



Spaces for People: Making essential travel and exercise safer during Coronavirus

# Opportunities in East Lothian to support communities and businesses in Covid-19 recovery

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June 2020

Preamble

This document has been provided for awareness. It is a live document and will be subject to change. The reader should note that not all of the interventions proposed may be achievable or may be adapted over time through the recovery and renewals period.

## Executive Summary

The new Spaces for People Fund presents East Lothian with opportunities for reimagining our public realm as a place where businesses thrive and communities bounce back from the impact of the pandemic.

The fund is for temporary measures to enable life to return to our town centres, and we are encouraged to think beyond the 'business as usual' model and consider what a 'green recovery' would look like. This will support the outcomes of our Climate Change Strategy by maintaining the high levels of cycling and walking seen during lockdown, and by people supporting their local shops because they have been there for them.

One of our biggest challenges will be getting children to schools once they re-open. Current estimates are that 3-4 times the number of school buses will be needed in order to observe social distancing guidelines. Making it possible for pupils within, say, 5 miles of their secondary school to cycle could reduce costs and set up healthy habits for life.

The proposals deemed appropriate for immediate further consideration are:

- **Slower speeds for quicker recovery** – reduce speed limits in our town centres to 20mph and inter-urban routes to 40mph (excepting A-class roads), making it possible to introduce other supporting measures in towns. It will also support cycling between towns to get to school and for those who cannot drive.
- **Space for shopping** - relocate parking to allow space for queueing (and potentially eating and drinking) as well as passing through. In particular:
  - **North Berwick** – close East end of the High Street to motorised vehicles to allow both queueing and movement. Parking to be displaced to Elcho Green
  - **Haddington** – move parking from north side of the High Street further into the carriageway creating space for people closer to the shops
  - **Musselburgh** – implement a temporary cycle lane on the north side of North High Street and the High Street
- **Space for exercise** – via a series of closed streets, traffic calmed spaces and improved off-road routes, create a 3-5km exercise circuit for walking and cycling around each town.
- **Provide space at School** – provide safer return to School localised school interventions maintaining physical distancing and managing indiscriminate private car drop off
- **Additional cycle parking and local bike hire** – in towns and coastal sites

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About Covid-19 and Social Distancing

- 1.1.1 The need to prevent unnecessary deaths from the Covid-19 pandemic has required governments around the world to restrict the movement of people. Since the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2020 people in Scotland have been required to stay at home, and only go outside for food, health reasons or work.
- 1.1.2 People who go out must stay 2 metres away from other people at all times (social distancing).
- 1.1.3 As restrictions are now being eased it is more important than ever that social distancing is observed to avoid another surge of infections.

## 1.2 About the Fund

- 1.2.1 Spaces for People is a new, temporary infrastructure programme which offers funding and support to councils in Scotland to make it safer for people to walk, cycle or wheel for essential trips and exercise during this period. It aims to enable measures focused on protecting public health, supporting social distancing and preventing a second wave of the outbreak.
- 1.2.2 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/projects/2020/scotland/spaces-for-people-making-essential-travel-and-exercise-safer-during-coronavirus/>
- 1.2.3 The Spaces for People programme is funded by the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland and delivered by Sustrans Scotland.

## 1.3 Collaborative Working through the Improvement Service

- 1.3.1 To promote the fund and explain the reasons and the need for speed of delivery, the Improvement Service hosted a webinar on 30<sup>th</sup> April to highlight some of the options.
- 1.3.2 The fund being made available is unequivocally to deal with the outcome of the pandemic. It is to assist the public in maintaining social distancing, to protect the NHS and enhance safer movement and access, to help key workers, to promote areas for safe exercise and to address growing issues with inequality.
- 1.3.3 It is a tool within a suite of government interventions to engender whole system recovery. The interventions will only be applicable over the short term (initially 6 months) to make people feel safer and remove conflict in pinch point locations.
- 1.3.4 These interventions will be 100% externally funded. No match funding is required.
- 1.3.5 The emphasis of Spaces for People is on **temporary** infrastructure, and it remains to be seen what the impact of these interventions will be in East

Lothian. It is proposed to monitor and evaluate the impacts of these during the course of the recovery and renewals period.

