

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 11 January 2024

East London Street

Executive/routine
Wards

Executive
11 – City Centre

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Transport and Environment Committee notes:
 - 1.1.1 The updated traffic count and speed monitoring data, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 3 and paragraphs 4.1 – 4.8;
 - 1.1.2 The resurfacing and renewal options available for East London Street, as detailed in paragraphs 4.9 – 4.14; and
 - 1.1.3 The options appraisals for an alternative route for out of service buses, as detailed in Appendix 4 and paragraphs 4.15 – 4.19.
- 1.2 It is recommended that based on the updated information in this report, Transport and Environment Committee takes no further action at this time.

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East London Street

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to the request from Committee to address resident concerns about the issue of excessive traffic, particularly out of service buses, on East London Street.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 12 October 2023, Committee considered a [report](#) in response to concerns about the issue of excessive traffic, particularly out of service buses, on East London Street.
- 3.2 Committee [agreed](#) to receive a report in two cycles considering the following issues:
- 3.2.1 The merits and demerits for maintaining the status quo on East London Street inclusive of cost, impact on noise levels, sustainability, timescale for the reconstructions of setts;
 - 3.2.2 The merits and demerits for reprofiling East London Street from setted to standard carriageway inclusive of cost, impact on noise levels, sustainability, timescale for tarmacking the central carriageway, recommendations for resident engagement ahead of making this transition and process for obtaining an exemption to the setted street policy; and
 - 3.2.3 Additional potential and costed options for improving the sustainability of the status-quo or tarmacked carriageway via restricting heavy traffic movements inclusive of any recommendations to improve the environment around St Mary's Primary School.
- 3.3 Committee also requested that officers work with Lothian Buses to understand the total access and egress options for the operation of Annandale Street depot to identify whether adjustments to the surrounding road network could benefit a more sustainable and evenly spread operation, lessening the impact on surrounding residential amenity overall.

4. Main report

Road Safety Traffic Counts

- 4.1 Traffic count and speed monitoring was carried out in East London Street between 17 November 2023 and 25 November 2023. This monitoring recorded vehicle speed and the total number of light, medium and heavy vehicles. It also recorded the number of public service vehicles (buses) to use the street.
- 4.2 The previous traffic count was carried out in May 2019. It should be noted that this traffic count did not determine the difference between Public Service Vehicle (PSV) or Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) vehicles with similar axle configurations.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 shows the recorded data from both counts. It should be noted that only seven days of data were used from the 2023 data in order to give an accurate comparison to the 2019 data.
- 4.4 The data shows that there has been a significant reduction in the number of vehicles using East London Street from 2019 to 2023. In particular, the use of the west-bound carriageway. This is likely to have been as a result of the removal of traffic restrictions for Tram construction.
- 4.5 The traffic speed data between both counts is quite consistent, with only a small reduction in the mean speeds. Both counts show that mean speeds in both directions were within the 20mph speed limit.
- 4.6 Appendix 3 shows the recorded HGV and PSV use from the 2023 survey.
- 4.7 The data shows that there is very little HGV use of East London Street, with only 25 vehicles recorded over the seven-day period.
- 4.8 The data shows that bus use accounts for approximately 2.2% of all vehicle use in East London Street, although there is a higher percentage of buses using the westbound carriageway. This is very likely to be buses accessing routes from Annandale Street depot.

Road Reconstruction Options

- 4.9 At its meeting on 9 March 2018, Transport and Environment Committee approved the [“Finalised Strategy for Setted Streets”](#) . Within the principles approved, it states that setted streets that fall within the World Heritage Site and/or are in a conservation area will be protected.
- 4.10 East London Street is within the New Town conservation area, therefore, when a capital renewal takes place, the proposal will be to renew the setted carriageway. A deviation from the Finalised Strategy for Setted Streets would be required for the setts to be removed. If an alternative surface was pursued then this would require a consultation exercise, including heritage groups, finalising with a report to be approved by the relevant committee.

- 4.11 If an alternative resurfacing option, other than a sett renewal, was considered for East London Street, then the options available would be a full reconstruction of the street using asphalt or an asphalt overlay of the existing setts.
- 4.12 Due to the heavy vehicle use of the street, an asphalt overlay would not be the preferred option as the overlay would very likely deteriorate quickly giving a low lifecycle before intervention was again required.
- 4.13 Appendix 2 shows the cost and construction time estimated comparisons between the three options, with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Alternative Route for Buses

- 4.14 In order to reduce the number of out of service buses using East London Street, a street appraisal was carried out on Green Street. Green Street is not currently suitable to support bus use due to the existing street dimensions and traffic calming measures currently in place.
- 4.15 Options and a Preliminary Design have been commissioned for the improvement of the Green Street / Annandale Street junction. The design should accommodate unobstructed turns for buses to and from the Central Depot and future proof the opening up of this junction as an alternative route to East London Street to reduce delays and journey times.
- 4.16 When undertaking the options appraisal, the following options were considered in the decision-making process:
- Pedestrian provisions;
 - Impact on traffic calming;
 - Landscape and ecology;
 - Bus operations (swept path analysis);
 - General traffic operations (swept path analysis);
 - Deliverability;
 - Cost;
 - Maintenance; and
 - Sustainability.
- 4.17 Three options have been developed, with the results of this appraisal are attached in Appendix 4.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Lothian Buses are aware of the concerns raised in respect of buses running on East London Street and will continue to review their route plans to minimise its use for scheduled services.

