



Deputation to City of Edinburgh Council, Transport & Environment Committee from South West Edinburgh 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Active Travel Measures – Travelling Safely

[South West Edinburgh 20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#) wants to build more resilient communities with thriving local businesses and services that will help tackle climate change, inactivity and air pollution. Simply put to *live better locally*. Therefore we warmly welcome the Transport Convenor's message that investment in public transport, pedestrian improvements and a safe, coherently designed cycling network should be prioritised.

We welcome the commitments from the [UK](#), [Scottish](#) and [local governments](#) to tackle the problematic vehicle use that is harming public health. This will help groups like [SW20](#) to help communities access schools, local businesses and green spaces more sustainably. All political parties representing South West Edinburgh stood on manifestos that promised to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport. We ask that where they are opposing schemes that make improvements in our area, [they present alternatives](#).

The [stark climate change warnings from the IPCC](#) will mean that in the future we must move around our city differently. This will be the defining issue of the 21st century and the sooner we make these changes, the less challenging the Net Zero transition will be.

We have mixed views about the proposals being debated today. They can be summarised as follows:

- We warmly welcome the retention of many schemes and hope that the ETRO process will allow for further consultation, improvements and final designs for these schemes – especially Longstone, Inglis Green, Murrayburn and Slateford Roads – to be delivered in a timely manner.
- It's obvious that these schemes need to be better connected - for example linking Longstone cycle lanes properly with Lanark Road and also from Lanark Road through Juniper Green to reach quieter streets.

We draw the committee's attention to two serious road incidents that took place recently outside the boundaries of the Lanark Road scheme: on a busy afternoon in Juniper Green a driver had to be cut free after rolling their car following a crash into a parked car, while at Longstone the driver of a van crossed the oncoming carriageway and pavement before crashing near the builder's yard. These and similar incidents erode the community's confidence in reaching the improved road layouts and underline the need to extend these schemes.

- Many walking and cycling improvements will not bear fruit until there are further end-to-end journey investments (e.g. pedestrian crossings, segregated junctions



and connected cycle networks) and we urge the council to be cautious about usage data from schemes which are not yet connected to other safe routes, especially while the majority of offices in the city are still closed due to the pandemic.

- We welcome the ['cut the clutter'](#) partnership with Living Streets. It should be extended based on the survey data currently being collected.
- We urge CEC to build upon the success of school streets with permanent designs where possible. In the 1970s [70% of children walked to school](#) – this should be our target.
- The choice between parking and better active travel is a false one. Reallocation of road space from active travel back to private vehicles does not align with UK, Scottish or local government policies to reduce car use:
 - We are very disappointed that pedestrian improvements in shopping streets, the cornerstone of 20 minute communities, are being removed. COVID has transformed home working - there is an opportunity to use local shops in a sustainable way.
 - Adding parking and reallocating pavements and cycle lanes to private vehicles simply induces further private car use. This harms bus journey times too. Public transport hesitancy appears likely to persist and without providing safe alternatives congestion will increase.
 - Replacing safe segregated cycle lanes with advisory lanes that will [make it less safe](#) and [much less likely for people to cycle](#) is hugely disappointing. Roads with segregated cycle lanes are [safer for all road users](#) including pedestrians of all ages and abilities. To be clear, you will be voting to worsen safety for vulnerable road users.
- We welcome the lack of any serious incidents around floating parking since the committee last met, and we support the principle of well-implemented floating parking, but believe that the community urgently needs to see the vision for these layouts in a permanent state, rather than the temporary materials which may be suppressing local support.
 - We note that in addition to any potential benefit to cyclists, floating parking seems to significantly reduce cycling speed, potentially reducing both the frequency and severity of collisions with people exiting their cars.
 - Floating parking can also move pavement cyclists (who are unwilling to use the main traffic lane) into a well defined area of the road and away from vulnerable pedestrians. We urge the council to take all such factors into account when establishing final designs.

Finally, we wholeheartedly support consultations to help residents and business voice support or concerns about policy proposals or specific schemes. We strongly urge the Council to follow the statutory processes to help understand how policies can be adapted. However, we do not believe the council should delay indefinitely or compromise the core objectives of these schemes by seeking consensus in an area where significant



behavioural change is required – opponents will seek to delay many schemes, irrespective of consultations. COVID has taught us that delaying because of election cycles will simply mean more unequal change when decisions have to be made rapidly. The harm being caused by climate change, inactivity and emissions cannot be filibustered.

Please make your decisions in that context.

Yours,

[South West Edinburgh 20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#)