

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 31 March 2022

Health and Inequalities in relation to Active Travel Provision in Edinburgh – Motion by Councillor Macinnes

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	16, 17, 18, 27

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Transport and Environment Committee is asked to note the contents of this report in response an adjusted Motion which was approved by the Council on 23 September 2021 in respect of Health and Inequalities in relation to Active Travel Provision in Edinburgh.

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Health and Inequalities in relation to Active Travel Provision in Edinburgh – Motion by Councillor Macinnes

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to a Motion tabled by Councillor Macinnes and agreed by the Council on 23 September 2021.
- 2.2 The Motion requested that officers bring forward a report to the Transport and Environment Committee examining the issues raised in an [open letter](#) to Councillors from a group of 140 health professionals. The letter emphasised why active travel and actions to combat air pollution, and the health inequalities and outcomes they can help to address and to meet climate obligations, are of critical importance.
- 2.3 This report also summarises the likely effect of not making significant progress towards improved sustainable transport and the transport-related actions the Council is taking towards achieving a more equitable, healthier future for all those living, working and visiting Edinburgh, as requested by the Motion.

3. Background

- 3.1 The open letter set out the following key points for consideration, which have directly informed the content of this report:
 - 3.1.1 Health professionals have a responsibility to protect and promote the health of the population, to address inequalities, and to advocate for the needs of the most deprived and disadvantaged members of the population;
 - 3.1.2 Raised concerns about the impact of the climate crisis on health, globally and locally;
 - 3.1.3 Confirmed concerns about harms to health caused by air pollution in Edinburgh;
 - 3.1.4 Stated that regular physical activity is associated with improved health outcomes at all ages;

- 3.1.5 Supported the retention, and further development and integration of infrastructures designed to support active travel and clean air for the whole population of Edinburgh, to mitigate inequalities in health, local mobility, and air quality, including quiet routes in the vicinity of schools to allow safe active travel for families, integrated networks of segregated safe paths for cycling, city-wide subsidised cycle hire programmes, and low-emission zones; and
- 3.1.6 Raised concerns that suggested steps to reverse active travel measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic would be a retrograde and harmful step for the health of the population of Edinburgh.
- 3.2 Plans and strategies which focus on supporting active travel and sustainable travel in general, in addition to those which focus on tackling air pollution, are summarised in the Main Report and listed in the Background reading/External references section.

4. Main Report

- 4.1 The Council is committed to supporting all citizens to travel as actively and sustainably as possible. It is also committed to improving air quality to support better health outcomes for all citizens.
- 4.2 Sustainable transport is one of a set of measures that can deliver a healthier, more sustainable city. Reducing air pollution and increasing active travel have direct health benefits for citizens.
- 4.3 There is evidence that well-designed urban neighbourhoods, complete with active travel infrastructure, good air quality and public (green) spaces contribute positively to population health improvement. Conversely, a failure to invest in public realm improvements and sustainable transport can further accentuate health problems associated with physical inactivity, traffic pollution, community severance and social exclusion. Section 8 of this report provides links to background evidence.
- 4.4 The evidence also suggests that health benefits are greater in transport modes in the upper part of the sustainable transport hierarchy (walking and wheeling, cycling and public transport) and health harms are greater in the lower parts (taxis and shared vehicles, and individual vehicles). Shifting the modal share towards the upper parts of the hierarchy, so that there is an increase in the proportion of people wheeling, walking, cycling and using public transport, will contribute to increased benefits and reduced risks to population health. *(Text from [Transport use, health and health inequalities: full report \(publichealthscotland.scot.\)](#))*
- 4.5 A number of common themes emerged when it came to learning about the challenges and preconditions for successful place based working. These were: working with partners; community engagement; time and resources; evaluation and learning; exit and legacy. There is no one size that fits all. There is no 'best' design. The important thing is to be clear about the rationale for design choices, ensuring that they align with the ambition for the programme, the capacity to

implement and the characteristics of the community. (Text from [Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf \(lankellychase.org.uk.\)](#))