- 5.2 In addition, they will continue to remind drivers of their responsibilities at the start and end of service, on service route information, newsletters, online portal and through real time information.
- 5.3 Council officers will continue to monitor the road condition, in line with the Council's approach to inspection and remedial action will be taken if required. The road condition will also continue to be assessed as part of the prioritisation of road condition (in accordance with the policy on setts renewal).
- 5.4 Atmospheric monitoring will continue, and the annual report of data gathered from the Passive Diffusion Tube (PDT) monitoring will be available in 2024.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The information collated in response to this request forms part of the Council's normal activities and therefore no additional costs have been incurred.
- 6.2 Lothian Buses have advised that there would be a financial and operational service impact should scheduled services not operate along East London Street.
- 6.3 The future carriageway renewal of East London Street will be funded by the existing Roads and Infrastructure Capital budget.
- 6.4 Funding would have to be identified prior to implementing any of the design appraisal options, as detailed in Appendix 4 and paragraphs 4.15 – 4.19.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 No equality or poverty impacts have been identified in preparing this report.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

Environmental Impacts

- 8.3 Atmospheric monitoring is being carried out on East London Street to understand the nitrogen dioxide concentration in the air.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 The information provided in the petition from August 2023 highlights the community impact of noise associated with traffic, particularly buses, on East London Street.
- 9.2 This report outlines the current Council policy for setted streets and outlines the costs, advantages and disadvantages of the options for surface renewal on East London Street.
- 9.3 The Council policies on setted street and road condition have been applied for East London Street. A report on the prioritisation methodology is expected to be considered by Committee in March 2024.
- 9.4 Atmospheric monitoring is being carried out in accordance with the Council's responsibilities on monitoring air quality.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – East London Street Traffic Count

Appendix 2 – Comparison of Construction

Appendix 3 – East London Street HGV and PSV use

Appendix 4 – Green Street Appraisal Options

East London Street Traffic Count

Appendix 1

Site No.	Location.		Direction.	Speed Limit - PSL (mph)	Start Date.	End Date.	Total Vehicles.	5 Day Ave.	7 Day Ave.	No. > Speed Limit.	% > Speed Limit.	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed
4	East London Street	All Vehicles	East	20	Tuesday 07 May 2019	Monday 13 May 2019	20524	3226	2932	2224	10.8	16.2	19.3
			West	20	Tuesday 07 May 2019	Monday 13 May 2019	35039	5647	5006	2033	5.8	15.8	18.5
			East West	20	Tuesday 07 May 2019	Monday 13 May 2019	55563	8873	7938	4257	7.7	15.9	18.8

Site No.	Location.		Direction.	Speed Limit - PSL (mph)	Start Date.	End Date.	Total Vehicles.	5 Day Ave.	7 Day Ave.	No. > Speed Limit.	% > Speed Limit.	Mean Speed	85%ile Speed
4	East London Street	All Vehicles	East	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	18285	2825	2612	711	3.9	14.7	17.7
			West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	10093	1517	1442	861	8.5	15.5	18.7
			East West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	28378	2917	4054	1572	5.5	15.1	18.2

Table 1

Method	Estimated Cost	Estimated Construction Duration
Sett Reconstruction	£1.5m - £1.8m	52 Weeks
Asphalt Reconstruction	£0.75m - £1.0m	16 Weeks
Asphalt Overlay	£0.30m - £0.50m	4 Weeks

There are advantages and disadvantages to all 3 options. **Table 2** below details some of these:

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Sett Reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longest lifecycle. • Maintains traditional built heritage. • Low carbon footprint during construction. • Requires little ongoing maintenance. • In-line with Council policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most expensive to construct. • Long construction period (disruption). • Louder tyre noise.
Asphalt Reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive construction costs. • Less tyre noise for residents and St Mary’s Primary School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest carbon footprint during construction. • Not in-line with Council policy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less construction period (disruption) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes traditional build heritage. • May increase traffic speeds and require speed calming measures.
Asphalt Overlay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest construction costs. • Less tyre noise for residents and St Mary's Primary school. • Lowest construction period (disruption). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortest Lifecyle. • Will quickly require maintenance intervention. • Not in-line with Council Policy. • Removes traditional built heritage. • May increase traffic speeds and require speed calming measures.

