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LSEG comments on ‘Travelling Safely’ consultations, July 2022

[05/07/2022 Consultation Response Consultation, Low Traffic Neighbourhood, pavement widening, Pedestrian Crossings, Travelling Safely, walking schemes](#)

Living Streets Edinburgh Group supports the general aim of the ‘Travelling Safely’ programme – to provide healthy, environmentally friendly alternatives to travel by private car. We therefore support the retention of all remaining schemes (whether closure of streets to traffic such as Cockburn Street, or pop up cycle lanes such as on Lanark Road) where they are well used, and where they do not cause unacceptable problems for other priority road users such as buses and disabled people. For the avoidance of doubt, we do not consider private car parking to be ‘priority road users’.

We are not in a position to comment on which of the individual schemes currently being consulted about meet these criteria; however, we have previously emphasised the need to collect (and publish) monitoring data in order to carry out appropriate evaluation (see for example: bit.ly/3aajyje). This continues to appear to be largely absent.

We must repeat our regret that almost all town centre ‘walking schemes’ (widened pavements) were removed ‘en bloc’ in 2021: they are therefore not subject to the current consultation. The decision to remove them was made without any plan to replace them with more permanent measures fit for the future and without any consultation with the community or with stakeholders such as ourselves. As such it breached the policy placing walking and wheeling at the top of the sustainable travel hierarchy, and we urge the council to come forward with new plans to improve pedestrian spaces in town centres as a matter of urgency.

Finally, with regard to this consultation, we are sceptical that the current method of asking people to comment on somewhat obscure statutory procedures (ETROs) is likely to engage the wider public effectively. The schemes have already changed branding from ‘Spaces for People’ (which they are probably still best known as), to ‘Travelling Safely’, and now ‘ETRO’s. While we recognise the difficulties involved in public consultation exercises, we would suggest that the most effective way of gauging public opinion to date has been the ‘Common Place’ method used in 2020. This generated a very high volume of public comments, many of which are still very relevant and still to be acted on. We note that ‘wider pavements’ was one of the most commonly requested interventions.

David Hunter

Convenor