

## **Low Traffic Neighbourhood – East Craigs**

### **Feedback Themes and Information**

#### **Resident Feedback that the changes are unfair and undemocratic**

In normal circumstances the introduction of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) would be the subject of regular consultation and engagement in the development of plans and as part of the process to advertise a Traffic Regulation Order. This process can often be lengthy.

However, in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Scottish Government encouraged local authorities through the Spaces for People programme to create safer spaces for walking, cycling and wheeling in local areas, in part to provide greater space for physical distancing to be maintained and in part to support the increased numbers of people who were actively travelling around local areas.

Recognising the need for interventions to be introduced quickly, the Council's Spaces for People programme utilises Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders to introduce temporary measures (on roads these measures can be in place for a maximum of 18 months and for pavements the maximum time for the intervention is 6 months). The temporary interventions are monitored regularly and adapted to address any adverse impacts experienced.

An update on all Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders introduced as part of Spaces for People is presented to a Council Committee every two months. In preparing this update, a review of all of the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders takes place and reviews/adjustments are recommended where appropriate.

#### **The proposed LTN is not being implemented in response to COVID-19 and therefore using TTRO powers is not justified**

While the early preparatory work for this was undertaken as part of the West Edinburgh Link project, the COVID-19 lockdown period saw large increases in the number of people walking and cycling, whilst the roads were quiet, facilitating the maintenance of physical distancing. The LTN will help maintain quieter roads to enable people to continue to safely walk, cycle and wheel and will support the on-going need to maintain physical distance when moving around the city.

At Craigs Road, with the High School returning, larger groups of people gathering around the school could make physical distancing difficult. The proposed modal filters, especially the bus gate, will reduce traffic flows on Craigs Road and will make physical distancing easier as people can, if required, use the road space much more readily and safely.

Feedback on the Commonplace website highlighted narrow footways in some places are an issue in this area. With roads being quieter within the LTN people walking will more easily and safely be able to step into or cross the road if they need to pass another person on footway at the recommended physical distance. In addition, people on bikes can feel safer moving further out into the road to pass pedestrians.

In addition to recognising the current phase of the Scottish Government route map through the COVID-19 restrictions, these measures will also support on-going physical distancing and will ensure that the area is safer if further restrictions are required to be introduced again in the future.

The LTN presented as part of the Spaces for People programme is temporary and will be regularly monitored and adjusted if necessary. Engagement with residents will continue through Autumn

2020 and, alongside reviewing the monitoring information collected as part of the temporary implementation, it is anticipated that the final design of a permanent LTN will not be implemented until financial year 2021/22. The permanent proposals would be subject of a formal Traffic Regulation Order consultation process.

### **Why is East Craigs LTN being progressed while a Leith LTN is not?**

The East Craigs LTN has been developed based on the preparatory work which has been undertaken for the West Edinburgh Link project since 2018. A short note on this work is set out below.

1. The detailed public consultation carried out as part of the West Edinburgh Link programme received feedback from residents which highlighted that certain streets in the area did not feel safe enough to cycle on due to the number of vehicles choosing to use them to avoid busier areas and the speed of vehicles on these streets. Vehicle volume and speed surveys carried out confirmed these issues.
2. In addition, there are longstanding concerns from local Community Councils regarding increases in traffic through East Craigs and surrounding areas due to the West Craigs/ Cammo Developments.
3. Detailed feedback was received from an advisory group of local residents about where the modal filters should be located to best address issues raised in the consultation.
4. The East Craigs Primary School Travel Plan indicates that some of the same issues reported in the West Edinburgh Link consultation are also ones that make parents and pupils feel less safe about traveling to school by walking, cycling or wheeling.

In addition, feedback from members of the public, received through the Spaces for People Commonplace website, included the issues reported through the West Edinburgh Link consultation as well as highlighting unsafe conditions for cycling, narrow footways and requests for certain roads to be closed in the East Craigs area.

The preparatory work, which has been completed for East Craigs, is still being developed for Leith where implementation is more complex as a result of the on site Tram works.

### **Response to specific feedback on the impacts of the proposed LTN**

#### ***Journeys times and congestion***

The purpose of the LTN is to re-route traffic within the wider area in order to facilitate safer streets and safer walking and cycling within the LTN area. Subject to any changes in travel habits brought about by the project, it is anticipated that the overall volume of traffic will remain approximately the same, although within the LTN area traffic levels will be much lower.

The impact of the proposed changes have been assessed with the aid of a traffic model and the findings suggest that the impact of the LTN on the major junctions of the area: Barnton; Drum Brae; and Maybury will be minor.

The LTN will mean that some car journeys will take longer for residents. However, on balance, it is considered that the benefits of streets that are free of through traffic, are therefore quieter and which feel safer and more attractive for walking and cycling outweigh the longer journey times for some residents' car journeys.

Residents have highlighted particular concerns about the impact on side roads such as Craigmount Approach. The initial traffic modelling was at strategic level looking across the whole area of East Craigs and, as such, did not provide precise predictions for such side roads. However, traffic counts on the roads in the area will be undertaken to assess changes in traffic resulting from implementation of the LTN. This collected data will be used to inform the layout of the LTN, alongside feedback from residents during the Autumn engagement, as part of the review process for the Spaces for People programme following implementation. If traffic does increase on certain roads, action will be taken to address this.

