

Deputations

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00 am Thursday, 11th November, 2021

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

Deputations

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CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Item No 3

11 November 2021

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 7.1 on the agenda – Active Travel Measures – Travelling Safely Update– Report by the Executive Director of Place	Spokes South Scotland (written and verbal)
3.2 In relation to Item 7.3 on the agenda – A71 Dalmahoy Junction Improvements – Report by the Executive Director of Place	St Mary's Church Residents Association (verbal) Ratho and District Community Council (verbal)
3.3 In relation to Item 7.4 on the agenda – Citywide Mode Share Targets (CMP) – Report by the Executive Director of Place	Spokes (written)
3.4 In relation to Item 7.7 on the agenda – Brunstane Road Closure (ETRO Progress Update) – Report by the Executive Director of Place	Portobello Amenity Society (written and verbal) Brightons and Rosefields Residents' Association (written and verbal)
3.5 In relation to Item 9.1 on the agenda – Motion by Councillor Lang – Edinburgh Recycling Centres	Unite the Union and Unison (verbal)

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This submission is on behalf of Spokes South as part of a deputation for the Transport and Environment Committee on Thursday 11th November 21

Agenda item 7.1 Active Travel Measures with regard to

Recommendations in item in 1.1.2. on the Comiston Road and Braid Road schemes

The recommendations for the committee to consider are

Comiston Road

4.1.1 'Targeted removal of a small number of cycle lane defenders' in order to 'make deliveries easier and provide residents with better access for picking up or dropping off passengers'

4.1.2 'Removal of the Northbound cycle at on the approach to Comiston Springs Avenue to be replaced with a peak time Bus Lane ' in order to 'Improve public transport journey times along the corridor.'

Braid Road

4.4.3 Option 2 is recommended to open Braid Road in both directions and to introduce a model filter immediately North of Braidburn Terrace. Suggested (by officers) as a 'balance between improving resident connectivity and protecting vulnerable Road users at this historically busy junction' and the option also 'protects the Meadows to Greenbank Quiet Route and partially mitigates the impact of intrusive traffic in the local community'.

SUMMARY

This committee is meeting in the middle of the COP 26 Glasgow conference. TV and Radio stations have given enormous coverage to the Climate emergency and its causes and victims. We are encouraged that the Scottish Government and City of Edinburgh Council have challenging targets and are developing plans for significant changes to reach those targets, including a significant switch from private cars to sustainable travel, but we want to see those targets reflected in the decisions council makes in this committee.

It takes time for individuals and families to switch to sustainable travel. Family lives are complicated, but over the last 18 months or so we have seen many more people walking and cycling in South Edinburgh as a result of temporary infrastructure measures. It is ironic then, that councillors are being asked to consider changes that will reduce the safety and comfort for cyclists on both Braid and Comiston Road, and especially at the South end of the Quiet Route, making families doubt that they will have a safe route to school or work.

DETAILS

Braid Road

Proposed ostensibly for the convenience of local residents, re-opening a historically busy rat-run will inevitably bring in traffic from a much wider area of South Edinburgh and Midlothian. None of the options on offer would help to keep the changes for local access

only. Prior to closure the junction of Braid Road at Braidburn Terrace recorded 9000 cars per day on average, according to council officers. Now that same junction is a key to the South end of the Quiet Route to the Meadows. Cyclists use the junction throughout the day and the morning 'rush hour' sees a constant stream of walkers and cyclists on the way to schools, nurseries and work.

However ugly the current temporary arrangement of barriers, it provides reasonably safe passage for cycling by keeping cyclists and vehicles apart as much as possible. It also provides access for cyclists and pedestrians to cross to The Hermitage. Options 1-3 in the consultation all create additional streams of traffic from the South heading North and introduce additional traffic streams to the junction,

This makes it difficult for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the road to the Hermitage. This was previously thought to warrant a toucan crossing, but no such arrangement is on offer here.

In Option 2, in spite of a modal filter stopping vehicles from accessing the area immediately North of the junction, cyclists will often have to be in the flow of traffic through the junction, and the right turn into Braidburn Terrace will be especially difficult because the cyclist has to sit sandwiched between traffic flows waiting to turn. Officers described this turn as 'challenging' at a meeting with community councillors and it is entirely unsuitable for children, anyone with children on board, or new, less confident cyclists.

Access to and from this junction via Braid Road will be much more dangerous for cyclists because of the loss of a long stretch of segregation on both sides of the road to provide space for 2 way traffic. Recent studies in London showed that segregation results in 40% less accidents to cyclists than normal roadspace or painted lanes.

