



**Joint Submission to the Leith Programme Consultation
13/01/2013**

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Introduction

This is a joint consultation response to the City of Edinburgh Council Leith Programme Consultation supported by:

- [Greener Leith](#)
- [Leith Central Community Council](#)
- [Leith Links Community Council](#)
- Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council
- [Leith Open Space](#)
- [The Friends of the Water of Leith Basin](#)
- [The Cockburn Association](#)
- [SPOKES](#)
- [Living Streets Scotland](#),¹
- [The Cyclists' Touring Club Scotland](#)
- [Pedal on Parliament](#)

We wish to see Leith Walk redesigned so it becomes more “liveable” - by which we mean a street that is safer for even its most vulnerable users, more prosperous, less polluted and more attractive.

Many of the changes we propose below aim to re-orientate the street away from acting as a mere transport corridor for through traffic and towards its primary function as one of the most important civic spaces in Edinburgh and a people friendly destination in its own right.

It is based on the responses we received to the community-led Vision for Leith Walk² consultation that ran in 2012, and the valuable input of a number of experts and people from other civic and environmental organisations.

¹ Living Streets Scotland have a policy of not commenting on specific street design proposals but the organisation does endorse section 24, “general approach to pedestrian infrastructure,” of this consultation response.

² “Vision for Leith Walk: Final Report” Greener Leith/ Leith Open Space. 2012. Available at: <http://www.greenerleith.org/greener-leith-news/2012/11/9/vision-for-leith-walk-final-report.html>

Background

On 21 March 2012 at a public meeting in Lorne Primary School Edinburgh City's Design Leader, Ricardo Marini, told locals that Leith Walk was regarded as one of the top three roads in Edinburgh (after Princes Street and the Royal Mile). Marini stressed it was essential to get the focus back on to improving the quality of life in the area.

Many people are strongly supportive of this aspiration and are determined to change Leith Walk's current function as a motorised transport corridor and put all their efforts into the creation of a successful 'boulevard' environment with a thriving, sustainable local economy.

Leith Walk's improved infrastructure should provide a safe, healthy and clean environment for all local residents and users of the road. The use of public and active transport should continue to be encouraged.

With a revised layout of Leith Walk and Constitution Street up for consultation, Edinburgh has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a civic space that conforms to the most up to date design principles and that has the potential to become a people-friendly destination in its own right. Let's not miss this unique opportunity.

In our view, the draft council consultation proposals for the street could do more to make the most of this opportunity. They do not take account of a series of Scottish Government and city council policies, nor do they do enough to address the economic, safety or environmental challenges that face the street and the wider area. These challenges need to be faced in order to address the aspirations that many of its users share.

Throughout the official consultation period it has been made clear that the proposed improvements in the draft design must be delivered within a £5.5m budget, and that this restricts what can be achieved.

However, in conversations our members have had with council officers during the Leith Walk consultation process it has become clear that a very limited range of design options have been fully costed and considered by council officers.

It also seems that many design options that would command widespread public backing have been dismissed inexplicably early in the process, even though councillors gave officers the following instructions weeks before the Draft Leith Walk design work and consultation began³:

“The Director of Services for Communities will ensure that the design team assesses a full range of options to give increased priority for cyclists, including dedicated and mixed use lanes, to complement the proposals of the Active Travel Plan”

The specific improvements we propose below have been put together following extensive consultation with local businesses, planning experts, and hundreds of local residents.

In the context of the protracted length of time that Leith Walk and its residents, users and businesses have suffered - the tram works contractors started digging in 2007 - it is clear that serious progress on the ground by end of 2013 is key to sustaining the vitality of the area.⁴

We believe that the improvements we call for below support the priorities our members and the other contributors to this submission have identified for the area, and call on the City of Edinburgh Council to implement them in full.

³ “What we learned at the council today” Greener Leith, 2012. <http://www.greenerleith.org/greener-leith-news/2012/7/31/what-we-learned-at-the-council-today.html>

⁴ Ideally, improvements/reinstatement to pavements up to but excluding Picardy Place to be completed no later than 31 December 2013, with an appropriately timely start date and implementation of all non-infrastructure measures.

SECTION A: POLICY CONTEXT

1. It is not clear from the consultation materials what design principles have been applied to the Leith Walk draft design, or what the aim of the exercise is.

Below we highlight a series of national and city policy considerations that we believe the Leith Walk design should be based on

Designing Streets

2. Scottish Government guidance is clear on the priorities local authorities should apply to the design of streets:

"Good street design can promote a better quality of living for everyone. Sustainable patterns of behaviour can be influenced greatly by the intelligent design of streets. It is therefore essential that all parties involved in street design ensure that streets contribute as positively to their environment as is possible."

"Creating good streets is not principally about creating successful traffic movement: it is about creating successful places."

Despite this guidance, the proposed design and layout of all the significant junctions in the draft Leith Walk and Constitution Street design still prioritises traffic movement over the "place function" of the street to the detriment of all residents and regular street users, particularly those who travel on foot or by bike.

Thus we believe the proposed Leith Walk and Constitution Street designs from the council are poorly aligned with Scottish Government policy in this regard. The proposals we outline in this response would do far more to promote Leith Walk as a successful place and more enjoyable destination in its own right.

Active Travel Action Plan

3. The council has put in place an Active Travel Action Plan⁵ and committed to a target of 22% of commuter trips by foot and 15% commuter journeys and 10% of all journeys by bike by 2020.

The Active Travel Action Plan identifies the entire length of Leith Walk as a “high pedestrian use” corridor. In the section of the plan focussed on pedestrians the council pledges to give pedestrians more priority over motorised traffic by redesigning junctions and piloting “X” crossings at high demand junctions.

As we set out in section C below, there is little evidence that these pledges have been taken account of in the Draft Leith Walk Design proposals, and thus little apparent prospect of meeting these targets locally. Footfall on Leith Walk has been in decline since at least 2009⁶, and it would be deeply regrettable if the council were to miss an opportunity to address this trend by failing to significantly improve the pedestrian infrastructure of the street.