### ***Traffic avoiding busier routes***

As part of the consultation exercise for the West Edinburgh Link project and through feedback on Spaces for People residents have expressed concern about traffic using local roads to avoid busier routes (sometimes known as 'rat running'). Traffic surveys in the area confirmed this to be the case, particularly on Craigs Road.

Further, feedback received has indicated that once the new developments in West Craigs and Cammo are completed volumes of traffic moving through East Craigs, particularly Craigs Road and Craigmount, will likely increase making the area feel less safe and attractive for walking and cycling.

### ***Junction of Craigs Road and Drum Brae South***

From the feedback received it is recognised that more local residents will have to use this junction and that there is a concern about impact on safety at this location. The analysis of accident data at the junction shows no current safety concerns. Once the LTN is in place, there may be more local resident trips through the junction, however there will also be less traffic using this route to avoid busier routes. On balance, we do not consider that the LTN will decrease safety at this junction. However, a 'stage 3' Road Safety Audit will be undertaken following the LTN's implementation and potential changes are being considered at this location in advance of introducing the LTN.

### ***Designing Streets***

The Edinburgh Street Design Guidance, which uses Designing Streets as a key policy context, firmly highlights that prioritising access by walking and cycling above private car use is fundamental.

At present, the traffic flows facilitated by the street layout of East Craigs and the surrounding roads act to make walking less safe and comfortable than it could be, and to discourage higher levels of cycle use in the area. Whilst traffic calming can help address speeds, where there are already traffic calming measures in most parts of the area, they have not been sufficient to create quiet enough streets to make cycling and walking feel safe.

Further, the often long straight roads in East Craigs are fundamentally different in character and layout to the type of road layouts which Designing Streets recommends for maintaining full traffic access. This is particularly true for Craigs Road. Whilst the LTN does restrict car access, it maintains full access for cycles and pedestrians, and improves travelling conditions for these modes and therefore aligns to the underlying principles of Designing Streets.

### ***Craigs Road school drop off and vehicles turning***

There is evidence that, when the right conditions are provided, people do walk and cycle more as was experienced during the recent COVID-19 lockdown period.

The changes proposed in the LTN will deliver reduced traffic on local streets, meaning there should be fewer school drop-offs by car which will make the area outside the school safer.

Leading up to the school, Craigs Road already has double yellow lines for a long stretch, so no drop off by car is permitted here. As the school entrance is the area where the highest numbers of pupils are likely to be, there should be no increased risk from vehicles turning in the road (since they are not allowed to drop off here). We recognise that some people may disregard the double yellow lining, so as part of the LTN the project team will be considering ways to help enforce the restrictions.

Access and egress for waste collection vehicles will be maintained on all the streets in a safe manner. In some case this will be done through the provision of key-operated barriers to prevent reversing over long distances.

### ***Impact on Elderly and disabled residents***

The quieter streets enabled by the LTN should be more attractive and easier to use for all people, including those with mobility impairments who still use pavements to get around, such as in a wheelchair. The designs were shared with the Edinburgh Access Panel for feedback and they raised no significant concerns. We are considering potential changes to help facilitate journeys to key destinations for car dependent people.

### **Feedback and Evidence**

Feedback on LTNs in London, and the BikeLife research in Edinburgh, gives a clear message that the greatest barrier to more people walking and cycling is feeling unsafe on the roads due the volume and speed of vehicles. Furthermore, once they are in place residents tend to prefer having safer, quieter streets which allow them to walk and cycle at ease, even when it means some trips by car take longer.

### **Background Information**

It is important to see the LTN in a wider context of local and national transport policy. For reference, included below are links to some of the Council policies and plans which provide this context.

#### **City Mobility Plan**

<http://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/city-mobility-plan/>

#### **City Plan 2030**

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/26927/choices-for-city-plan-2030>

#### **Edinburgh City Centre Transformation**

[https://www.connectingedinburgh.com/city-centre-transformation/city-centre-transformation-1;  
and](https://www.connectingedinburgh.com/city-centre-transformation/city-centre-transformation-1;and)

<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s6001/Item%207.1%20-%20ECCT%20Final%20Strategy%20with%20all%20appendices.pdf>

#### **Active Travel Action Plan**

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/13766/active-travel-action-plan>

## Next Steps

In response to the feedback received so far and, as outlined above, modifications to the proposed LTN are being considered to address concerns about:

- Difficulty of turning right across Drum Brae South from Craigs Road;
- Difficulty of turning right across Glasgow Road from North Gyle Road, North Gyle Grove and Craigs Gardens;
- Enforcement of restrictions in areas where double-yellow lines are in place e.g. for Craigs Road school drop-off;
- Journeys for car dependent people;
- Congestion; and
- Impact on car dependent people when accessing the Gyle Shopping Centre.

The Council will set out any proposed modifications as early as possible.

Once the LTN layout has been finalised, the Council will:

- Notify all residents of the final plan, setting out the rationale for the changes made and indicating the proposed date for installation;
- Install the measures required for LTN implementation;
- Undertake on-going engagement with residents;
- Monitor implementation (e.g. traffic surveys) of the LTN; and
- Review implementation and make changes if appropriate.