East London Street HGV and PSV Use

Appendix 3

Site No.	Location.		Direction.	Speed Limit - PSL (mph)	Start Date.	End Date.	Total Vehicles.	5 Day Ave.	7 Day Ave.	% of Total Vehicles
4	East London Street	HGV	East	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	13	3	2	0.07
			West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	12	2	2	0.12
			East West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	25	5	4	0.09

Site No.	Location.		Direction.	Speed Limit - PSL (mph)	Start Date.	End Date.	Total Vehicles.	5 Day Ave.	7 Day Ave.	% of Total Vehicles
4	East London Street	PSV	East	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	223	39	32	1.22
			West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	403	63	58	3.99
			East West	20	Friday 17 November 2023	Saturday 23 November 2023	626	102	89	2.21

Green Street Appraisal Options

Design Option	Existing Context	Route Constraints & Potential Impact	Project Objectives						Total Project Objectives	Rank
Green Street x Annandale Street Junction Improvement			Pedestrian provisions	Landscape and ecology	Bus Operations	General Traffic Operations	Deliverability	Cost		
Option A	This option looks to only alter the southern kerbline. The proposal seeks to increase the radius to accommodate bus movements in a westerly manner, in particular. Carriageway widths on all arms will remain the same.		By keeping carriageway widths constrained, vehicle speeds are likely to remain reduced and crossing widths remain minimal.	It is proposed that 4 No. street trees are removed and compensated at 4 No. locations on the north and north-east side of the junction.	This option allows the movement of buses out of the Central Depot and onto Green Street, however, does require vehicles on Green Street to sit back. Similarly, for buses going southbound, vehicles will need to sit on Annandale Street to allow exit from Green Street. By keeping the approach arms lower than 6.5m, this means that any future proofing could be more challenging.	This option will have minimal impact for general traffic operations. The alteration of the kerb radii will assist movements for larger vehicles turning left.	No TRO requirements will be needed as a part of this option. An RSO will be required to redetermine a small section of footway to carriageway. It is estimated that approximately 3 parking spaces will be lost as a result of the works.	This will be the lowest cost option.	42	1
			8	5	5	5	9	10		

Design Option	Existing Context	Route Constraints & Potential Impact	Project Objectives						Total Project Objectives	Rank
Green Street x Annandale Street Junction Improvement			Pedestrian provisions	Landscape and ecology	Bus Operations	General Traffic Operations	Deliverability	Cost		
Option B	This option involves altering both the north and south kerblines of the junction to and creating a 6.5m carriageway width for north to south movements. Both the Hopetoun Street and Green Street arms will remain the same width.		There is minimal impact on crossing lengths in this proposal. It could be argued that by opening up the junction for through movements from north to south, vehicle speeds could increase, however by keeping the raised table, it is estimated that this impact will be minimal.	It is proposed that 5 No. street trees are removed and compensated at 5No. Locations on the north and north-east side of the junction.	Similar to option A, this option allows movement of buses out of the Central Depot and onto Green Street, however does require vehicles on Green Street to sit back. Similarly, for buses going southbound, vehicles will need to sit on Annandale Street to allow exit from Green Street. The 6.5m width of carriageway on Annandale St allows future proofing should buses seek to further utilise this area, however Green St remains 4.5m.	This option will have some impact on general traffic operations. North to south movements will be made easier and left turns on Annandale Street will be made easier.	A TRO and RSO will be required for this option. 1 gully will need to be relocated as a part of these works. It is estimated that approximately 4 parking spaces will be lost as a result of the works.	This is the mid cost of the 3 options.	42	1
			8	5	6	7	8	8		

Design Option	Existing Context	Route Constraints & Potential Impact	Project Objectives						Total Project Objectives	Rank
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Green Street x Annandale Street Junction Improvement		Pedestrian provisions	Landscape and ecology	Bus Operations	General Traffic Operations	Deliverability	Cost		
Option C	This option is the most involved of the 3 and seeks to widen all arms of the junction to achieve 7.30m running lanes. Footway widening on 3 of the footways is proposed, and the southern footway of Green Street is to be reduced for a short section.	Carriageway widths are increased on all arms in this option which makes crossing more challenging for pedestrians. The proposals do give opportunity to widen footway widths on Annandale Street and Green Street however.	It is proposed that 5 No. street trees are removed and compensated at 5No. Locations on the north and north-east side of the junction.	This option enables cars on Annandale Street turning left onto Green Street to make the manoeuvre while buses on Green Street head southbound. The 7.3m width of carriageway allows future proofing should buses seek to further utilise this area, however considerations would need to be made to Green Street itself.	By opening up all arms of this junction to 7.3m, vehicle movements will be less constrained. This option requires removal of the most parking spaces.	A TRO and RSO will be required for this option. As part of the works, waiting restrictions will need to be extended on Hopetoun Street and Green Street. It is estimated approximately 17 spaces will be lost as a result of the proposals.	This will be the highest cost option.	38	3