There is a notable omission in ATAP's 'Cycle Friendly City' (CFC) section [p25-26]. The document states that CFC interventions will focus on 'Travel to work areas with the greatest potential to generate day to day bike trips,' explicitly including Leith and Leith Docks, but then it fails to mention Leith Walk in the table on page 26 - although other main shopping streets (such as Dalry Road and The Bridges) are included.

This omission can only be an oversight since there are no other CFC-type roads leading to Leith, and clearly the railway path routes, although attractive, are too circuitous to serve the CFC function for most trips between Edinburgh and Leith. Whilst Easter Road is mentioned [p26, text] this is not a suitable alternative for many trips - besides which, Leith Walk offers far greater potential given its width.

⁵ Active Travel Action Plan. City of Edinburgh Council. Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/398/active_travel_action_plan

⁶ Fact Check: Is Leith Walk the dirtiest street in Scotland? Greener Leith 2012. Available at: <http://www.greenerleith.org/greener-leith-news/2012/8/15/fact-check-is-leith-walk-the-dirtiest-street-in-scotland-and.html>

Furthermore, the top map on p19 of ATAP suggests that Leith and Leith Walk areas already have the second highest level of bike commuting in the city, after south-central Edinburgh. Leith and the Walk should thus be a priority area for cycle infrastructure and 20mph provision, following the investment which has now already been made in south-central Edinburgh.

Health and social inclusion.

4. It is also not clear whether the development of the ATAP took account of household access to cars, or the potential for public health improvements - and consequent cost savings to council care budgets - that could be achieved by investing in particular neighbourhoods.

Much of the economic benefit of investing in active travel infrastructure is associated with the savings to the tax payer of long term improved public health outcomes associated with greater physical activity.⁷

In the Leith Neighbourhood Partnership Area, more than 50% of households have no access to a car.⁸ Additionally, people living in the Leith and Leith Walk wards have poorer than average health outcomes on a number of indicators compared to both the Edinburgh and Scotland wide averages.

If the council does not pay heed to these wider policy drivers, or indeed the latest feedback from local consultations which reveals that the lack of safe active travel infrastructure is a significant barrier preventing people walking and cycling (see section 5, below), it is unclear how it will meet its stated active travel - and indeed health improvement - policy goals in the Leith Walk and Constitution Street area.

The costs of all forms of motorised transport, especially public transport, have increased more rapidly than inflation in recent years, whilst household incomes have stagnated over the same period.

⁷ "Cycling and Health" CTC Campaign Briefing. 2012. Available at: http://www.ctclothians.org.uk/files/health-and-cyclingbrf_1.pdf

⁸ "Leith Neighbourhood Partnership Area Profiles" City of Edinburgh Council. Available at: <http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/neighbourhood-partnerships/leith/downloads/area-profiles-for-leith-np/>

We believe that there is also therefore a strong social inclusion argument (borne out by research conducted in Edinburgh⁹) in favour of investing in walking and cycling facilities on Leith Walk as these two modes are far more affordable and accessible to people on low incomes.

The recently opened £650,000 Quality Bike Corridor in south-central Edinburgh is an incremental improvement on what was there before, but has received considerable criticism in that it retains too high priority for motor traffic, and should have been much more welcoming to less confident cyclists. Indeed the Council Leader himself has agreed publicly that it could have been better.¹⁰

Leith Walk provides a better opportunity, given the greater widths available, and it will be tragic if the council does not take cycle provision here a considerable step further than in the south Edinburgh QBIC - creating conditions conducive to everyday travel and shopping by bike for large numbers of people.

⁹ "Transport policy and health inequalities: a health impact assessment of Edinburgh's transport policy." Gorman, D. and Douglas, M.J. and Conway, L. and Noble, P.W. and Hanlon, P.W. (2003) Glasgow University. Available at: http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/4280/1/Transport_policy_and_health_inequalities.pdf

¹⁰ "Cycling boost for Edinburgh with new dedicated bike route?" Cllr Andrew Burns. Available at: <http://andrewburns.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/cycling-boost-for-edinburgh-with-new.html>

Local views

5. There is a clear local consensus amongst local residents and shoppers that supports an improved **pedestrian** experience for everyone in Leith, (smooth pavements, ramps, priority at traffic lights) as well as an improved, safer cycle experience for **cyclists**. Despite this, the draft design has done too little to address these priorities. There have been several relevant consultation exercises undertaken by various organisations in recent years. Key findings include:

- The 2012 Vision for Leith Walk survey¹¹ that involved 452 Leithers identified “invest in cycling and walking including separated cycle lanes” as locals top priority for the street.
- A 2012 survey of two Leith Walk businesses¹² customers showed that a majority supported better facilities for cyclists on the street.
- In a 2010 survey of 360 Leithers¹³ asking what would help them cycle, walk or use public transport more; providing dedicated cycle lanes on all arterial routes came 4th on the priority list, whilst planting more flowers and trees on Leith Walk came seventh.
- In 2010 in another consultation¹⁴, where minority and ‘hard to reach’ groups were over represented in the sample identified “improved cycle infrastructure” as the single most important action that can be taken to get more Leithers cycling with 49% citing this factor.
- “Improved infrastructure” was also identified by Leithers in the same survey as the second most important factor (after better weather) that would encourage them to walk more.
- Leithers also said that the two top factors that deter them from cycling more are “behaviour of other road users” and “feeling unsafe or vulnerable.”

¹¹ Vision For Leith Walk, Greener Leith/Leith Open Space. 2012. Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/112731335/Vision-for-Leith-Walk-Final-Report#fullscreen>

¹² “Leith Walk shoppers survey confirms support for cycle lanes” Greener Leith. 2012. Available at: <http://www.greenerleith.org/greener-leith-news/2012/10/4/leith-walk-shoppers-survey-results-underline-support-for-cyc.html>

¹³ “Future Travel Plan for Leith” Greener Leith. 2010. Available at: <http://www.greenerleith.org/storage/We%20Love%20Leith%202nd%20stage%20consult%20report.pdf>

¹⁴ “Leithers attitude to travel” Greener Leith. 2010. Available at: <http://www.greenerleith.org/storage/We%20Love%20Leith%20Travel%20Statistics%20Summary%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

Air Quality

6. Parts of Leith Walk have been designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), whilst Leith Walk connects with Great Junction Street and Bernard Street, which are also included in an AQMA.

