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10.12.15

West Lothian Council, Draft Active Travel Plan

www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/9633/Active-Travel-Plan-consultation

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

We are pleased that the Council is producing this document, most of which we fully support. Our comments concern only Sections 3 and 5, which we cover in A and B below respectively.

One general admin point is that it would be very useful if the final document is numbered extensively, so that it is easier to refer to any particular section. As there is very little numbering in the draft document, the numbering below within A and B is our own; it does not refer to numbers in the draft.

A – Draft Plan Section 3 – Vision for AT in WL

- 1 *Issues to be addressed* – this page ties in well with our feelings
- 2 *What needs to be achieved* – this page ties in well with our feelings, except for the following point..
- 3 **Definition of 'AT network'**

Some readers might assume under 'Strategic Aims' that the 'AT network' is entirely off-road, whereas it should be explicit that it includes roads (e.g. with segregated and/or unseg cycle facilities, and 20mph in residential, shopping and school streets, all as appropriate). The road system goes from almost every source to almost every destination, whereas offroad cycling facilities are far more limited (with Livingston being something of an exception) and so the road system will have a crucial role to play for the foreseeable future, and needs to be made more cycle-friendly.

This point should also be borne in mind in the rest of the Plan, as it is not always as explicit as it should be. One other example is table 3.1 where there is an output measuring offroad paths of various types, but not onroad (which should be counted separately for segregated – currently zero? - and unseg).

Similarly in table 3.2 for “km of AT network” - include road and measure the different types separately – we would like ideally to see onroad seg rising (from zero) but shared footways (pavements) falling.

- 4 **Funding** – a further indicator in table 3.2 should be the % of the Council's transport budget (additional to CWSS and outside funding) allocated to active travel. [see also C 15 below].

B – Draft Plan section 5 - Achieving the Vision .. the AT Action Plan

1 **Key aspects** A further heading should be *traffic demand management*. Promoting AT is going to be far more successful if accompanied by demand management measures. Even if these are mainly in other policy documents, rather than the AT plan, they are so crucial to success in AT planning that they should be mentioned prominently here, with their own section heading. Examples could be...

- **Charging at station car parks.** Linlithgow is a prime example, where the small main car parks get occupied by early commuters, many of whom live within easy walking or cycling distance. A charge here, possibly only for *all-day* parking, would encourage people living nearby to walk or cycle, and would also have the advantage of leaving spaces for other drivers who arrive later but may have greater need for a space and would pay to have one close to the station.
- **Charging for High Street car parking**
- **A levy on the number of car spaces** (over a certain minimum) at major shopping, leisure or workplace destinations. This would be an incentive to developers and businesses to locate in places easily accessible by AT and public transport.
- **Physical traffic management measures** – road closures to prevent rat-running (but allowing bikes), and so on.

2 **The tables** Generally, it feels that the tables are rather long and ideally some entries could be combined/ consolidated. Despite that, we below do suggest some additions!!

Table 5.1

3 **Row 1, Development Management process** - Procedures are needed to ensure this happens and is satisfactory. e.g. the AT officer may need to be asked formally to look at the weekly list of PAs, and at all draft TROs. Planning conditions also need to be *enforced* - which does not always happen effectively.

4 **Row 3** - replace word 'paths' by 'routes' (re the point in A3 above)

5 **Row 5** – could explicitly mention the A71 corridor as needing attention.

6 **Row 8** – this is one of the few places where A3 above is dealt with clearly.

7 **Add – Road renewals** – All road & footway renewal/ resurfacing projects to be *rigorously* audited as to whether cycling and/or walking facilities can be added/ improved at the same time. Resurfacing exactly as before is often a huge wasted opportunity as new or improved cycling/walking provision could often be made at the same time with little or no extra cost. Linlithgow High Street, footways and carriageway, is a prime example of missed opportunity and wasted resources.

8 **Add – Onroad segregated facilities** – Develop one or more trial onroad segregated cyclist routes on arterial roads into a town.

9 **Add – One-way streets** – All new 1-way streets to allow 2-way cycling and develop a programme to enable 2-way cycling in all existing 1-ways [different techniques will be appropriate in different cases].

10 **Add – Restrictions on motor traffic [as in B1 above]** – Identify opportunities to restrict car space (static or moving) where this will enhance active travel sufficiently to outweigh any disbenefits. Given the hierarchy of walk-cycle-PT-private, the car should no longer automatically be king.

Table 5.2

11 **Row 3, Workplaces** – promote the Cycling Scotland Cycle-Friendly Employer award.

12 **Row 8, Communities** - promote the Cycling Scotland Cycle-Friendly Communities award.

13 **Row 12, Policy linkages** – as well as air quality plans, mention climate action plans and health promotion plans

Spatial Framework

14 **Travel within communities** is surely the top priority, helping the most people and being the easiest win. Therefore the entire section *AT Networks within Communities* should be moved to the beginning of this section, before the *Missing Links* section, rather than being lost at the back of the lengthy table 5.3.

Furthermore although the local community plans are still to be worked out, it might be worth giving an example of what this could mean for one particular community, given how important this section should be. e.g. for Linlithgow the High Street needs made cycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly; there should be a Blackness Road ↔ Low Port traffic-separated cycle facility; and so on.

Funding

15 As mentioned in A4 above, the Council should allocate a minimum % of the transport budget (additional to CWSS and outside funding) to active travel. We suggest Edinburgh's example of 5% (of transport capital and revenue) rising 1% a year to 10%. We note that Dundee's draft AT plan is consulting on a minimum 5% figure.

The draft plan has 7 bullet points on funding, but not a single one mentions Council own funding. This is surely not good enough in such a major new plan.

We hope these points are useful

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