

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 2 March 2023

Response to Motion by Councillor Macinnes – Accessibility Commission

Executive Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Transport and Environment Committee notes the progress being made through collaborative working with external partners focussed on accessible streets and that a Round Table discussion with partners is proposed to take place by Summer 2023 to help ensure accessibility is at the heart of placemaking and transport projects in Edinburgh.

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the Council's actions to improve accessibility and sets out the next steps in working with partners to improve the Council's understanding of accessibility issues and to support decision making in the future.

3. Background

- 3.1 On [30 June 2022](#), Council approved the following adjusted motion by Councillor Macinnes. The Council agreed:
- 3.1.1 To recognise that Edinburgh was undergoing significant, ongoing change to its transport network and placemaking efforts, particularly as we move towards our 2030 Net Zero Carbon commitments and make further efforts to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling.
- 3.1.2 To recognise that while reducing private car use was vital if we were to meet these aims as well as tackle congestion, many older and disabled residents rely on car transport to go about their lives and that lack of accessibility remains a significant issue for many in our community. To recognise that some decisions taken by the Council over the last five years have not always recognised or responded adequately to these needs, and that lessons must be learned from this. To note that many already use or would wish to use wheeling and cycling as a means of tackling mobility and disability challenges and that this should be recognised and facilitated within our policy development and implementation.
- 3.1.3 To note the existing forums and stakeholder groups, like the Edinburgh Access Panel, who already made a significant contribution to these issues and agree the need to ensure that community voices reflecting lived experience were heard as we shape the future of this city together.
- 3.1.4 To further note that there was a need to provide additional input to the approach of the Council to ensure currently unheard or disadvantaged groups provide valuable input to help shape policy and implementation plans. To recognise this would help the Council ensure that we took the right policy decisions to tackle current transport inequalities and that we implemented those policies in a way that reflects what we heard from residents and experts about meeting the needs of older and disabled residents.

- 3.1.5 To agree that a report be presented to the Transport and Environment Committee within two cycles, setting out how the Council's engagement with the Edinburgh Access Panel could be strengthened and how the panel's role in shaping Council decisions could be improved.
 - 3.1.6 To agree that officers should, ahead of the committee's consideration of this report, facilitate a round table meeting so all members of the new Transport and Environment Committee could meet with representatives of the Edinburgh Access Panel to better understand priorities and the improvements which could be delivered in the short term to improve accessibility across the city.
 - 3.1.7 To agree that, as part of the Transport and Environment Committee work plan, there should be an annual accessibility report, detailing the steps taken by the Council over the preceding 12 months to address accessibility issues and setting out the key priorities and additional actions to be taken for the year to come.
- 3.2 Following approval of the motion, officers discussed the timing of this report with Councillor Macinnes and agreed to bring the report to Committee in March 2023.

4. Main report

Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan

- 4.1 Edinburgh's City Mobility Plan (CMP), approved in [February 2021](#), recognises that it is critical that people of all abilities are able to move around the city safely and conveniently. It confirms that measures will be put in place to support a range of accessible travel options and commits to continue developing an understanding of the variety of mobility challenges faced and solutions to them.
- 4.2 CMP was prepared alongside the emerging City Plan 2030, which ensures land use planning and transport are fully aligned and support accessible sustainable places where citizens don't need to use a car to move around.
- 4.3 Measures which support greater ease of movement via active means, such as through the continued removal of clutter and other barriers from our streets and public spaces, are a key priority.
- 4.4 The aim of the Council's [20 Minute Neighbourhood Programme](#) is for all its citizens to live well locally, where everyone can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk, wheel or cycle from their home. Ensuring that these local trips can be made safely, conveniently and affordably no matter what an individual's mobility needs are, is critical to the successful delivery of the programme.
- 4.5 In addition, officers are partnering with SEStran to progress delivery of a Mobility as a Service (MAAS) system in Edinburgh – a key tool to enable more personalised travel options across the city and into the wider region. Other supportive measures include expansion of the city's Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) offer, and the creation of mobility hubs in key locations to support safe and easy access to sustainable travel modes.
- 4.6 Whilst the main thrust of the CMP is around shifting as many required trips as possible to the most sustainable travel modes, it recognises that for some people

and in some circumstances private cars might be needed. Measures to support blue badge holder access into and around the city, for example, remains a key priority.

Active Travel Action Plan

- 4.7 On [2 February 2023](#), Committee approved the Draft Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP) for consultation over Spring/Summer. It sets out a wide range of actions aimed at making Edinburgh a better, safer and more convenient place to walk, wheel and cycle.
- 4.8 One of the key ambitions of the draft ATAP is to implement the Edinburgh Accessible Streets Initiative (EASI). EASI is based on a proposal by Living Streets, with its core aim to make the city inclusive for people with disabilities. It includes actions to:
- 4.8.1 Make it easier to cross side roads, with dropped kerbs, 'tighter' junctions to reduce the crossing distance, raised crossings and continuous footways;
 - 4.8.2 Prioritise level walking surfaces where driveways cross pavements, with steeper ramps at the kerb for cars;
 - 4.8.3 Continue 'de-cluttering' initiatives, including the A board ban;
 - 4.8.4 Enforce the pavement parking ban at the appropriate time; and
 - 4.8.5 Increased provision of places to sit.
- 4.9 The EASI is an ambitious concept (for example, tackling missing or damaged dropped kerbs alone involves 17,000 locations). The proposal for consultation on the draft ATAP is that early priorities should be:
- 4.9.1 Bus routes, facilitating access to bus stops;
 - 4.9.2 Town centres; and
 - 4.9.3 Access to Health Centres.

Equal Pavements Pledge

- 4.10 In [September 2022](#), the Council signed the 'Equal Pavements Pledge' aimed at improving the accessibility of footways by Transport for All, the disability group focusing on transport.

The Edinburgh Access Panel

- 4.11 Officers work closely with [The Edinburgh Access Panel](#) to improve accessibility for physically disabled and sensory impaired people, predominantly in relation to the built environment.
- 4.12 Through discussions with the Access Panel, there is an acknowledgment that more needs to be done to ensure that accessibility is at the heart of policy and delivery of transport and placemaking projects.

Round Table Discussion

- 4.13 A city-wide Round Table discussion is being set up to address some of these key issues of accessibility within the city.
- 4.14 In addition to Transport and Environment Committee members, the discussion will include groups such as: the Edinburgh Access Panel, Mobility and Access Committee Scotland, Euan's Guide, Inclusion Scotland, Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living, Sight Scotland, RNIB, Guide Dogs, Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, among others.
- 4.15 The discussion will also focus on how the Council can strengthen engagement Edinburgh Access Panel and other organisations to support decision making on transport and placemaking policies and actions.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Round Table discussion will be arranged and held before Summer 2023. Following this discussion and further work with partners, it is envisaged that an 'Accessibility Charter' will be developed for agreement by the Council and partners.
- 5.2 Additional training in inclusive design will be provided to officers who design and deliver public realm projects in the city. Discussions are ongoing with Transport for All to explore the scope, remit and cost of this training.
- 5.3 An annual progress update will be provided. As well as reviewing the year past, this report will also set out priorities for the upcoming year.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost for additional training is being sought and, if agreed, will be part of the Learning and Development programme for the Council.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 A collaborative approach with key stakeholders, disability groups, people with protected characteristics as well as engagement with the general public, will be critical in delivering safe and accessible streets for everyone.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.