The most recent transport statistics show that traffic is increasing in the city, a trend likely to continue once the tram works are finished in the city centre. In addition, efforts to control air pollution to date have proven ineffective over many years. This means that the chances that the council will have to incur the additional costs of setting up and maintaining one or more local Low Emissions Zones (LEZ) in the future in order to comply with pollution laws are increasing.¹⁵

As an LEZ is likely to target larger, more polluting, vehicles, it also has the potential to add costs to the delivery and supply costs of local businesses, and public transport.

Another option that council officers have proposed to tackle air quality problems in the city (for example, in the Active Travel Action Plan) is investing further in active travel infrastructure - walking and cycling.

We would like to see evidence that Leith Walk designers have estimated the impact on local air quality of a shift to active travel modes and conducted a cost benefit analysis comparing the impact of promoting a modal shift to walking and cycling away from motorised transport with the costs to the council and the local economy of establishing one or more LEZ's in the area.

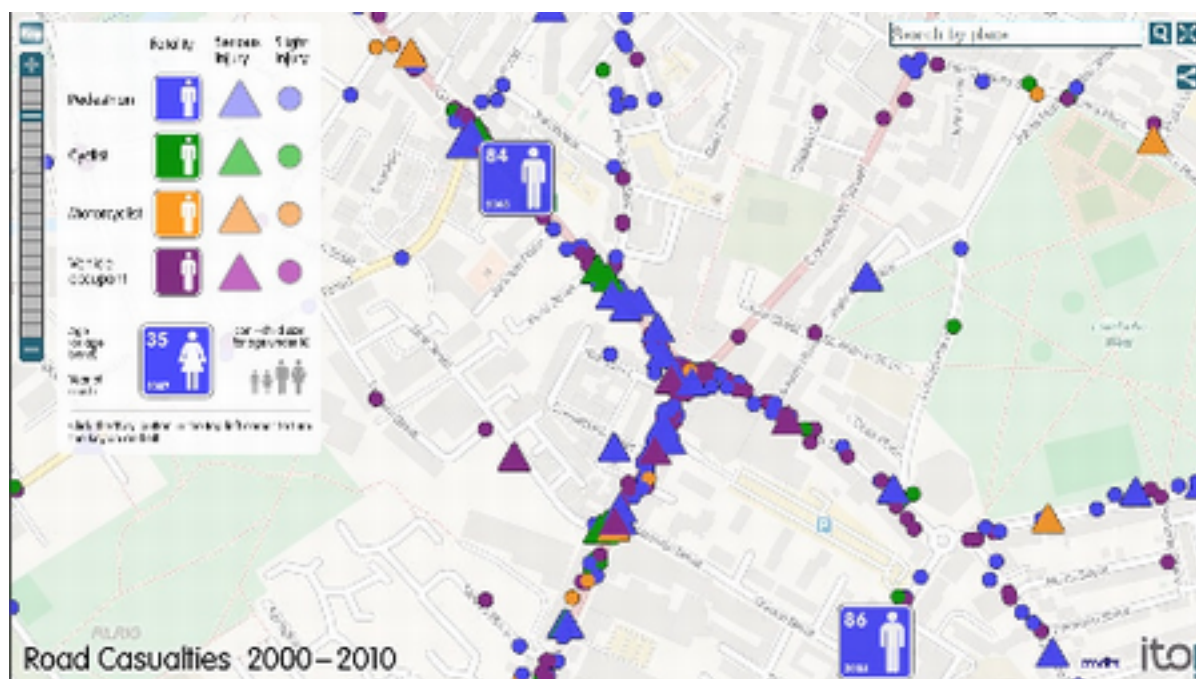
The cost of establishing and maintaining an LEZ could be considerable. With local businesses, public transport users and the council itself having to pay the most. We urge councillors to consider this prospect carefully before approving any design for Leith Walk that continues to prioritise motorised traffic over other transport modes.

In the meantime the ongoing health problems and the public costs associated with air pollution will continue, without further action. A 2010 Westminster report concluded that Air Pollution is responsible for 35,000 premature deaths in the UK alone.¹⁶

¹⁵ "More Leith Streets to be included in Air Quality Management Zones." Greener Leith 2012. <http://www.greenerleith.org/greener-leith-news/2012/12/9/more-leith-streets-to-be-included-in-air-quality-management.html>

¹⁶ Environmental Audit Committee - 5th Report - Air Quality. House of Commons, 2010. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmenvaud/229/22902.htm>

20mph speed limits



7. Part of Constitution Street already benefits from a 20mph speed limit. Extending this 20mph limit to Leith Walk as well will encourage more people to walk and spend time on the street, benefiting the local economy.

There is also evidence to suggest that 20mph limits can promote safer streets, a modal shift towards active travel and cut air pollution.¹⁷

As the map above shows, road traffic accident data¹⁸ suggest that the part of Constitution Street currently covered by the new 20mph zone was already the safest part of the consultation area.

A 20mph limit on Leith Walk is therefore likely to be far more effective in cutting both the number and severity of road traffic accidents in the neighbourhood.

¹⁷ Various briefing sheets. 20s plenty for us: <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/briefings.htm>

¹⁸ "Road Casualties 2000-2010" ITO World. Available at: <http://map.itoworld.com/road-casualties-uk#lat=55.97128617609226&lon=-3.170604219135243&zoom=17>

The Labour Party included a pledge in their 2012 manifesto¹⁹ to extend “20mph limits to all residential and *shopping streets* because they are green and healthy,” and that all coalition councillors have agreed to consult further on extending 20mph zones as part of the capital coalition agreement.²⁰

Whilst Edinburgh council officers may be keen to await the evaluation of the South Edinburgh 20mph zone pilot, there is a growing consensus throughout the UK²¹ that 20mph speed limits can save lives and reduce the severity of accidents.

Consequently, a 20mph limit covering Leith Walk and all of Constitution Street should be implemented as rapidly as the necessary legal processes allow.

