

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2022/05/water-of-leith-crossing-must-be-included-in-redevelopment-of-former-cash-and-carry-site-say-locals/>

# Water of Leith crossing must be included in redevelopment of former cash and carry site say locals

By  
[Phyllis Stephen](#)

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**A planning application has been lodged by J Smart & Co to develop the former Booker site next to Sainsbury's at 22 Inglis Green Road, where the community council and locals say a pedestrian bridge must be built over the Water of Leith.**

When the application was lodged previously as part of the PAN process, an online consultation was held. During this process around 90 people as well as councillors, the Water of Leith Trust and Spokes all submitted comments asking for a bridge to be a part of the development. Now a new planning application has been made and it is [open for comments](#) until 3 June 2022.



# LONGSTONE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Secretary of Longstone Community Council, Stuart Campbell, said: “Longstone Community Council welcomes the redevelopment of the former Booker site as (mainly) housing, although remaining concerned about the extra traffic it will surely create.

“However we are disappointed that the developer, although showing an Active Travel route around the development for cyclists and pedestrians to connect Inglis Green Road with the north side of the development (a requirement of the Local Development Plan), has failed to include a bridge across the river as implied by the Local Development Plan to connect with the Water of Leith Walkway on the north side.

“A bridge would greatly improve access in all directions, offering local people many new travel options. Consequently we will be asking the Planners to make providing a bridge, or funds to build one, a condition of consent. We also think that there is a more direct route for the Active Travel route. The deadline for comments on the [application](#) is 3 June.”



A member of Longstone Community Council, Alan Gordon, has been keeping a close eye on the development site and provided us with a visualisation of a preferred route shown above.

He said: “It is of particular importance to our community that a new bridge crossing between Longstone and Hutchison/Chesser is formed. It is a missing link in the local path network which would have many benefits for the area. For example it opens up the network connection between Gorgie and the Union Canal tow path / Water of Leith path, and the Lanark Road cycle lanes. As well as creating many circular walking opportunities locally, it would relieve some cycling pressure on the aqueduct, provide a safe non polluted route for pupils of St Cuthbert’s who live in Longstone to get to school, reducing many short car journeys to places such as World of Football, ASDA and other local services.

“The footpath/cycle connection has been present in the council’s Local Development Plans for a good while now. It ticks the correct boxes as part of the City Mobility Plan, Core Path Strategy and 2030 City Plan.

“While I appreciate the missing crossing may not be within the development boundary as such and therefore it’s not really up to the developer to propose the crossing, my feeling is that monies should be allocated using a section 75 planning condition towards the cost of the new crossing.

“I’d hope that the council and Sustrans could then either match that or find the rest needed. Nobody locally thinks this a bad idea and it would have full community support.”

Cllr Ross MacKenzie who represents Sighthill/Gorgie, said: “I am fully supportive of the community in their demand for a crossing at this location. The development represents a golden opportunity to connect existing walking and cycle routes while providing a much-needed access point for the people of Longstone and Redhall. The council needs to show that it’s on the side of local residents by making this happen.”

## **Architects comment**

Jonathan Harris, Architect for the developers J. Smart & Co. (Contractors) PLC, said his client is delighted to be redeveloping this brownfield site at 22 Inglis Green Road, to provide future new homes and affordable homes for the local community.

Mr Harris said: “The development site is identified within The City of Edinburgh Council Local Development Plan (LDP) as forming part of the T7 Active Travel Route which requires safeguard for potential cycleway and public transport links.

“The proposed planning application masterplan therefore includes provision for a future crossing over the Water of Leith, having been designed to provide for a cycleway and footpath safeguard within the site ownership boundary along the proposed line of the T7 Active Travel Route.

“Land ownership is a major consideration in delivery of a future river crossing and, with the river and opposite bank of the Water of Leith being outwith the applicant’s ownership, the applicant is unable to deliver development on land outwith their legal ownership. Against this background, the development has therefore been designed to safeguard this route to enable the City of Edinburgh Council to take forward a river crossing in the future should they wish.”

## **SPOKES**

Spokes, the cycle campaign group for Lothian, has long been arguing for this bridge as part of the active travel mix.

A spokesperson said: “The council have included a bridge as part of the approved infrastructure at this location, and it’s a ‘no-brainer’ as far as we’re concerned, since it would

- enable the new residents easy access to the Water of Leith Path, for walking and cycling and thus for access to many parts of the city
- likewise enable the new residents (and existing Longstone residents) to access the Asda superstore directly on foot or by bike, rather than driving the long way round
- enable residents on the Chesser side to gain direct access to Sainsbury’s supermarket on the Longstone side, again by foot or bike, rather than driving the long way round

“Just as important, the bridge could be used by cyclists as an alternative to the canal Aqueduct. The towpath over the Aqueduct is narrow and cobbled, with no protection from the water itself and many cyclists are put off by this.

“We are therefore disappointed that the developers have not included a bridge in their plans, and we propose to object accordingly – as do Longstone CC.

“An estimated costing for a modest bridge 2m or 2.5m wide in keeping with the Water of Leith Path, is less than £50,000, so the developers are currently missing a golden opportunity to please their new residents and the local community, and indeed the wider community.”

# Water of Leith Conservation Trust

A spokesperson for the Water of Leith Conservation Trust (WOLCT) said: “At all stages we have requested a bridge to connect the communities AND we would like to see it at the more sensible location connecting to New Mart Road.

“This is better for many reasons not least it will mean less trees and river side habitat destroyed. Also I believe they are only proposing ‘safe guarding’ the route and not actually putting in a bridge at the edge of the site by Sainsbury’s.

“Active travel and connected communities should be at the heart of any development – the council should insist that a modest bridge is included in the plans, I know the community will. We had a bridge estimated for the site and it was only £40,000 for one similar the that 300 yards downstream. This would be a drop in the ocean for this development.”

WOLCT has provided two images with their preferred route drawn on the developer’s plan and the aerial version of the Google map which you can see below:

## SECTION 5.4 - OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

It is proposed to create new communal garden spaces along the south-western section of the site and in the heart of the development.  
All residents will have access to shared gardens. These will be accessible only to residents to help develop a sense of community.

The colony-style houses and all ground floor flats will also benefit from private gardens.  
A number of upper flats also benefit from private balconies overlooking the Water of Leith.

Please also refer to HarrisonStevens’s Landscape plan and Design Statement.



OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

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In the recent Sustrans cycling and walking index it was reported that 66% of residents in Edinburgh walk at least five days a week – more than any other mode of transport, and above the average of 50% for all cities in the Index.

**The planning application 22/02233/FUL can be found [here](#)**

