

LANARK ROAD: City of Edinburgh Council Coalition Leaders: Adam McVey (SNP) & Cammy Day (LAB)

Dear Cammy & Adam,

We write to ask you to reconsider the removal of the #SpacesforPeople (SfP) scheme on Lanark Road. We warmly welcome the Council's plan to retain and improve many SfP schemes. But we fail to understand why Lanark Road cannot proceed with an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), in line with the recommendation of the Council's officers.

The case for Lanark Road is strong! It is in part a dual carriageway, a design that often leads to excessive speed, is largely without bus priority measures and poses challenges for pedestrians. The SfP scheme has successfully calmed traffic, encouraging families and people of all ages to use the route safely and more sustainably. It has been transformative for many – trips to the park, safe cycling, road noise reduction, better access to green spaces – all while having minimal impact on traffic flow. Reverting to a wider carriageway will likely increase traffic speed.

Retaining SfP measures aligns with UK, Scottish and local transport aspirations. The Scottish Government has said it is keen for SfP measures to be made permanent. This echoes similar calls made by the UK Government of Councils in England. Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Review 2 (STPR2) states *"making these [SfP schemes] permanent (where they are successful) is the next key step in creating a change to the way road space is allocated and supporting active travel"*.

However, there is room for improvement, particularly for pedestrians - enhancing crossing points, better routes to bus stops, larger floating bays, reducing wide junctions, improved accessibility to businesses, surface improvements and improving 30mph compliance. By scrapping the scheme there is no obvious route to make these improvements at all. The opportunity may be lost altogether.

If removed, the alternatives are, at best, unattractive and may pose personal safety risks. Council Officers confirmed at committee last week that surface and lighting improvements on the Water of Leith introduce significant risks to the biodiversity of one of Edinburgh's hidden gems, Craiglockhart and Colinton Dells. What remains is unlit, isolated and often muddy. SfP Lanark Road provides a safe, secure route for daily use encouraging a more diverse range of groups to get active.

Yet, there is an opportunity: there appears to be broad support within your party groups to improve not remove this scheme; Council Officers proposed retaining it; and your market research shows broad support by Edinburgh residents for such schemes.

COVID rates remain high and public transport hesitancy is likely to persist. The Gillespie & Longstone junctions, untouched by this scheme, face further congestion without feasible alternatives. The challenges of recovering from COVID and addressing the unequal effects of inactivity, emissions and climate change demands bold responses and leadership. Please play your part.

The image of spending public funds on removing this scheme and reverting to a wide, fast road, jars with the city's aspirations. It is set against a backdrop of #cleanairday, a commitment to achieve NetZero by 2030, Scotland hosting COP26 and clear policy intentions at all levels of government to encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. Bold missions require bold and consistent leadership.

As leaders, we ask that you consider whether your proposal on Lanark Road aligns with the positive and inclusive vision that you want for our modern European Capital city.

Yours,

26 organisations & businesses from across Edinburgh – see below

Signatories:

BEST: Better Edinburgh for Sustainable Travel*

Living Streets, Edinburgh

Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG)

SCOREscotland - Strengthening Communities for Race Equality Scotland

Women's Cycle Forum Scotland

EVOC (Edinburgh Voluntary Organisation Council)

Bridge 8 Hub

Cargobike Movement

Farr Out Deliveries

Urban Pioneers

*BEST member organisations (16)

Better Broughton, Bikes for Refugees Scotland, Blackford Safer Routes, Car Free Holyrood Park, Cleaner Greener Corstorphine, Davidson's Main Primary School Bike Bus, Edible Estates, HAGSA, Harts Cyclery, Low Traffic Corstorphine, Newington Safe Routes, Safe Cycling South Edinburgh, Safer Greener Silverknowes, SW20: South West 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, Spokes & Spokes Party