It is also worth noting that pedestrian and cycle casualties are rising in Scotland²², leading some experts to call for more determined action from local authorities - such as greater use of 20mph zones - to reverse this trend.

¹⁹ Moving Edinburgh Forward Together. The Labour Party. Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/85083582/Moving-Edinburgh-Forward-Together>

²⁰ Coalition Agreement. The Edinburgh Labour Party and the Scottish National Party. Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/7513/coalition_agreement

²¹ “The 20mph revolution: Millions of drivers face lower speed limits as new laws sweep the country” The Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/the-20mph-revolution-millions-of-drivers-face-lower-speed-limits-as-new-laws-sweep-the-country-8434292.html>

²² “Cycling and Walking to be top road risks” Scotland on Sunday: Available at: <http://www.scotsman.com/scotland-on-sunday/scotland/cycling-and-walking-to-be-top-road-risks-1-2711824>

SECTION B - GENERAL COMMENTS ON DRAFT LEITH WALK DESIGN

Management of parking and loading

8. The current arrangements for parking on the street are ineffective and dangerous, partly due to poor enforcement. There is also overprovision on some parts of the street.

To boost the economic vitality of the street, parking should be managed far more effectively - with the aim of maximising the number of unique visitors to the street. Even if parking is free for a set period, all drivers should be required to display a ticket that shows when they occupied a parking space to aid more effective enforcement.

For example, the council could consider reducing the current 1 hour parking restriction to 30 minutes, in order to promote a greater turnover of spaces.²³

Research from the New York Department of Transport²⁴ shows that promoting a greater turnover of parking spaces is equivalent to creating more new parking spaces. In turn this allows the number of physical parking spaces to be cut, freeing up room for protected cycle lanes on narrow sections of the street - whilst also increasing turnover at businesses on the street.

The original tram design proposals for Leith Walk reduced the amount of parking/loading bays on the street and moved them onto side streets. In 2010, when the traffic regulation orders for the Leith Walk tram works were considered by council officers, they concluded that any conflict with local residents parking on these side streets would be minimal as loading took place during the day, whilst residents needed parking in the evening.²⁵

We are unclear why it is acceptable to councillors and council officers to reduce the amount of parking/loading spaces on Leith Walk for the tram, but the same action is apparently not feasible in order to facilitate the introduction of protected/mandatory cycle lanes in any intervening period - even though there is clear public support for safer

²³ This could be implemented via a free "parking disc" distributed by Leith Walk retailers. This is widely used in countries throughout central Europe. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disc_parking

²⁴ "Measuring the Streets" New York Department of Transport. 2012. Available at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-10-measuring-the-street.pdf>

²⁵ Edinburgh Tram - Traffic Regulation Orders. City of Edinburgh Council. 2010. Available here: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/compliance/C2010-53/Correspondence%20with%20Party%20concerned/frParty23Aug2011/5_Edinburgh_Tram_-_Traffic_Regulation_Orders_21-09-2010.pdf

bike infrastructure.

9. Bike parking should be provided at frequent intervals, together with additional racks at key destination points. For example, the tram stop at Picardy Place, Pilrig church, supermarkets and the Foot of the Walk will require more bike parking facilities.

10. Consideration should be given to providing dedicated parking spaces for disabled drivers, the City Car Club and electric vehicle charging points on Leith Walk and Constitution Street.

11. The scope for using brownfield sites - like Shrubhill - as temporary free car parks could help to boost footfall on the street and help to position Leith Walk as a destination in its own right.

Waste Management

12. Proposals to locate communal bins for domestic waste on the road, rather than the pavement are welcome. The same strategy should be extended to the commercial waste sector too. This will vastly improve the pedestrian experience of the street, particularly for those with sight and mobility impairments.

We note that some local traders are already working together to minimise the number of bins they need to store on the street. More support should be provided to local traders to extend and promote similar collaborations.

Reducing the total number of bins stored permanently on the pavement should be a priority as they are very detrimental to the pedestrian environment - particularly impacting on people with buggies, or mobility/sight impairments.

The council is currently evaluating the scope for taking a “more robust” approach to managing trade waste in the city centre. We urge the council to apply more robust - indeed zero tolerance - management policies towards enforcing poor trade waste presentation on Leith Walk and Constitution Street too.²⁶

It is in the interests of all Leith businesses to have a pleasant street environment that attracts footfall.

²⁶ “Trade Waste” City of Edinburgh Council: Available at: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2806/transport_infrastructure_and_environment_committee

13. Once waste management has been re-configured we would hope that these changes will be strictly enforced. Enforcement activity in the Leith Walk area has lagged behind other areas of the city.

Signage

14. Better signage towards Leith and Leith Walk, emphasising that it is a destination in its own right, as well more use of the Leith flag should be considered as part of the design.

15. There is also a great deal of redundant and damaged signage. This should be removed, or replaced, to minimise street clutter.

Road markings

16. Red surfaces have been used elsewhere in the city to denote bike lanes. On Leith Walk it is proposed that red surfaces will also be used to identify bus lanes. The council should seek to colour bus lanes and bike lanes consistently throughout the city. This will minimise confusion amongst all road users.

Concerns have been voiced over the current use of red chips embedded in the road surface to demarcate bike lanes in some places, as they are not as visible as the previous method of using a red surface coating on the road. We therefore urge designers to think carefully about how the best balance between visibility and longevity can be achieved on the street.

Consideration should be given to using a higher proportion of red chips, or adding red colouring to the sealing material, or seeking advice from other local authorities - for example, the uniformly red tarmac cycle lanes on Falkirk Road in Linlithgow.

17. Once new road markings have been installed they should be strictly enforced.

Location of trees and greenery

18. We would have preferred to see more specific proposals in the draft design for new greenery throughout Leith Walk and call for more details to be made available in the final design.

19. Local consultation has identified that there is a great deal of public support for more street trees in the area, provided they can be maintained over the long term.

20. There is also extensive evidence that increasing the number of street trees can help to mitigate against air pollution cost effectively²⁷, and consequently there may be some merit in prioritising the areas most blighted by air pollution for additional street trees.