1.3.6 Supplementary to Scotland's route map response, the UK Department for Transport has provided additional direction and reference to the new traffic signs permitted for use. Appendix A

## 1.4 Spaces for People Funding Criteria

1.4.1 All applications will be assessed against the following criteria (updated 12 May 2020):

- **Protecting public health:** Provide temporary walking and cycling infrastructure that helps to protect public health by enabling safe physical distancing for essential journeys and exercise for everyone, in particular where there are space constraints or user safety concerns.
- **Essential journeys:** projects should focus on essential journeys including:
  - Journeys to and from hospitals and health services.
  - Journeys to shops, pharmacies, schools, and other returning workplaces
  - Journeys for recommended exercise, for example neighbourhoods and local parks.
- **Immediate delivery:** Projects should be delivered quickly and provide a visible improvement that has an immediate benefit.

Sustrans has confirmed that the fund is specifically for active travel measures. Measures to support public transport use will only be considered where there is an obvious connection with improved conditions for walking and cycling.

## 1.5 Examples of measures which could be funded

- Selective road closures using planters or cones
- Reallocating road space for wider footways
- Reallocating road space for cycle tracks
- Reallocating parking and loading
- Reduced speed limits and/or traffic calming measures
- Cycle parking
- Removal of barriers to open up constrained spaces/remove pinch points

The above list is included on the Sustrans website. Having consulted with Sustrans, it is clear that measures which, while temporary, would not be able to be removed at short notice are likely to be eligible. This would include e.g. temporary footway construction using bolt-down kerbs and infill.

## 1.6 What is happening elsewhere

- 1.6.1 Sustrans have created a map<sup>1</sup> which shows the latest street changes across the UK under the scheme. These changes include temporary cycle lanes, wider footpaths, barriers to close streets to motor traffic, and reduced speed limits.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/space-to-move/>

## 2 Available data

### Commonplace Website

2.1.1 We collected suggestions for East Lothian via the Commonplace website <https://elothianspacesforpeople.commonplace.is/> from 21-31<sup>st</sup> May 2020. This was advertised through the local press and area partnerships/community networks as well as online. The headline results have been summarised in Appendix B.

### High Street footfall counts

2.1.2 In November 2019, footfall counts were taken at a range of locations for every town centre in East Lothian. These are available for review and identify areas where there has been high footfall historically.

### Strava

2.1.3 Strava publishes a 'heat map' of athletes' activity across the world. Runners, cyclists and swimmers who have signed up, map the routes and the data is uploaded every two months and aggregated into a map like the one below.



*Figure 1: Strava heat map for East Lothian from their website on 11 May 2020. The lighter the colour, the more activity on that route.*

2.1.4 More detailed information on the change in people's behaviour over the period of lockdown may be available from Strava.

# 3 Consultation and review

## 3.1 Initial Ideas

- 3.1.1 The Sustainable Travel Officers Group reached out to contacts in the business and community sectors, and unsolicited suggestions were received from members of the public. All the ideas have been collated in this document, together with submissions to the Commonplace portal.
- 3.1.2 People are looking for space to exercise safely close to home without coming into contact with too many other people. As shops and services re-open more people will need to be able to access our town centres. There is concern that some individuals may elect to use out-of-town locations where the shops have more space in their premises to allow circulation.
- 3.1.3 In line with Council policy, we are supporting our High Street businesses by evaluating whether public space on roads can be temporarily re-designated for commercial use or to facilitate queuing.
- 3.1.4 Since the full extent of the footways (and more) is likely to be needed to allow people to pass at the 2m separation distance, we will need to look to parking spaces and traffic lanes to create space for e.g. premises to display goods in the street, put tables outside, and make room for queuing.
- 3.1.5 Additionally, we are reviewing the capacity of the school crossing patrols to resume service once schools return. It may be that several of these staff need to isolate, and consideration will need to be given to covering their responsibilities. Restricting roads at school times may be a solution.

