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A701 Sustainable Transport Corridor

Arup consultancy are doing a feasibility study (for SEStran, rather than MLC?) looking at how the current A701 could be turned into a "sustainable transport corridor" if the proposed new 'relief road' is built.

Below are Spokes comments to Arup...

Building roads such as the "relief" road is fundamentally incompatible with the action we need to take to avoid climate breakdown, and the modal shift that both local authorities and the Scottish Government say they want to happen. The time to start reforming our transport choices is right now and building a new road should not be an option. Our suggestions below could and should be done *instead of*, rather than *along with*, the building of a new road.

If the A701 is to become a genuine "sustainable transport corridor", then the most important objectives are the following:

- * Separation of pedestrians and cyclists from motor vehicles.
- * Lower levels of motorised traffic.
- * Prioritisation of public transport over private motor vehicles.

These objectives should be achieved by:

- * Re-allocating existing carriageway (rather than grass verges) as footway/cycleway. There is no need for more than one carriageway lane in each direction. I think it would probably be best if there was a unidirectional cycleway on each side of the road, but this isn't definite.
- * Cycleways should have clear priority when crossing side roads; otherwise it is safer for most people to cycle on the road.
- * Through traffic should be prohibited. This could be achieved using a bus gate or some other ANPR system, so that local access could be maintained, people just wouldn't be able to drive all the way along the A701 within some given timeframe (for free, anyway).
- * Additional crossings (toucans and tigers, preferably) should be added at regular intervals along the entire section.
- * The speed limit should be reduced to 30 mph (at most). Speed cameras to automatically enforce the speed limit should be added. Alternatively, a system similar to the speed discrimination traffic signals on the A75 at Springholm could be considered (Springholm has speed cameras connected to a set of traffic lights which turn red if someone is exceeding the speed limit).
- * Toucan crossings should be added to every road leading on to and coming off Straiton junction.
- * Ideally there would be a bridge or underpass at Straiton junction, such that pedestrians and cyclists don't need to cross the slip roads at all. If the junction is ever rebuilt, as is happening with Sheriffhall, a safe route across the junction for non-motorised users must be a priority.

PTO...

Additionally:

- * The roundabouts at Straiton Park (IKEA) and the B7006 should be converted into signalised T-junctions.
- * The radii at junctions should be tightened, particularly at Niven's Knowe Road.
- * Any new road being built should also include segregated active travel infrastructure. It is far more cost-effective to do this at the beginning, rather than retrospectively add it in the future.
- * Consideration should be given to, at the very least, future-proofing Straiton junction for the proposed cycleway parallel to the bypass from Straiton to Lothianburn.
- * The existing shared use paths are in need of upgrades (widening in points, resurfacing in others). The signage is often confusing or inadequate as well. For examples: there is only one blue sign between Burdiehouse Burn Valley Park and Lang Loan, the paths either side of Lang Loan are only about 1m wide (and have poor sightlines due to overgrown hedges) and the path to the west of the southern dumbell is very rough (and normally covered in glass).
- * Pedestrian crossings should be direct, rather than the Z-shaped, guardrail enclosed type (such as the existing one just north of Sofology).
- * A connection along Loanhead Road to the existing path at Straiton pond should be included.