21. However, if it remains likely that a tram shall be built on Leith Walk in subsequent years, the scope for using trees in planters and movable containers should be considered to avoid wasted investment. Planters can be used, for example, to demarcate cycle lanes from the parking lane along the length of the street and by private businesses to demarcate pavement seating areas licensed by the local authority.

Management and communication

22. There should be one person given overall responsibility for overseeing all the works on the street, and their contact details should be promoted to the public.

23. The council should establish a works office on Leith Walk to manage enquiries from the public, resolve problems, and explain what is happening.

²⁷ "Health Benefits of Street Trees". The Forestry Commission, 2011. Available at: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf/\\$file/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf/$file/Health_Benefits_of_Street_Trees_29June2011.pdf)

Bus stops

24. Bus traffic is important on Leith Walk, with a bus carrying far more people per area of road space than can a private car. Where there is a conflict between bus and car, the former should have priority. The road surface at bus stops must be reinforced to a sufficient standard to cope with the impact of this. In order to cut street clutter, it would be preferable to see bus tracker signage integrated into each bus stop, rather than have each bus tracker display placed on a separate pole.

General approach to pedestrian infrastructure

This section has been endorsed by Living Streets Scotland.

25. Pedestrian infrastructure should be given the highest priority in the plan.

We welcome proposals by the council to renew all the pavements on Leith Walk and Constitution Street and repair the damage done to speed humps/raised crossings at junctions that help to calm traffic. A smooth, continuous surface is essential to wheelchair users and people with buggies.



At all crossings, particularly signalised crossings, we would wish to see pedestrians given greater priority.

At non-signalised junctions with side roads, there should be a consistent approach to providing raised crossings.

At signalised crossings pedestrians should not be forced to “island hop” - one stage crossings should be the norm. Crossing times should also be sufficient for the elderly and disabled to cross safely.

The draft plans do not give enough detail on proposed locations for things like guard railing, so it is not possible to give site specific feedback on these issues.

In general guard railing²⁸, and other street clutter, such as redundant signage and poles, should be removed wherever possible. The remaining poles, lamp posts, litter bins and phone boxes should be relocated so that they do not form a barrier to pedestrian movement.

To this end, container bins, whether they are for commercial or residential use should be stored either in commercial premises, or on the road in parking/loading areas.

Scope for extra seating should be considered, this can help to indicate “destination points,” and may also be valuable to the disabled and elderly near bus stops.

Local consultation has identified support for the provision of free, well maintained public toilets on the street.

The previous photo serves to illustrate the very poor pedestrian environment on Leith Walk at present.

²⁸ “Street Pride Briefing 4 - Guard rails”: Civic Voice. Available at: http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Briefing_note_4_Guard_rails_-_Final.pdf

General approach to cycling infrastructure

26. Our strong preference is for segregated cycle facilities the entire length of the Walk.

We accept, however, that is not going to happen at this time due to the council's perceived constraints relating to funding, parking and available road width.

Accepting the above, if the council is serious about its ambitious target to increase cycle use, then we urge at the minimum the following approach. This approach is also reflected in our detailed comments in Section C below.

Uphill (i.e. southbound) there should be a 'protected' cycle lane for the entire distance up to and connecting to the planned segregated section after London Road. (See Appendix 2 for our meaning of 'protected.') Whilst this lane would retain the existing level of the roadway (thus eliminating drainage costs) it would provide a greater degree of separation from traffic than the traditional advisory Edinburgh on road lanes, as it would run between parked cars and the kerb.

Downhill (i.e. northbound) the proposed short segregated cycle lane at the roundabouts makes little sense unless it can be extended at least past Annandale Street, and ideally to Pilrig. If that option is deemed unachievable, then onroad provision should be made in this section.

In lower sections of the Walk, where cyclists will use the bus lane, this should be as wide as possible, with the adjacent traffic lane being of the minimum necessary width.

Approach lanes to advanced stop lines should all be mandatory, not advisory lanes, where they are located at the side of the road.

SECTION C - SITE SPECIFIC COMMENT

Picardy Place roundabout

27. The white hatched areas shown on the plan should be part of the adjacent islands (as proposed at the London Road roundabout) rather than just white paint on the road. Otherwise there is a risk that some motorists will be tempted to pass cyclists on the inside.

Picardy Place - London Road

28. The proposed northbound dedicated cycle lane between the pedestrian crossing opposite the Playhouse and Gayfield square is not likely to be used by cyclists, in its present form.

It is downhill, relatively short, and has some dangers, such as a lorry parked in Union Place obscuring cyclists from motor traffic turning left into Union Street, or cyclists being 'doored' on a downhill slope by car passenger doors opening. It would be worth retaining if it were continued down past the difficult Annandale Street junction and if the above problems are rectified, including removing the obscuring loading bay, and keeping the cycle facility back from the car door area. If however the segregated lane is removed then an on road lane should be provided, ideally of 2m width in this relatively fast section of road.

29. The proposed southbound dedicated cycle path running uphill between London Road and Leith Street is to be welcomed and should be retained. However, far greater thought should be given to how people access the northern end - particularly from Leith Walk.

30. If the northbound cycle lane is removed, consideration should be given to moving the taxi rank that is currently outside the Playhouse over to the other side of the street. This would serve to integrate it better with the tram stop, whilst also minimising conflict with the southbound dedicated cycle lane - we are concerned that taxi passenger doors will often open without the passengers thinking about cyclists coming up on the left. An alternative might be to leave wider pavement space between the segregated lane and the taxi rank.

31. Very importantly, the original design for the tram on Leith Walk envisioned replacing the London Road roundabout with a signalised T-junction. If it remains the intention of the council to extend the tram down Leith Walk, we are unclear why this safer design

cannot be implemented now. Extra costs incurred should be taken from the current tram project contingency budget.

Road traffic accident data for this area suggests that it is an accident blackspot for all road users²⁹. Current Scottish Government design guidance for roundabouts recommends “changing the junction type,” if it cannot be made safe for cyclists.³⁰

The scope for moving the pedestrian crossing on London road closer to the roundabout should be investigated - the present two stage crossing is a considerable detour for people walking up from Elm Row to Leith Street.