## 3.2 Local businesses

- 3.2.1 It will be necessary in the first instance to understand what space businesses feel they will require to open up to the public, and what space will be legally required. Businesses will be encouraged to make application via the Councils website for a 'Tables and Chairs' permit.

## 3.3 Public spaces for recreation

- 3.3.1 It will also be necessary to understand if there are additional requirements from communities regarding space for social activity.

## 3.4 Exercise and novice cycle routes

- 3.4.1 Given the requirements to take exercise close to home, there has been a huge increase in local cycling. We are proposing making changes to roads to create circular cycle routes of 3-5km in each town which can be used by novice cyclists building up the confidence to cycle in traffic. Given that bus travel is likely to be constrained for some time, non-drivers may opt to cycle to work, and they need space and time to build their skills.

3.4.2 These routes will require consultation with local people and the wider cycling community.

## 3.5 Consultation

3.5.1 Under the terms of the Coronavirus emergency legislation, Transport Scotland have confirmed Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders introduced on emergency grounds can be made without recourse to consultation provided they are reviewed on a 6 monthly basis and limited to a maximum 18 month period. The need for planning permission will be checked.

## 3.6 Safety

3.6.1 While there is no requirement to consult for a temporary Traffic Regulation Order, proposals will be reviewed in terms of road safety and accessibility.

## 3.7 Communication

3.7.1 One of the biggest challenges is to reassure local communities and businesses and create a sense of safety as activities are phased in. It will be necessary to communicate widely so that suggestions can be fed into the process. This will be particularly appropriate as children start to go back to school and we understand more about their requirements.

3.7.2 Suggestions were collected as part of an online consultation for a period of ten days up to 31<sup>st</sup> May via the Commonplace website. Further suggestions will be considered as they are put to us, and the interventions will be continually monitored, and feedback reviewed.

3.7.3 Updates are posted on <https://elothianspacesforpeople.commonplace.is/> and here is information on our website at [https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210574/emergencies\\_safety\\_and\\_crime/12488/coronavirus/4](https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210574/emergencies_safety_and_crime/12488/coronavirus/4)

## 3.8 Road Safety Audits

3.8.1 Some interventions will require safety audits. We currently have contracts with AECOM, Stantec and WYG in different parts of the county, and we will extend these to include additional support for Spaces for People projects. This support may include drawing up designs, monitoring and safety auditing proposals.

## 3.9 Evaluation and review

3.9.1 The schemes will be reviewed at implementation, and thereafter to assess:

- a) all the required infrastructure is in place e.g. barriers have not moved
- b) that the interventions are working as intended
- c) whether additional measures are needed
- d) the wider impacts of the interventions
- e) monitor usage/footfall



# 4 Indicative Timescales

4.1.1 Our programme is still being developed however, we are working on the general priorities of:

- Stage 1A : Town centre areas where shops are re-opening (early July)
- Stage 1B: 20mph for towns (from July)
- Stage 2 : Routes to schools (August)
- Stage 3A: Connections between settlements for longer-distance cycle links as alternative to public transport, and leisure routes (September)
- Stage 3B: Public E-bike hire / alternatives to public transport (September onwards)