Whilst Option 2 steers cars away from the section of Braid Road immediately North of the junction, those drivers who want to head towards Morningside Station will merely work their way back through the Braid estate to achieve that, creating more traffic along the other roads on the Quiet Route.

Comiston Road

We are told more gaps need to be created in the segregation to allow for deliveries and dropping off passengers at parts of the route. Currently gaps in the segregation are exploited not just for short periods but for long-time parking, with vans and lorries belonging to construction, gardening and landscaping vehicles being regular offenders. Any gap means cyclists need to overtake, and this is difficult to judge safely in both directions, but particularly difficult heading uphill. We believe all options should be explored to avoid this.

We are very supportive of the need to keep busses moving and we acknowledge that traffic queues do sometimes delay busses in the area where the bus lane extension is proposed. This occurs not just at peak times but also at the weekend.

If the decision is made to reopen Braid Road with the justification in part to reduce queuing traffic on Comiston Road, there should be no need for the extension of the bus lane.

A part time bus lane, which removes the segregated lane will mean that for most of the day there will be a long segregated lane with kerb side parking, which is a big loss of safety for the cyclist for most of the day. We would consider a Full Time enforced bus lane to be a better alternative if busses continue to be delayed. However we note that this too will make cycling less safe than at present and will stop some cyclists from using it.

As part of a longer term, permanent solution we believe it must be possible to achieve avoid delays for busses AND provide safe passage for cyclists and we would be happy to be part of that discussion.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Reconsider the decision to re-open Braid Road Northbound, and only do so if you can be sure to contain its use to local residents.**
- 2. Delay changes to Braid Road until you have a design that will look and feel safe for cyclists and pedestrians**
- 3. If Braid Road is to be reopened, there should be no need at this stage to extend the bus lane.**

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Paper 7.4, Citywide Mode Share Targets

Deputation by Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign

Spokes is very pleased to see the Council seeking to adopt targets for a hugely significant and very challenging reduction in car km by 2030. In order for Scotland as a whole to reach the government's 20% target, cities and urban areas may need to exceed that figure, and it is great to see Edinburgh proposing a 30% reduction.

This target will also give rise to improvements in the local climate and air quality, supporting both human and planetary health, as well as improving the physical environment.

However we have two major concerns on the report as it stands, first, the background assumptions that underpin the targets, and second the downgrading of targets for getting about by bike.

Spokes suggests to remove modal change targets or revise solely as a response to the car mileage reduction initiative based on the points that we raise. Cycling mode share targets need further things considered such as 20 min neighbourhoods and the pedestrianisation of the city centre, as indicated in the following. We are very concerned that the cycling mode share target is insufficiently ambitious and that such a reduced target might impact planned cycling budgets.

1. Firstly, **The calculations**

We ask councillors not to be over-awed by the detail and complexity of the calculations in the report. Rather, we believe there is a major flaw in the basis of the calculations, as a result of which the decisions on modal share targets are unreliable since these appear to be derived purely on the basis of the calculations.

As we understand it, the calculations are done on the basis that *every km no longer travelled by car should instead be travelled by a sustainable mode.*

This is problematic for two reasons. First, shifting away from car use may cause some discretionary trips to evaporate completely (e.g. a Sunday afternoon drive to pick up donuts from a drive through) and not to be shifted to another mode. Second, where car trips are replaced with a different mode this may often mean a different destination and a different trip length. A person who does a grocery shop by car may well go to an out-of-town store at greater distance; whereas if they change to a bike with panniers, or a cargo bike, they will very likely go to a local shop or in-town supermarket. Similarly, someone who normally goes out for a Sunday drive, but decides on a cycle instead, is likely to travel far fewer km.

Furthermore, the move to shorter journeys is something which the Council very explicitly wishes and intends to promote, with its heavy emphasis on 20-minute neighbourhoods for the future of the city. Again, longer car trips over 8km will be replaced by shorter trips by bike or other sustainable means, for the same purpose or for roughly the same time duration.

In summary, the basic assumption of the report's calculations, that the number of km travelled will remain unchanged, is deeply flawed.

Additionally, the City's Transformation ambitions cover far more than simply a reduction in km travelled by car and an increase in cycling modal share is a fundamental part of this. Supportive projects, such as the introduction of the Low Emission Zone, should also affect travel choices, as will the increasing use of eBikes, capable of transporting more goods and travelling greater distances (picking up some of the reduction in trips over 8km (well within most people's ability without electric assist!)). There is also evidence that people are more likely to initially switch from car use to public transport use and that with the increasing availability of safe and convenient cycle routes, many people are likely to switch from public transport to cycling. The population of Edinburgh and the number of visitors will increase during this period so there will be also impact the kms travelled. All of these factors need to be considered as part of the modal share targets for CMP.