We urge the council to consider implementing a design that will allow pedestrians to cross London Road in one stage and southbound cyclists to cross to the segregated bike lane to the south of the roundabout at the same time as them.

Furthermore, if councillors do decide to retain the London Road roundabout - a far more dangerous option if the present proposals are retained - then further thought should be given to the design of the roundabout to promote cycle safety.

The intentions are not entirely clear from the plans, but this should include measures that reduce the number of lanes on the roundabout and measures that force motorised traffic to reduce speed at this junction.

²⁹ “Road Casualties 2000 - 2010” ITO World. Available at: <http://map.itoworld.com/road-casualties-uk#lat=55.95727377801216&lon=-3.1843910686851578&zoom=18>

³⁰ “Cycling By Design” Transport Scotland, 2010. Available at: <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/cycling-by-design>

As the photo below shows, the roundabout is currently designed to allow motorised traffic to travel through the intersection at high speeds. This is dangerous for other road users.



The proposals in the current draft design were described as a “cyclist blender” by local urban design experts,³¹ and they are not apparently compliant with Scottish Government design guidance as set out in the Transport Scotland “Cycling by Design,” guidance.

The council must consider the design of this junction very carefully in order to maximise safety for all road users at this point as it forms an almost unavoidable link between Leith and the city centre for all road users.

Lastly, consideration should be given to identifying appropriate new sites for the “Elm Row pigeon” sculptures and the clock that once stood in the middle of the London Road roundabout.

³¹ Planning Expert warns Leith Walk cycle lanes a ‘cyclist blender,’: The Scotsman. Available at: <http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/planning-expert-warns-leith-walk-cycling-lanes-a-cyclist-blender-1-2666231>

Elm Row

32. After the roundabouts - Elm Row, particularly southbound, is possibly the most threatening part of Leith Walk for cyclists. It also performs a vital role as a public transport interchange and shopping centre.

Our much preferred design solution is an uphill protected cycle lane, behind the bus stops. If that is not agreed, a kerbside cycle lane should be provided from the pedestrian crossing up to and onto the roundabout. The solution shown in the plans of a centre-lane cycle lane is inappropriate here, as buses (all of which continue up Leith Walk) will nonetheless be likely to use the left-turning lane, meaning that cyclists and buses will cross each others' paths.

Whether or not a protected cycle lane as above is provided, consideration should be given ALSO to a cyclist facility in the cobbled section of Elm Row. This would require a non-cobbled path and measures to avoid conflict with cars using the Elm Row parking area - parallel parking rather than end-on might be required.



Annandale Street/Montgomery Street Junction

33. The Annandale Street/Montgomery Street junction should be simplified to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.



The left-turn feeder lane for northbound traffic turning into Annandale Street, and the central traffic islands, should be removed, with only two traffic lanes approaching the junction. Also, the angle of the turning into Annandale Street should be sharpened by pavement widening, so that the whole junction becomes smaller scale and more appropriate to an urban shopping street.

For pedestrians this should allow crossing any arm(s) of the junction in one movement.

For cyclists, this would allow space for a downhill segregated route continuation and/or for improved uphill cycling provision. Even if a downhill segregated solution is not accepted, removal of the left-turn traffic lane means that cyclists travelling north will not have to cross this lane, though in this case similar issues to Pilrig Street junction (see 34 below) would also need considered.

The scope to set back the traffic lights on Montgomery Street in order to allow southbound pedestrians/cyclists/motorised traffic to safely access the cobbled part of Elm Row (with a non-cobbled bike lane) - avoiding the busy bus lanes - should be explored.

Elm Row is of course an important local shopping destination in its own right, and many pedestrians and cyclists will wish to enter it for that reason rather than for just for through travel.

Annandale Street Junction to Pilrig Street

34. An early draft of the plans for Leith Walk showed that the street is wide enough on this entire section to accommodate a protected cycle lane on the southbound/uphill side of the street. This early plan, which officers say is technically feasible, should be reinstated in preference to the current draft consultation plans.

The current plans propose a wide hatched “central reservation” on the street on this section of Leith Walk. This could be narrowed/removed and as such is a waste of tarmac that could be used to continue a protected and/or segregated lane down from Picardy Place on the northbound carriageway on the inside of the parking/loading lane.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of the west side of the street is currently bordered by brownfield sites - e.g Shrubhill. As the photograph below shows, taken on a weekday morning - this means there is a considerable over provision of parking/loading space on this side of the road.



If it is not possible to remove the central reservation, consideration should be given to narrowing the pavement slightly and/or removing loading bays/pavement build outs on this section of street as an alternative means of allowing space for a protected southbound cycle lane. When building subsequently commences on these brownfield sites developers should be encouraged to provide wider pavements and loading facilities on site, or via side streets.

Pilrig Street Junction

35. Everyone we consulted agreed that the island in Pilrig Street should be removed and that pedestrians should be able to cross Leith Walk and Pilrig Street in one movement, with Leith Walk crossing points on either side of the junction.

There were two views about the left traffic filter lane. Many people felt it should be changed to 'left and ahead' on the grounds that less confident cyclists would be worried about having to cross to a central cycle feeder lane. Others felt the left-only lane should be retained, on the grounds that a lot of motor traffic turns left here, and cyclists who stay by the kerb are in danger of being 'cut up' by left-turning motorists. Scottish Government guidance appears to be ambiguous on this matter.

If the left traffic filter lane is removed, careful thought needs given to whether it is safer to have no cyclist feeder lane at all, or a kerbside cycle feeder lane. If no cycle feeder lane is provided, the pavement on the south side of the Pilrig Street/Leith Walk junction could be widened somewhat. A tighter left-turn might also make motor traffic take more care.



Pilrig Street to Foot of Walk

36. The uphill cycle lane should be a protected lane, as in Appendix 1. This may require some changes to parking/loading in places, as well as thought as to priorities at junctions.

As the photo from this part of Leith Walk shows below, cyclists - even in groups - struggle to find a safe space on Leith Walk when they are squeezed between a busy bus lane and a busy traffic lane.



