



City of Edinburgh Council

Transport & Environment Committee, 14 Oct 2021

Item 7.4 – Short Term Improvements at Portobello High Street/Inchview Terrace/Sir Harry Lauder Road Junction – Report by the Executive Director of Place

Dear Councillors,

Portobello Community Council normally seeks to learn the view of the community and reflect those to the local authority. However, the circumstances at hand forced a more direct form of engagement with Council officers and councillors following two fatal incidents at this junction. As co-chair of the community council I have taken part in a series of stakeholder meetings, sharing local knowledge of the junction as a pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist while also reflecting on discussions by the community council and within the community. It has been a very emotional process.

It was shocking to see Option 1 taken forward as a serious proposal for a short-term remedy – replacing an ill-advised advisory cycle lane with a third lane for general traffic. This proposal shows little understanding of the gradient at the location, the speed of traffic – either fast & accelerating to get through traffic lights, or stationary – and the additional risk this would force onto cyclists moving slowly across a lane of traffic to head toward Inchview Terrace or two lanes for Seafeld and Kings Road. You cannot improve the safety of a junction by introducing additional risky manoeuvres for the most vulnerable users. Design should not be made to account for poor adherence by HGV drivers – professional drivers – while simultaneously expecting cyclists to behave in exactly the way designed for, or simply implying that by cycling across the junction they themselves are at fault [Police Scotland].

It is good to see Option 2 being recommended for implementation. At times it felt like Spokes Party, the ward councillors and community council were championing Option 2a – but let's be clear: it is the least worst option. It is a short-term sticking plaster only. Preventing left turns by HGV drivers reduces the likelihood of further deaths, however it does force a small number of HGVs to other roads – if there is a best road for HGVs in the general area then it is clearly the Harry Lauder Road – it's not Northfield Broadway, it's not Brighton Place.

As such the medium-term solution must be implemented as soon as possible. Its implementation is not tied to the short-term one – there are no dependencies. Putting its deadline as short-term completion + 18 months sets an unambitious target. Pull it in, complete it much faster. Until it is completed, ensure mitigation strategies are in place on at-risk roads (speed cushions on Northfield Broadway – good; mitigations for Brighton and Southfield Place too?), with repeat traffic monitoring and improved on-road signage for cyclists of alternative routes.

It is encouraging to see the Council's road safety plan, Vision Zero – but there is a need for all involved to be sufficiently trained and familiar: councillors, council officers, stakeholders, and other professionals. This could have realised a "short-term" proposal was implemented in a short timescale.

Yours,

Lee Kindness

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