It may be that a different approach is needed, based on trip numbers or purposes; or, at the very least, a new row added to the table to represent "km no longer travelled" and an indication of which modes will be contributing to the "km no longer travelled" - clearly cycling would have a major role here.

2. Our second main concern is over the **Cycling targets**

The report makes no mention of the Council's current targets, in the existing Local Transport Strategy and Active Travel Action Plan. These targets were for 10% of all trips to be by bike, and 15% of commuter trips.

However, the targets presented here (now for 2030) are just 7% for all trips (down from 10%) and 9% for work trips (down from 15%).

This appears to represent a serious downgrading of the Council's ambitions for the future of local travel, and at a time when other capital cities such as London and Paris are aiming much higher, and indeed are already delivering, with many km of segregated routes, and many more to come - and rapidly rising cycle use as a result. Edinburgh, too, is hoping to make permanent roughly 39km of its 40km of its protected main road routes, albeit with some serious reductions in safety on one or two routes such as Comiston Road. Moreover, the historic forthcoming rises in government active travel cash should make it feasible for these and other routes to be upgraded to proper segregated standard and to a continuous and connected high quality network well before 2030.

As such, downgrading the cycle use targets seems misguided and disappointing. Moreover, this downgrade seems to be happening based on flawed assumptions and somewhat abstract calculations, as explained earlier. If accepted here, then these targets will undermine the existing policy goals and targets of the Council's other strategies - already approved by the Council. This is not acceptable. Transport Scotland is not setting any modal shift goals alongside the reduction in car kms goal, although it has analysed the modal shift required to achieve the goal. It is unclear why Edinburgh needs to set these modal trip targets for cycling and public transport targets when there are already policy targets in place for the city.

In our view, such decisions should be based on political intent, guided by technical advice but not dictated by it. We therefore ask the Council to rethink the basis of this paper and to adopt cycle use targets which are more in line not just with existing targets but with its own policy ambitions and with what is happening in other capital cities.

Martin McDonnell



DEPUTATION ON BEHALF OF BRIGHTONS AND ROSEFIELD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ON ITEM 7.7 TO THE MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 11 NOVEMBER 2021

My name is Diana Cairns and I am Chair of Brightons and Rosefield Residents' Association, which comprises around 200 households in Brighton Place and the surrounding streets. We have a group position on Portobello community council.

If the closure of Brunstane Road goes ahead, this area will be severely impacted. A survey of residents indicated that 92% of respondents opposed the closure of Brunstane Road and only 8% supported it.

The Council's ETRO consultation shows that an overwhelming majority of 77% of respondents oppose the closure of Brunstane Road and the community council's survey showed that 80% of respondents oppose it so public opinion on this matter is very clear.

Many people believe the council did not listen to their concerns at the first stage, that it is a done deal and so it appears to be. Despite the huge opposition to this plan the council seems hellbent on pushing ahead with this road closure.

The report recommends that objections be set aside, with no explanation as to why. This says it all - concerns of people living in this area have been - and continue to be - ignored. There has been a refusal to even try out alternatives to the total closure of Brunstane Road, such as a one-way system, traffic lights at the bridge or passing places.

Issues such as the fact that Brighton Place and Southfield Place are part of a safe route to school are not even mentioned. However, paragraph 4.11.1 in the report mentions damage to cars in Brunstane Road. This is clearly a case of putting property before people.

The report fails to address our concerns, which can be summarised as follows:

Displacement of traffic from Brunstane Road to Brighton Place

Brunstane Road is one of only two north/south axes in and out of Portobello, the other being Brighton Place. Despite this, no mention is made in the report of the impact this closure would have on Brighton Place.

The report states that 2,200 vehicles per day currently travel up and down Brunstane Road. That traffic needs to go somewhere - you cannot just make it disappear.

If only half of that number of vehicles is diverted onto Brighton Place it will lead to an increase in traffic of 20%, i.e. 1,100 extra vehicles per day.

We know exactly what will happen as a result of the closure of Brunstane Road because when it was temporarily closed in August 2020 for utilities works Brighton Place experienced a huge increase in traffic volumes and there was rat-running on East Brighton Crescent and Lee Crescent.

Existing traffic problems in and around Brighton Place

Brighton Place is a residential street and busy bus route with three services operating on it. Traffic tails back from the lights at the north end of the street as far as the railway bridge at the south end of Brighton Place. The rail bridge is a single-lane pinch-point that causes a bottle neck.