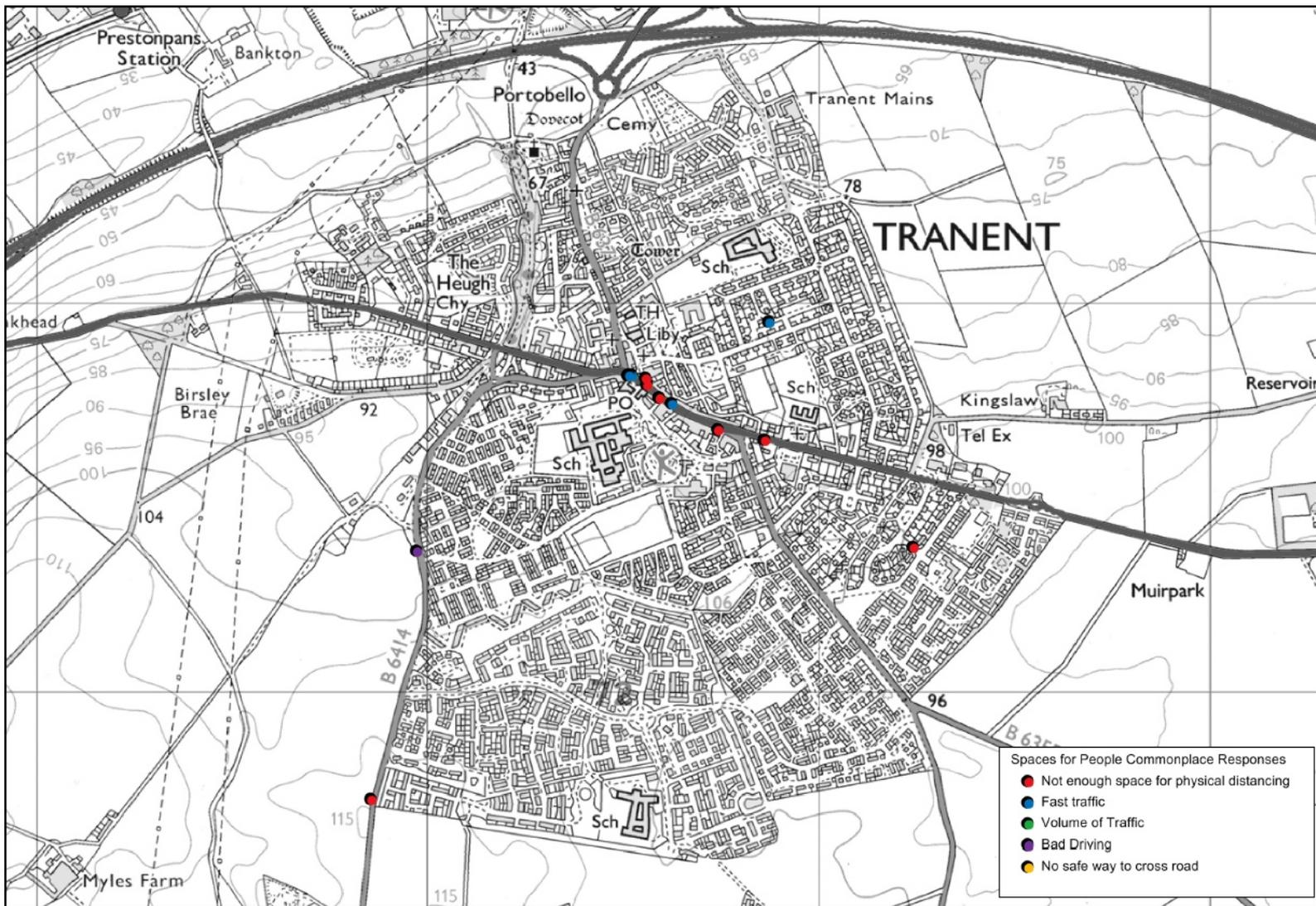
4.1.2 More specific details will be released in due course as plans are drawn up and risk assessments undertaken.

