is retained for legal reasons. The company has a sole Director, which to date has been Hugh Dunn. On Hugh's retiral at the end of September, the sole Director is now Paul Lawrence.

[Kevin McKee](#)

Wards Affected: All

### **Stenhouse Mill Lane Footbridge ("Burnside Bridge") – Update on reopening**

In February 2023, Committee received an [update](#) on Stenhouse Mill Lane Footbridge.

Since February, following site visits and design, a contract for the repairs has been produced, which will include work to the abutments where scour is present, repointing of the abutment wall, infill concrete to the Southwest corner, rebuilding of the Southwest corner wall, and installation of a new GRP bridge deck. Approval from SEPA has also been requested, and received.

Officers are aware of the local historic importance of the 'longstone'; the original bridge abutment still in place adjacent to the current bridge. It is a requirement of the contract that this is protected at all times during the works.

#### Next Steps

The contract will be tendered in October, then based on contractor availability and flow conditions in the

[Stephen Knox](#)

[Blair Cooney](#)

**Wards Affected:**

7 - Sighthill/Gorgie

watercourse, it is expected that the works will commence in January 2024, and will last three weeks. Following this, the bridge will be reopened. Officers are mindful of the importance of this bridge to the community and so this timeline will be accelerated if conditions allow.

Further updates will be provided to Ward Councillors and the local community when the contract has been awarded, and again when works are due to commence on site.

### **Lindsay Road / Rainbow Bridge – Successful Sustrans Funding Application**

Lindsay Road Bridge was closed in December 2021 due to the condition of the bridge and the resulting immediate health and safety risk. A previous [report](#) to Committee in February 2023 provides details of the background to this project.

#### Sustrans Application

Officers produced a feasibility study, which formed part of an application to Sustrans for the funding for the design of a replacement bridge deck, which was submitted in July 2023. To allow the application to be considered by Sustrans within the 2023/24 financial year, this proposal was submitted as a change control request to the existing, adjacent Leith Connections Phase 3 Project (Hawthornvale to Seafield route). This application has now been approved by Sustrans and £232,700 has been granted for options development and the design of Lindsay Road Bridge.

#### Next Steps

The Council will appoint a Designer to progress the design of the new structure. Different options for the new bridge will be considered and Stakeholder and Community Engagement will be carried out to ensure a suitable design is progressed. This will commence next month and is expected to be completed in approximately one year. The safety risk from the existing, deteriorated structure remains and it is now unfeasible to undertake the necessary utility diversions required for demolition of the bridge deck before winter, and so this risk will increase. A review is now underway to determine how this risk can be mitigated, and Officers will provide further updates to Ward Councillors and Committee.

[Stephen Knox](#)

#### **Wards Affected:**

13 – Leith

Once the design stage is completed, officers intend to apply to Sustrans for 70% of the construction funding required for the new structure.

Although construction funding is not yet confirmed, given the positive outcome of the design funding application to Sustrans, this work will now progress and a further report will be brought back to Committee when required.

**Local Traffic Improvement Programme (Previously known as the Neighbourhood Environment Programme – NEPs)**

Building on the previous Neighbourhood Environment Programme, officers will shortly begin preparing a draft programme for local traffic improvement schemes. Once the draft programme has been prepared, it will be shared with Elected Members for comment.

The development of a new Local Traffic Improvement Programme is intended to address mobility challenges for our most vulnerable road users, factored to support investment in areas of multiple deprivation.

It is expected the programme will be developed by the end of this calendar year and, subject to feedback from Elected Members and Committee approval, could operational in early 2024.

The current available capital budget is in the region of £700,000.

[Dave Sinclair](#)

**Wards Affected:** All

**Annual traffic kilometers by cars and Taxis in Edinburgh**

The Department for Transport released its annual traffic statistics for 2022 at the end of July 2023. The most recent data for Edinburgh shows an increase in traffic between 2021 and 2022, though these are still lower than the baseline year of 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic. An update on the City Mobility Plan and its key performance indicators is scheduled for February 2024.

The data is shown in the table below.

[Kevin Hewie](#)

**Wards Affected:** All

**The city has a well-connected and sustainable transport and active travel network**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	Target
Annual traffic kilometres by cars and taxis in Edinburgh	2,457M	1,817M	2,051M	2,293M	30% reduction by 2030