

Corstorphine Connections Consultation

Response from Spokes, 21st February 2021

Spokes submits the following response to the above consultation. We appreciate that this is primarily an information gathering exercise, but note that there could be some great improvements for walking, wheeling and cycling in this area of West Edinburgh. We look forward to responding to specific LTN plans, once they have been drawn up and are out for consultation.

Spokes is supportive of well-designed low traffic neighbourhoods, to improve conditions for all forms of active and sustainable transport and to reduce domination by motor traffic.

Specifically on cycling, they provide a range of benefits, including the removal of rat-running traffic, calmer streets and routes that are permeable and convenient to cycles.

We have broken down this response into the constituent parts that CEC is currently investigating. Our response primarily frames cycling, and how it is impacted by lack of good quality cycling infrastructure as well as high levels of traffic.

1. Travel behaviours

There is already a lot of research and evidence on how people get around Edinburgh. The most recent [Edinburgh By Numbers report](#), [Edinburgh Bike Life report](#) and newly published [City Mobility Plan](#) has plenty of information on typical travel patterns.

The 2011 census also provides useful [benchline commuter data](#) to help understand how people in Corstorphine get about. This data shows that large numbers of short vehicle journeys are taken by people in Corstorphine to reach the Gyle Industrial Estate, a destination [within a 10-15 minute on-road cycle ride](#) starting anywhere in Corstorphine (if people were able to use the roads safely on a bike). The Corstorphine Community Council [placemaking exercise from 2016](#) also provides interesting quantitative data on active travel behaviours in the area.

2. Issues with transport and travelling in the area

The following issues are relevant to cycle journeys in and around Corstorphine:

- Lots of private motor/car traffic
Corstorphine has a lot of traffic. The [City Mobility Plan](#) shows that it has some of the busiest roads, poorest air and worst congestion spots in the city. Traffic is not only busy on main thoroughfares, but across many of the residential streets with lots of rat running. CEC's own traffic count data will back this up.
- Speeding traffic and roads feeling unsafe
Main roads and residential streets have many vehicles that are not adhering to 20mph speed limits. [Traffic collision data](#) shows the number of collisions in the area and backs up the argument that roads need to be safer.
- Quiet Route 9 is not very quiet, direct or accessible
The designated quiet route through Corstorphine is not particularly quiet due to rat-running, is indirect (approximately 20% longer than the direct route along the A8), and is inaccessible to many people due to physical barriers, tight turns and parked cars.
- Permeability for cycles is cut off by busy main roads with no provision
Anyone looking to get across the A8, Saughton Road North or Meadow Place Road will find this very difficult. There are no cycle crossings along the A8 or Saughton Road North and there is no protected cycling provision along any of the main roads. Despite being direct, these roads are very inaccessible for everyday cycling.

- There is no safe north/south route for cycling
Without direct and safe north/south provision, everyday cycle journeys in the area are limited.
- Travel to/from school very difficult for families going by bike
The school run is difficult to cycle, due to busy roads and lack of safe route provision. Access to Craigmount High School in particular is difficult for young people cycling to school, as there is no safe route in Corstorphine. Craigs Road is also inhospitable to cycling. Forrester High School is difficult to access by cycle from the east due to the barriers of Meadow Place Road and Saughton Road North. Primary schools such as Corstorphine and Carrick Knowe face much rat-running and inconsiderate parking during school run times, making their locations feel dangerous for families making the trip by cycle.
- Shared paths are already busy
There are some good shared paths at Pinkhill and Carrick Knowe heading into the city. However, they are already busy with people walking. An increase in cycling along these stretches will lead to more conflicts. It is therefore vital to allocate space for cycling on roads to cater for, and to facilitate, this increase.

There are also many issues with active travel flagged up in Corstorphine Community Council's [2016 placemaking exercise](#).

3. Perceptions on walking, cycling and wheeling

We know from many years of surveys and reports that there is latent demand for cycling in Edinburgh, with the [2019 Edinburgh Bike Life report](#) showing that one in four people want to start cycling. This is backed up by the big uptake seen in cycling during lockdown last March, April and May. Thanks to traffic reduction, newly quiet roads saw many new cyclists out and about in Corstorphine, including cycling "indicator species" such as young families and women.

We all know there are a range of reasons why people don't cycle at the moment, with key reasons including fear of traffic, lack of accessible routes and lack of knowledge of routes. Corstorphine residents are no different. The Corstorphine [placemaking exercise of 2016](#) provided a range of reasons why people don't cycle in the area - mostly due to traffic and lack of safe routes.