## 4.2 Interventions

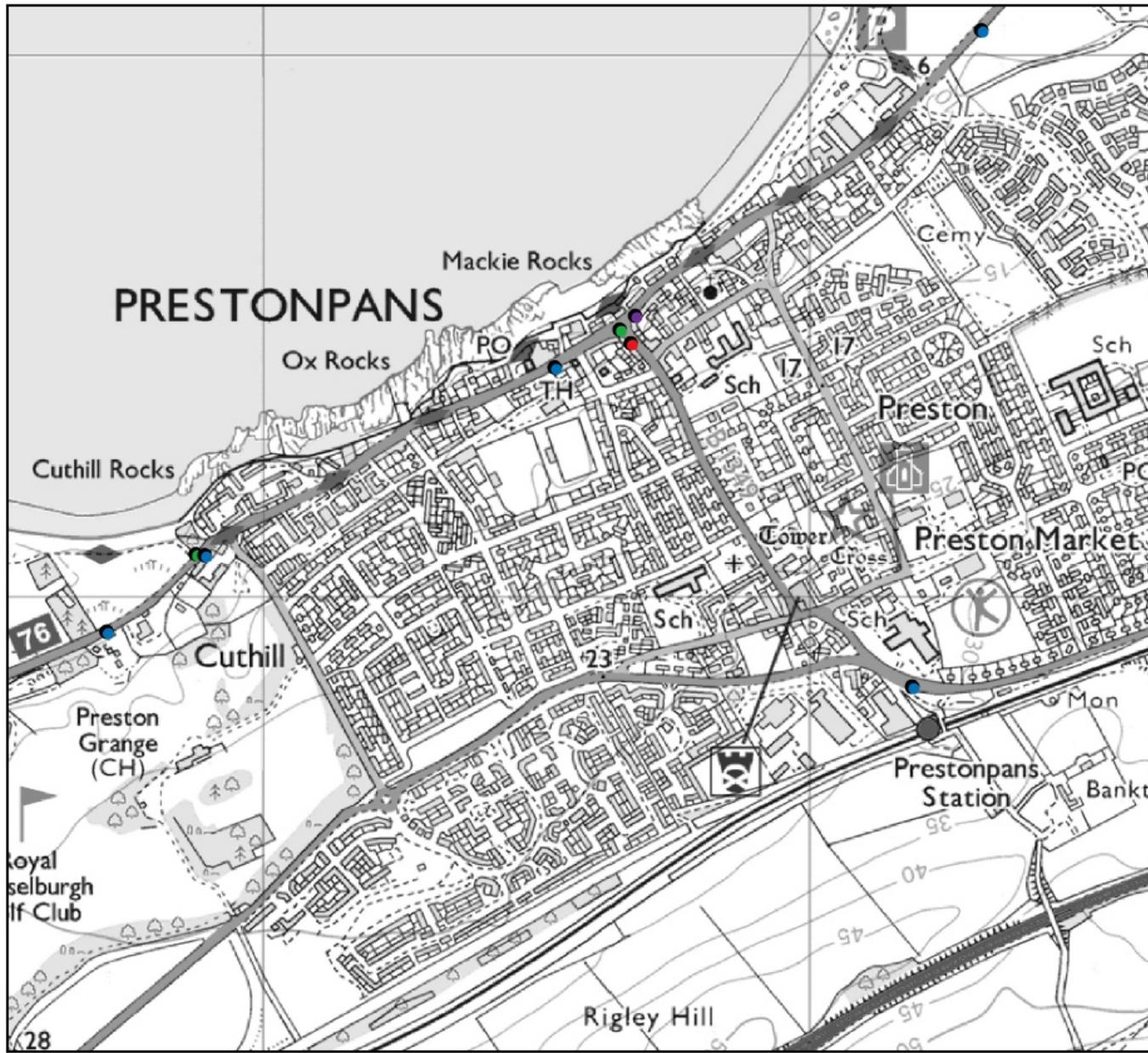
	Proposal	Notes	Indicative Dates
<b>Slower speeds</b>	Lower the speed limit in towns to 20mph and between some towns to 40mph	Lower speeds open possibilities to cordon off areas for queuing. It may also be possible to add segregated cycle routes between towns where speeds are 40mph	Mid July
<b>Parking restrictions</b>	Review parking durations in towns to increase turnover if necessary.	Higher turnover of visitors.	Mid July
<b>Cycle racks installation</b>	Install additional cycle racks in town centres and recreational cycle trip attractors e.g. beaches. See Secton 6.3	Supporting cycling at this time. Discouraging ad-hoc parking of bikes in inconvenient or unsafe locations	August.
<b>Cycle training/ Cycling to school</b>	Offer cycle training to people who live within 30 mins bike ride of their office. Essential Cycling Skills and basic bike maintenance (e.g. puncture repair) training. Assistance to schools to encourage cycling to school	Health-related benefits from extra exercise.	August
<b>Segregate people at pinch-points</b>	Install barriers to assist with 'crowd management' at pinch-points in the countryside		Mid July