Transport-related actions to improve sustainable travel and air quality

- 4.6 The [City Mobility Plan](#) (CMP) was approved by Committee in February 2021 and is the Council's statutory local transport plan. This 10-year strategy sets out policies and actions which will make travelling into and around Edinburgh more active, sustainable, safe, accessible and affordable for all residents, businesses and visitors by 2030. A core aim of the CMP is to improve and increase the provision of active travel and public transport infrastructure to encourage more sustainable travel and reduce private car use.
- 4.7 The CMP acknowledges the biggest challenges that must be tackled, which include climate change, poverty, exclusion, inequality, and improving safety, health and wellbeing. The Plan's vision is that:
- Edinburgh will be connected by a safer and more inclusive net zero carbon transport system delivering a healthier, thriving, fairer and compact capital city and a higher quality of life for all residents.*
- 4.8 To support the Vision, the CMP contains nine objectives and 49 policy measures under the themes of People, Movement and Place. The associated [Implementation Plan](#) sets out how key actions in the CMP will be progressed and delivered up to 2030.
- 4.9 Policy measures in the 'People' section of the Plan require behaviour change initiatives to focus on the use of active, sustainable modes of travel as opposed to the private car. This section also commits the Council to maintaining an affordable public transport system.
- 4.10 Policies within the 'Movement' section of the Plan require the delivery of actions that make it easier and safer for people to travel by foot, wheel, bike and public transport. Delivering walking and cycling networks, linking key destinations and improving access to education, employment and leisure is a strong theme throughout the Plan, in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy.
- 4.11 Significant progress continues to be made in delivering strategic active travel projects across the city. In [October 2021](#), Committee approved an updated Active Travel Investment Programme (ATInP), setting out an estimated investment of over £118million in facilities for walking, wheeling and cycling from 2019/20 to 2025/26.
- 4.12 The 20 Minute Neighbourhood programme will also contribute significantly to encouraging more active travel with the ultimate goal of enabling citizens to 'live well locally'.
- 4.13 There continues to be significant investment in public transport infrastructure, with the Tram to Newhaven expected to be completed by Spring 2023 and bus priority measures being delivered through the Bus Partnership Fund.

- 4.14 Commitment to expand the tram network from the north to the south of the city is also set out within the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Review 2 (STPR2) and the draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). A Business Case is being developed to support this.
- 4.15 New digitised systems to make demand responsive travel (DRT) more efficient and easy to use is progressing with a focus on supporting access to health, social care and education, particularly for vulnerable residents.
- 4.16 Policies in the 'Place' section of the Plan ensure that streets and public spaces are designed to be accessible and in a way that prioritises pedestrians, restricts vehicle access and supports healthier, safer and more pleasant movement within the city.
- 4.17 The CMP also aims to improve air quality by reducing emissions from road transport and commits to delivering a Low Emission Zone (LEZ). The Council's proposed LEZ, covering the city centre, is now progressing through its final stages of approval, with enforcement expected from June 2024. The LEZ will have a significant impact on public health in connection with reducing air pollution across the city.
- 4.18 The Council is also currently in the process of updating its Air Quality Action Plan. The draft Action Plan is expected to be presented for consideration and public consultation later this year. The Air Quality Annual Progress Report was presented to Committee in [January 2021](#), summarising progress on actions to address air pollution. The report confirmed that actions taken so far to tackle poor air quality through the Council's designation of Air Quality Management Areas, are resulting in an improving picture overall for the city's air quality

Measuring Success

- 4.19 In November 2021, Committee approved an ambitious target to reduce car kilometres (kms) travelled in the city by 30% by 2030. This target follows the Scottish Government's national target which seeks a 20% reduction in car kms by 2030. This target, along with several others targets in the CMP, will allow objectives to be monitored.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Officers will continue to progress the delivery of active travel schemes and actions to combat air pollution as part of the commitments made in relevant plans and strategies referred to in this report.

6. Financial Impact

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Engagement on active travel and air quality actions, as referred to in this report, have and will continue to be undertaken and reported to committee at relevant points.

8. Background Reading/External References

- 8.1 Safe walking and cycling infrastructure reduces health inequalities:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140520301729?via%3Dihub>
- 8.2 The impact on health inequalities of measures to address Covid: [Transport use, health and health inequalities: The impact of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 - Repository - Public Health Scotland](#)
- 8.3 The Glasgow Centre for Population and Health published a health report for Glasgow (Health in a changing City: Glasgow 2021) in August last year which amongst other recommendations noted the need: 1) to accelerate progress in building new AT infrastructure, 2) to engage with communities early on schemes to ensure fair and equitable access to active travel services and infrastructure, and 3) and to address safety, including reducing speed limits. Links to the [full report](#) and [executive summary](#).
- 8.4 Active environments and inequality - links to several evidence papers below:
- 8.4.1 Lankelly Chase (2017). Available at: <http://lankellychase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Historical-review-of-place-based-approaches.pdf>
- 8.4.2 Improvement Service (2016). Available at: https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/10744/place-based-approaches-report.pdf
- 8.4.3 Emma J. Adams, Nick Cavill, Engaging communities in changing the environment to promote transport-related walking: Evaluation of route use in the 'Fitter for Walking' project, Journal of Transport & Health, Volume 2, Issue 4, 2015, Pages 580-594, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2015.09.002>.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140515006829>
- 8.4.4 Keall et al (2015) Increasing active travel: results of a quasi-experimental study of an intervention to encourage walking and cycling. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26034048/>
- 8.5 [Transport and Environment Committee - City Mobility Plan](#) (Item 7.1, February 2021)
- 8.6 [Transport and Environment Committee - Low Emission Zone – Consultation and Development](#) (Item 7.1, October 2021)
- 8.7 [Transport and Environment Committee - Low Emission Zone – Preferred Scheme for Consultation](#) (Item 7.4, June 2021)

- 8.8 [Policy and Sustainability Committee - 2030 Climate Strategy and Implementation Plan](#) (Item 7.4, November 2021)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.