Traffic flow is curtailed by traffic lights at the south end of Southfield Place and the north end of Brighton Place where traffic on Portobello High Street is often at a standstill.

Southfield Place, a narrow street south of the rail bridge, has parking down both sides, which causes traffic chaos with two lanes of traffic plus buses trying to pass and queueing to get under the bridge.

A TRO to remove parking on one side of the street was supposed to be implemented this autumn but we have been informed that it will not happen until next autumn at the earliest. So, adding a potential minimum of 1,100 extra vehicles per day to this narrow street on a safe route to school is a recipe for disaster.

The Council's traffic survey recorded that 50% of vehicles exceed the 20 mph speed limit in the street. The situation is already unsafe and a child was knocked off his bike this summer in Southfield Place. Do we have to wait until there is a serious injury or a death before the Council takes action?

Lee Crescent and East Brighton Crescent residents are concerned that extra traffic in Brighton Place will result in these narrow streets being used as a possible rat-run if Brunstane Road is closed. This would cause congestion on these streets, one of which is home to a nursery, and increase the chance of accidents.

Lack of reliable data on which to base this decision

Traffic counts were done on the two roads for only a few days at a time when traffic volumes have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. There is no reliable data on which a decision can be made.

Residents have stressed the need for a strategic survey of the whole local road network to determine which roads might be closed with the maximum benefit and the minimum disruption for the majority of residents rather than closing one road by demand and for the benefit of only the residents of that road.

No permanent closure of any local road should be undertaken without a thorough assessment at a time of normality of the impact on the whole of the Portobello road network.

Increased traffic on a safe route to school

The report completely ignores the fact that Brighton Place is supposedly a safe route to and from a number of schools and nurseries used by a large number of children and parents twice a day, five days a week.

Additional traffic displaced from Brunstane Road to Brighton Place will lead to increased traffic volumes, queues and congestion, increasing the risk of accidents for children, cyclists and pedestrians using this route.

Air pollution

Increased traffic volumes with queues of cars with their engines idling will increase harmful emissions in Brighton Place for all those walking and cycling as well as for people living in the street.

The report states that air quality is within legal limits at the nearest monitoring station in Portobello High Street but this is some distance away.

The rail bridge between Brighton Place and Southfield Place is a tunnel where harmful emissions are likely to linger and concentrate. Our requests to have the air quality measured here have been refused, despite a transport officer admitting that any increase in traffic resulting from the closure of Brunstane Road could impact upon the current air quality in Brighton Place.

What we would like to know is at what point air quality monitoring might be considered and what action will be taken if toxic emissions are found to exceed safe levels?

Detrimental impact on quality of life, health and wellbeing for residents in the Brightons area

This ETRO has been dressed up as aiming to create a “quiet neighbourhood” but as this will be at the expense of the people living in the area around Brighton Place - a residential area - presumably we do not merit having a “quiet neighbourhood”?

Paragraph 4.11.3 in the report claims that for Brunstane Road residents: “The proposal will make it safer for residents and active travel users, improving quality of life and community interaction.”

The exact opposite is true for the Brightons area, as already described. Overall, what will benefit a relatively small number of people in Brunstane Road will disadvantage a much larger number of residents elsewhere.

Environmental impact

To get around the closure of Brunstane Road cars will have to drive further for longer, adding to traffic congestion on other routes, generating more toxic emissions and worsening air pollution. Overall there would be a negative environmental impact from this proposal.

Lack of contingency planning/mitigation measures

In raising our concerns we have been trying to encourage preventative measures to limit any negative impacts if this closure goes ahead but there has been no contingency or mitigation planning done by the council, despite repeated requests.

All concerns are brushed aside by the statement that the closure is a trial but it is not clear what is meant by that. Does it mean that if we experience the problems that are anticipated Brunstane Road will be re-opened?

As you know, HGVs are to be banned from turning left onto Harry Lauder Road from Portobello High Street, meaning an increase in the number of HGVs travelling up the Brighton Place route to access Milton Road, posing an increased risk of accidents in Brighton Place and Southfield Place.

The cumulative impacts of this change added to the estimated increase in traffic, plus the parking problems in Southfield Place, mean that a perfect storm of road safety risks is brewing for people using this route. As previously stated, the situation here is already unsafe.

We suggest that either the closure of Brunstane Road be postponed until the TRO for Southfield Place is implemented or the TRO for Southfield Place needs to be fast-tracked and implemented before the closure of Brunstane Road.

In summary







We remain strongly opposed to this closure. It is ill-thought out, divisive and not based on any reliable data. We ask that for all the reasons stated above you please vote against the closure and agree to seek out a fairer solution for all, based on reliable data collected at a normal time.