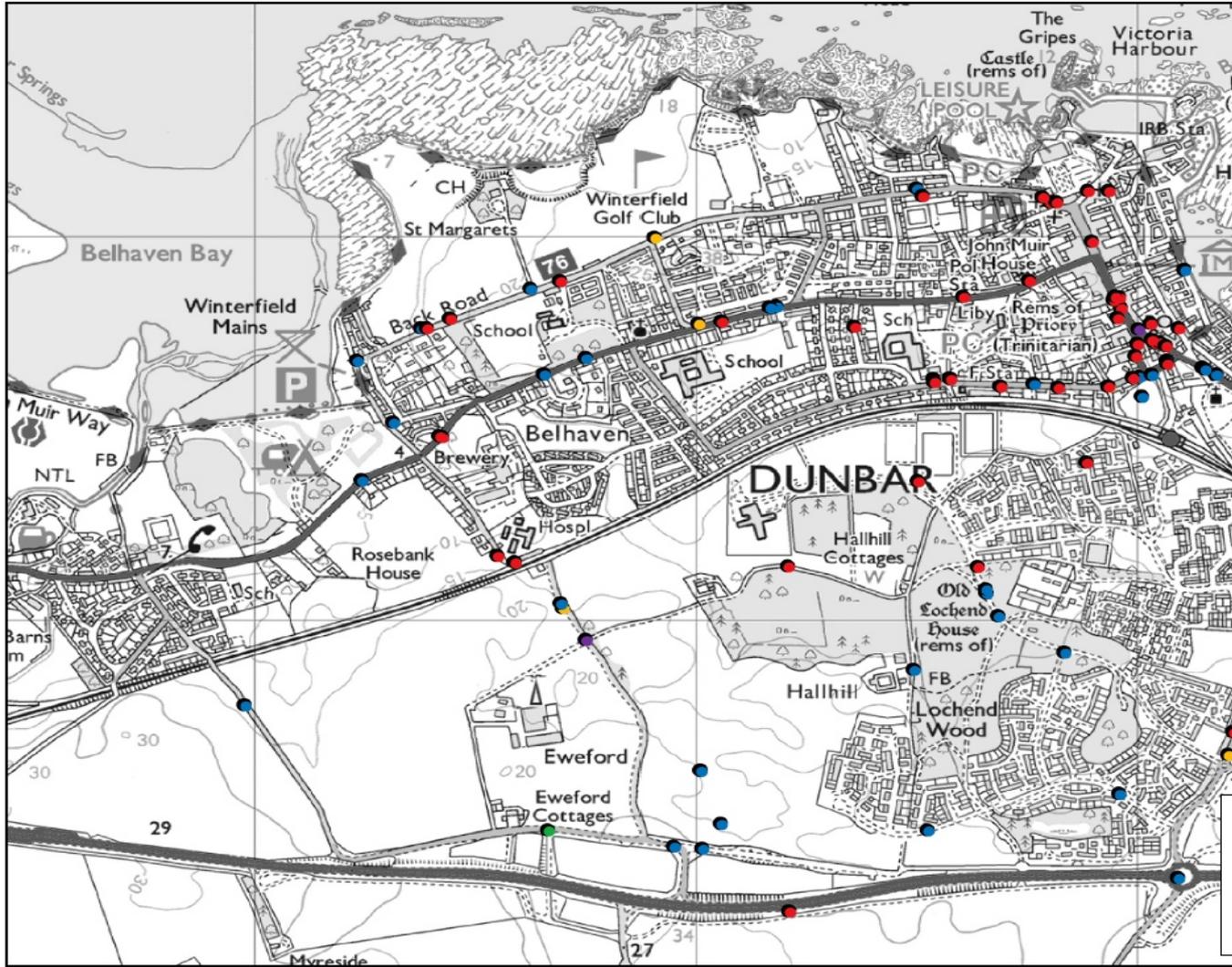
<b>E-Bike on-street hire</b>	E-Bike stations for each of our 6 major towns, situated at our identified mobility hubs. Two locations in Musselburgh have already been identified for public hire E-bikes funded via Sestrans to be installed in the coming months.	This will provide an alternative choice for public transport users, and non- vehicle owners. E-Bikes offer a greater mileage for commuting with less physical effort & a safer isolation choice. Bikes and storage racks are temporary and can be easily relocated.	November
<b>E-Bike Hire from bike shops</b>	Support our four independent bike shops to loan bikes to the public by the week. Booking could be over the phone or online. Provide incentives such as promotion or grants to purchase bikes for public hire.	Relatively easy means of getting more bikes into use.  Developing positive relationships with local businesses.  Supporting local businesses	Discussions on-going
<b>Responsible queuing at bus stops</b>	Promote social distancing and create space for queuing at bus stops		June
<b>Paths for everyone</b>	Create lamppost banners to remind people of the need for social distancing while out and about. This messaging becomes particularly appropriate as lockdown is eased and visitors come from other parts of the country.	Re-enforces the need for social distancing. Signposts people to our website for further info.	June
<b>Air Quality Promotional Campaign</b>	Run an air quality campaign using before/after pictures of each of the towns illustrating how dramatically the air quality has improved since the lockdown began and all the health and wellbeing benefits associated with this.	Potential long-term behaviour change	July
<b>Bike commuter routes</b>	Promote the east-west commuter routes so bikes/runners can be prioritised for work (and leisure) B1348, A199, A198		August
<b>Variable message signs</b>	For erection on roads leading to beaches advising on social distancing.		June
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	Evaluate and evolve proposals as required		Ongoing