As the photos below illustrate, the pedestrian environment on this part of Leith Walk is also particularly low quality, with poor surfaces, half removed lamp posts and badly managed commercial waste bins cluttering the street.



Foot of the Walk

37. This junction should also be further simplified, and treated as a straightforward crossroads, with pedestrians able to cross all sides of the junction in one phase. This will improve the pedestrian experience and make it safer for cyclists.

38. The scope for remodelling the important public space at the Foot of the Walk/ entrance to the Kirkgate should be considered, as well as options to remove The Horn “public art,” the long continuous benches, and the guard railing, and replacing them with shorter granite benches (as per Castle Street, for example) and street trees.

39. The council should investigate the scope for formalising a cycle route, or designating the pedestrian space as “shared,” through the Kirkgate shopping centre as this would provide a safe active travel connection to the North Edinburgh Cycle Network to the west at Queen Charlotte Street, and to Portobello in the east via Leith Links.

The design of the junction at the foot of Leith Walk should explicitly allow cyclists to enter and exit from the Kirkgate Shopping Centre. This is an important proposal which should not be left in limbo for some unspecified date in the future. It should either be incorporated into this project, or it should be implemented in 2013 as part of the completion of the Leith to Portobello cycle route.

40. In addition, the number of northbound lanes entering the junction from Leith Walk should be reduced from three to two. This will also make it easier to cross for pedestrians and safer for cyclists, as those wishing to proceed to Duke Street or Constitution Street will be required to filter across fewer lanes of traffic.

The uphill cycle lane should commence right at the foot of the Walk, not just after the junction, to avoid the existing pinch-point where Duke St turns left into the Walk, and traffic comes close to the kerb. The necessary space can be achieved if the pedestrian island is removed as suggested above.

Constitution Street

41. There is space for cycle lanes in the northern section of Constitution Street, i.e. north of Queen Charlotte Street. These should be added to the plans.

The proposed addition of the much needed pedestrian crossing at the north end of Constitution Street is to be welcomed.

Given the problems with local air quality on the surrounding streets there may also be scope to incorporate more street trees at the northern end of Constitution Street, provided they can be maintained over the long term.

About this consultation response.

This joint consultation response was coordinated by Greener Leith. It incorporates comment from members of the Leith Business Association, members of the SPOKES planning committee, Leith Links Community Council, Leith Central Community Council, Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council, Living Streets Scotland as well as a number of local residents and academic experts.

A draft was made available online for public comment, and dozens of further comments were received and considered before this response was finalised.

The response is supported by the following organisations:

- Greener Leith
- Leith Central Community Council
- Leith Links Community Council
- Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council
- The Friends of the Water of Leith Basin
- Leith Open Space
- The Cockburn Association
- Living Streets Scotland
- SPOKES
- CTC Scotland
- Pedal on Parliament

Greener Leith

Greener Leith is a Scottish Charity (SCO40838) that aims to promote sustainable development, community engagement and better public spaces in Leith, Edinburgh.

Greener Leith was established in 2006, and has received a number of awards for online local community engagement. We are currently working on two major projects. The first aims to develop a series mobile apps to support independent traders in the area and promote community news, and the second is a community owned renewable energy project.

More information about Greener Leith can be found at <http://www.greenerleith.org>

Leith Central Community Council

Leith Links Community Council is the statutory body representing the views of locals in any area roughly approximate to the Leith Walk ward. The area includes all of Leith Walk between London Road roundabout and the Foot of the Walk, including most side streets.

More information about Leith Central Community Council can be found at: www.leithcentralcc.co.uk

Leith Links Community Council

Leith Links Community Council is the statutory body representing the views of locals in the East of the Leith Ward. The area includes the northern section of the Leith Improvement Programme consultation area, between the Foot of the Walk and Constitution Street.

More information about Leith Links Community Council can be found at: <http://leithlinkscs.wordpress.com/>

Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council

Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council is the statutory body representing the views of locals in the West of the Leith Ward. The area includes the northern section of the Leith Improvement Programme consultation area, between the Foot of the Walk and Constitution Street.

Leith Open Space

Leith Open Space was formed 7 years ago in the belief that we must revive a faith in the democratic process, to give people confidence that their views can actually influence policy and decision-making.

It is also a voluntary initiative that brings people together from different cultures and promotes democratic engagement in Leith by organising multi-cultural discussion events, issues based community consultation, and inter cultural collaboration through a series of "World Kitchen" events.

You can find out more at www.leithopenspace.co.uk

The Friends of the Water of Leith Basin

The Friends of the Water of Leith Basin is a voluntary association that represents the interests of residents and businesses in and around the Water of Leith basin.

More information about FOWL can be found at: <http://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfTheWaterOfLeithBasin>

The Cockburn Association

The Cockburn Association (Edinburgh Civic Trust) works to protect and enhance the City of Edinburgh. It is one of the world's oldest architectural conservation and urban planning monitoring organizations.

More information about The Cockburn Association can be found here: <http://www.cockburnassociation.org.uk>

Living Streets Scotland

Living Streets works to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets across Scotland.

Living Streets Scotland has a policy of not commenting on specific street designs - and so is only in a position to formally support section 24 of this response - "General approach to pedestrian infrastructure."

More information about Living Streets Scotland can be found at: <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/living-streets-in-scotland>

Spokes

Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign, is a non party-political voluntary organisation, founded in 1977 and with over 1000 members in Edinburgh and the Lothians. We campaign for better conditions for using a bike for everyday journeys, as part of an overall health-aware and environment-aware transport policy by local councils and the Scottish government.

More information about SPOKES can be found at: <http://www.spokes.org.uk/>

Cyclists' Touring Club Scotland

Cyclists' Touring Club Scotland is the National Cyclists' charity – the 'AA' for cyclists. CTC has over 4100 members in Scotland. CTC embraces all types of cycling but is particularly committed to everyday cycling for utility reasons – work, school, shopping

More information about CTC Scotland is available here: <http://www.ctcscotland.org.uk/>

Pedal on Parliament

Pedal on Parliament is a grass roots campaign, established on April 28th 2012 when over 3,000 people cycled to the Scottish Parliament for the biggest cycle protest ever seen in Scotland.