However, if you decide to go ahead:

- The TRO for Southfield Place should be implemented first.
- The option to re-open Brunstane Road should be kept on the table throughout the trial period.
- Meaningful data must be collected for the whole of the trial period on the impacts of this closure and this should be analysed and shared in an open and transparent manner with residents.
- We would like an assurance that any problems that arise will be fixed immediately.
- We would like the council to engage with residents in a collaborative and open-minded approach to problem-solving.

Brightons and Rosefield area traffic problems



-  Traffic lights
-  Queueing traffic
-  Rat running along East Brighton/Lee Crescents
-  Safe route to school
-  Parking both sides of Southfield Place
-  Narrow, single lane underpass to Sir Harry Lauder Road and railway

Brightons' and Rosefield Residents Association – Traffic Problems

Southfield Place - congestion



Brighton Place - rail bridge congestion



Brighton Place - traffic queue



Brighton Place - traffic queue



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Deputation from Portobello Amenity Society to Transport and Environment Committee – 11th November 2021

Item 7.7 Brunstane Road Closure

Portobello Amenity Society strongly opposes the proposed closure of Brunstane Road.

There has been no overall, strategic assessment of traffic flows in Portobello before the promotion of this Experimental Traffic Regulation Order brought forward to enhance the amenity of residents in part of Brunstane Road at the expense of the wider population of Portobello.

The Statement of Reasons for the ETRO have changed since July shifting the emphasis from addressing *‘long-standing traffic problems due to a combination of the narrow road width, increasing volumes of traffic and the general increase in the physical size of vehicles on Brunstane Road’* to a traffic calmed area for the Coillesdenes. Please note that 80% of residents in the Coillesdenes who responded to the community council’s survey opposed the scheme. This is in line with the Council’s own surveys.

Brunstane Road and Brighton Place are the only north-south roads between Milton Road and Portobello High Street. Closing one will inevitably increase traffic on the other with increased congestion, increased rat-running around East Brighton Crescent and Lee Crescent and increased air pollution on a safe route to local schools. Brighton Place is already frequently congested, and buses often have to take turns to get past bottlenecks.

The impact of the Baileyfield housing development also needs to be taken into account as residents living on the south side of the site will have to exit onto the Sir Harry Lauder Road where no right turn is permitted. Traffic wanting to head west to the Seafeld junction will turn left along the Sir Harry Lauder Road, under the railway bridge, down Southfield Place and Brighton Place then along Portobello High Street, thus adding to congestion.

Closing Brunstane Road would create considerable problems for users of both the Brunstane Road allotments and the Bowling Club.

Most of the allotment holders, many of whom are elderly, live north of the bridge. Vehicles are needed to transport plants and compost and closing the road would mean greatly extended trips to and from the allotments.

Brunstane Bowling Club is in a league and in many other competitions which means that bowlers from all over come to visit. Most bowlers are elderly and closing the road would create difficulties accessing the club.

Brunstane Road is the main access to the A1 for many Portobello residents. Closing Brunstane Rd would add distance to journeys to Milton Rd and the bypass. It would also increase times for emergency journeys to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

If the proposals go ahead, the junction between Milton Road East and Eastfield at Scott's Garage will need re-planning to accommodate more cars turning right into Milton Road East. There has been no traffic modelling for this junction to assess traffic flow and therefore no changes to Brunstane Road and the Coillesdenes should be made until the impact of the closure is known.

In the deputation to the Transport and Environment committee of 12th November 2020, Brunstane Road traffic calming group claimed that: "Brunstane Road is a key link in Edinburgh's cycling network as it connects national cycle network Route 1 'The Innocent Path' to the Promenade and CEC's own route No 10." The society believes that this is incorrect as the existing, well sign-posted route from Cycle Route 1 is the most direct route into Portobello.

Rather than close Brunstane Road, the society believes that consideration should be given to other options which would alleviate the problems that Brunstane Road faces such as a one-way system, parking restrictions, or traffic lights at the bridge.

Before any closures are decided upon, a full traffic survey should be undertaken for the whole of Portobello and Joppa to arrive at a sustainable solution for the whole area. Traffic other than local traffic should be barred from all possible areas and calming measures such as chicanes introduced to stop drivers speeding and taking shortcuts. Improved signposting should ensure that Sir Harry Lauder Road becomes the main route for through traffic and not Portobello High Street. The population of Portobello is increasing, especially with the

development at Baileyfield, and the society believes that existing access routes to Portobello should be maintained rather than reduced.

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