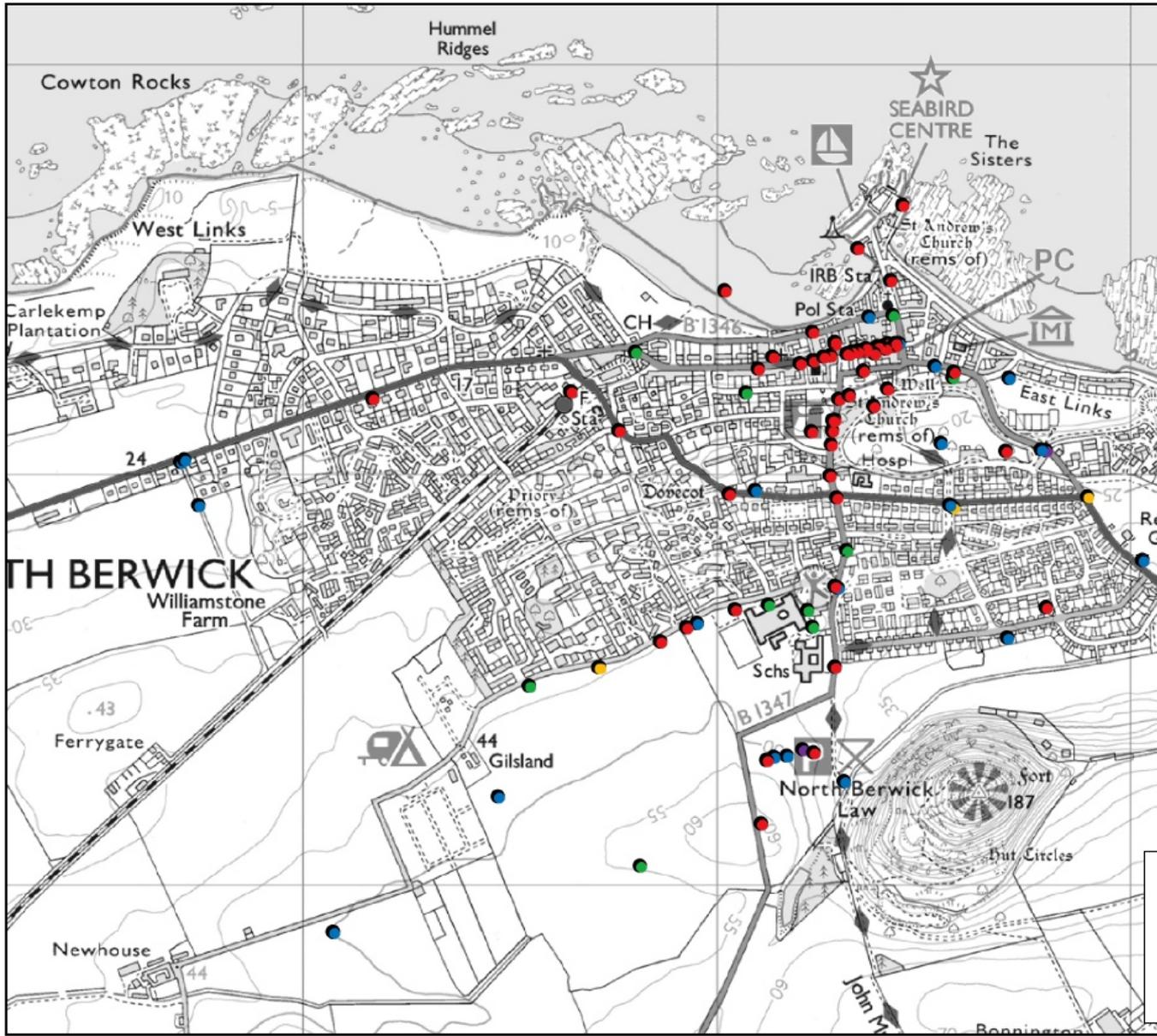
### 4.3 Locations of comments left on Commonplace website