The ride was notable for the large number of families and children taking part. All these people turn out in support of PoP's eight point manifesto which aims to make Scotland a cycle friendly nation.

More information about Pedal on Parliament is available here: <http://pedalonparliament.org>

Key contact:

This response was coordinated by Alastair Tibbitt, a member of Greener Leith.

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Appendix 1 - Vision for Leith Walk Consultation summary

The "Vision for Leith Walk" community-led consultation process took place between June the 4th 2012 and the 1st of July 2012. It sought to identify a "top 20" priority list of improvement for Leith Walk, by engaging with as many local residents as possible. 452 local residents took part in the process. Each participant could use up to 10 votes each as part of the proces.

A full report on the consultation is available here: <http://www.greenerleith.org/a-z/c-is-for/consultations.html>

Idea	Total
Invest in cycling and walking including separated cycle lanes	638
Do something about the drinkers and drug users in the Kirkgate	547
Green Bridge over Leith Walk	448
Establish a street market to support traders of all kinds	355
More trees and greenery	355
Improve Street Cleaning	277
Improve Shrubhill gap site	274
Support local street artists / more public art	274
De-clutter Leith Walk - bins	198
De-clutter Leith Walk - signage	150
Remove 50% of parking, properly enforce parking rules & use space for cycle lane	132
Publish a public register of shop owners	126
Repair the road surface	123
Improve the visibility, and ensure the value of, public amenities	115
Free public wi-fi to be extended to the Foot of the Walk	109
Improve communication and governance of Leith Walk	97
Audit the current provision of public amenities and the needs of the surrounding community	67
Develop Leith Walk as a "boulevard" for Edinburgh	48
Free and clean public toilets	24
Redevelop the old tram/bus garage opposite Stead's Place as a public square market site	16

Appendix 2 - Types of cycle lane

A grade separated, dedicated cycle lane, like the one in the first photo is the type of cycle infrastructure often associated with Holland or Denmark. It is separated from both the pavement and the road. Council officers have claimed it will cost an additional £2million to install this style of lane along the length of Leith Walk.



However, we do not believe that council officers have fully assessed the scope for installing “protected cycle lanes” on Leith Walk, like the second photo, above. These lanes are not physically separated from the road by a kerb. Instead they are demarcated by road markings, and sometimes bollards or planters. Wherever possible they pass behind parked cars rather than in front of them. As a consequence they are far cheaper to install, whilst they deliver many of the safety benefits as cyclists are protected from moving traffic by parked cars.

Appendix 3 - Response and Support by Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council (“LHNCC”)

This is written on behalf of LHNCC. This Community Council wishes to support the Submission to the LWIPC prepared by Greener Leith with consultation, assistance and support from Leith Links Community Council and Leith Central Community Council.

LHNCC has engaged with the LWIPC at a late date, but following recent various personnel and organisational changes LHNCC wishes to add its general support and a few specific comments to the Submission. This is all it is practicably possible for LHNCC to do at this stage given its late engagement, but LHNCC intends to be involved in the future stages of the process. LHNCC agrees with the strategy that various Community Councils, Greener Leith, and other business organisations and interested parties join forces on this.

Overall LHNCC supports the aims and constructive contributions of the Submission. We do have some specific comments to make:

GENERAL

LHNCC recognises that there is a number of issues which could and should be addressed and these are generally listed in the summary of the Submission published on Greener Leith's website namely: design principles, improved pedestrian and cyclists' experience, improving air quality, parking and loading, waste management, greenery, signage, bus stops and management and communication. LHNCC also recognises that there is a finite budget available for this project and would wish to see available resources distributed reasonably among all of these objectives and over all geographical sectors of the project not (for example concentrated at Picardy Place).

In Section B of the Submission LHNCC strongly support the comments in **items 8, 9 and 10**. In relation to improving pedestrian use and footfall it is significant that the only area of significant car park along the length of Leith Walk is at Waterworld/Tesco at the foot of the Walk. Provision of another significant car park at another point in Leith Walk could encourage more people to see Leith Walk not so much in terms of a traffic artery but rather as a destination, encouraging greater engagement of pedestrians and stimulate the business activities on Leith Walk assisting the re-generation of the whole area. Cannot some part of the site at Shrubhill be utilised for this purpose?

In **items 14 and 15**, we particularly point up the reference to Leith and Leith Walk. Although Constitution Street is not for most of its length itself a particular shopping destination, it is a vital route to important shopping and other attractions in Leith, and this is all the more reason for relevant signage, particularly signage targeted at pedestrians rather than wheeled traffic.

In relation to **items 18 to 21**, planters can also be incorporated in barriers required to demarcate any areas of pavement seating which are licensed through the local authority.

In Section C of the Submission LHNCC particularly supports the comments in item 40. In particular (Section 13:Bernard Street to Ocean Drive) the new pedestrian crossings at the junction of Constitution Street and Baltic Street are especially welcomed. The reinstatement of the trees in the north section of Constitution Street removed for tram works is also long overdue. It is disappointing to note very little imagination has gone into the southern section of Constitution Street (Section 12:Coatfield Lane to Bernard Street and Section 11:Great Junction Street to Coatfield Lane). Little more than repairing or renewing existing features appears to be going on here.

Appendix 4 - Additional comment from Leith Central Community Council

Leith Central Community Council have submitted the following additional comment on their views on the prioritisation of the works. Other supporters of the joint consultation response did not have time to comment or debate this issue and so it is included here as an appendix.

General design priorities

As has been acknowledged by City of Edinburgh, the design life of the "Leith Programme" works is only seven years. This is based on the funds available and, crucially, the **possibility** of extending the tram line along Leith Walk at the end of this period.

We therefore would like to see all "Leith Programme" design decisions - whether for remedial or improvement works - prioritise measures that firstly benefit pedestrians, secondly retail and waste management logistics, thirdly cyclists and buses, fourthly individual motor traffic. Accommodation of **possible** future trams on Leith Walk should be of the lowest design priority.