Despite this hostile environment, there are activities in place in Corstorphine at the moment to try to enable more people to cycle, including the [Corstorphine Primary School bike bus](#) and local Breeze group rides for women. There are community groups, such as [Low Traffic Corstorphine](#) and [Corstorphine Climate Action](#), who are advocating for better active travel provision. The [local community council](#) regularly discusses traffic and parking issues as a general problem that needs to be addressed, as well as being a barrier to active travel. The busy [local bike shop](#) is a keen advocate for better cycling provision. Corstorphine Primary School has an active travel group.

There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate there is a community appetite for everyday cycling. However, without quality cycling infrastructure to support these activities and discussions, it will continue to be a marginalised form of transport.

4. Access to and use of greenspace space in the area

There are several greenspaces in the proposed LTN area, namely Union Park and St Margaret's Park. Outside of the boundaries, Gyle Park is on the Quiet Route 9.

With respect to cycling, St Margaret's Park is used as part of the Corstorphine bike bus route, and it is sometimes used by people on cycles trying to avoid Saughton Road North and Ladywell Avenue.

These greenspaces are well used, and access by bike could be much improved with main-road protected infrastructure along Saughton Road North and High Street, to allow people cycling access to both Union and St Margaret's Park. Improved cycle parking in both of these parks would also be welcomed.

5. Where people want to travel to and from

No doubt CEC will have travel habits and data available to inform this part of the consultation. Our knowledge of the area sees two primary desire lines of travel - east/west and north/south. There is currently no quality north/south provision at all, and east/west is limited to the Quiet Routes, which are indirect, not geared up for mass cycling and have accessibility concerns.

Key local destinations in the area include employers at Gyle Industrial Estate and RBS Gogarburn, as well as local amenities including Gyle Shopping Centre, St Johns Road shops, local convenience shops and precincts, Tescos and PC World retail units, Hermiston Gait, Ladywell doctors' surgery, Corstorphine library, local nurseries, community centres and churches, primary and secondary schools, local parks and greenspaces, tram/bus stops, train stations, and access into the city centre.

The vast majority of destinations cited above are [within a relaxed 10-15 minute on-road cycle journey](#) from any part of the LTN area. It is hugely disappointing that so many local trips are not taken by cycle, due to a lack of safe routes and dominance of traffic.

6. Opportunities for improvement

We suggest the following measures to help improve cycling conditions in the proposed LTN area:

- Provide good-quality on-road protected cycling infrastructure along the main thoroughfares of Saughton Road North, Corstorphine High Street, Ladywell Road, Meadow Place Road and St Johns Road. A full A8 protected cycleway is a top priority, so that communities all along this key corridor can be connected by cycle.
- Remove intrusive traffic to make residential streets more appealing for people to cycle. This can be achieved by filtering, one way streets with contraflows, and other traffic calming measures. Candidate rat-running streets include Manse Road, Kirk Loan, Featherhall Avenue, Meadowhouse Road, Ladywell Avenue, Castle Avenue, Station Road and Pinkhill.
- Introduce speed reducing measures on main roads such as Saughton Road North, Ladywell Road and the High Street.
- Improve cycle access to Carrick Knowe and Corstorphine primary schools and Forrester and Craigmount high schools. This could be via school streets, protected main road cycleways and/or filtered permeability.
- Provide good quality cycle parking in greenspaces such as Union Park, St Margarets Park and Gyle Park.
- Avoid provision of new shared space infrastructure, except where there is no reasonable alternative, and provided space is adequate, in order to reduce conflict with pedestrians.
- Improve Quiet Route 9 so it is more accessible for people of all levels of cycling ability and cycle type. There are some very poor parts of this route with terrible visibility which needs to be addressed, such as the turn into Ladiebridge from Broomhall Road. The removal of guardrails and barriers like those at [Meadow Place Road](#), [Ladiebridge](#), [Traquair Alley](#) and [access to the Paddockholm](#) will make the route more accessible for adapted cycles. Access [from the north](#) at Kaimes Road also needs to be improved due to steps. Removal of through traffic and the enforcement of inconsiderate parking would also help significantly. It would also be good to hook QR9 into the off-road route to the Gyle Shopping Centre, so that it's easier and faster for people to get to these retail units.
- Improve Quiet Route 8 so it is more accessible for people of all levels of cycling ability and cycle type. It requires a good quality connection from Saughton Road North and Meadow Place Road so that people can access it more easily. It needs crossing improvements over Saughton Road North and Meadow Place Road, which currently take a long time. There is also a range of other crossing improvements needed heading west, which are in scope of the West Edinburgh Link plans. There are [barriers across the tram lines](#) which make the route completely inaccessible for adapted cycles and should be removed.