## 4.4 Rural

4.4.1 The proposal is to install additional cycle racks at our countryside sites. Some of these sites already have a few cycle racks, but they are insufficient, particularly given the influx in cyclists during the lockdown. Stainless steel cycle hoops or cycle stand will be purchased and installed in concrete pads in groups of four which will be easy to install and remove. Each item in the table above is four hoops in a concrete pad.

<b>Bike racks (Sets of four hoops in a concrete pad)</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>No. of sets</b>
Levenhall Links	2
Morrison's Haven	2
Longniddry Bents No 1	2
Longniddry Bents No 2	2
Longniddry Bents No 3	2
Aberlady	2
Gullane Bents	2
Yellowcraig	3
North Berwick East Beach	1
North Berwick Jacob's Ladder	1
Tynninghame	2
Linkfield	1
Shore Road	2
Whitesands	3
Barns Ness	2
Skateraw	2
Thorntonloch	2
Hopetoun Monument	2
TraprainLaw	1
Butterdean	2
Ormiston Station	2
Crossgatehall	2
Longniddry Station	2
Cottyburn	2
North Berwick Law	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

<b>Pedestrian barriers 2m</b>		
	<b>Location</b>	
	Yellowcraig	
	John Muir Country Park	
	Gullane Bents	
	<b>Total</b>	

# 5 Appendix: RNIB Scotland

## Courtesy Code

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) Scotland is the country's leading charity working with blind and partially sighted people. They welcome the Spaces for People initiative, however they have concerns that due to the tight timelines they will not be fully consulted on designs which will rely on photos and plans which may not be accessible to people with sight loss.

In response, they have issued the following Coronavirus Courtesy Code

RNIB recommend that:

1. A Coronavirus Courtesy Code should be promoted to enable safe social distancing for all road users. We would be happy to work with others on its development to make sure all pedestrians and road users:
  - Keep safe and keep 2 metres apart
  - Be aware that not all disabilities, including sight loss, are visible
  - Work together to ensure everyone can use our roads and paths
2. Preference must be given to allocating extra space for cyclists from the road, not from the pavement space.
3. Any signage indicating any new pop-up cycle lanes should be placed on the road/cycle lane, not on the pavement.
4. Shared space between cyclists and pedestrians must be avoided. Blind and partially sighted pedestrians find it extremely difficult to detect cycles, whilst cyclists may not realise that a pedestrian has sight loss. Mobility aids such as white canes can get caught up bicycle wheels, which is a further hazard to both.
5. While retaining dropped kerbs at crossings for wheelchair users, kerbs should be kept allowing visually impaired people to safely find the pavement edge.
6. Existing controlled crossings should be maintained.
7. Warning markings and signs must also be provided to instruct cyclists to stop when pedestrians are near or on the formal crossing.
8. Many existing bus stops are inaccessible to people with sight loss if these must be reached across cycle lanes - new bus stop arrangements introduced under the scheme must be accessible to the visually impaired.