

Supporting statement from Liberton and District Community Council for

City of Edinburgh Council – 15 October 2020

Coalition Motion for City of Edinburgh Council -15 October 2020

PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT JUNCTION OF LIBERTON BRAE, KIRK BRAE, MAYFIELD ROAD AND BRAEFOOT TERRACE

1. History

Liberton and District Community Council (LDCC), and others, have been concerned for many years about the safety of this junction for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Late 1990's early 2000s - issue raised through then Liberton Primary School Board - It was impossible for children (and carers) hoping to walk to Liberton Primary school from the area at the lower ends of Liberton Brae and Kirk Brae to safely cross Kirk Brae. It still is.
- Subsequently a pedestrian request phase was installed in the traffic lights for Liberton Brae and Liberton Road but not for the Kirk Brae or Mayfield Road arms.
- Pre 2015 – LDCC minutes of meetings in 2013 -14 refer to difficulties for pedestrians
- 2015 - submitted to meeting of 31 August 2015 – paper detailing problems at junction for cyclists and suggestions for resolving including better signage, road markings and extending no parking areas. The then Cllrs Bill Cook and Norma Austin Hart attempted to progress.
- 2017 discussed at meetings April through to November when in response to Cllr Howie's request LDCC agreed a list of suggestions to improve the junction which Cllr Howie forwarded to CEC officials – see Appendix
- 2018 Jan - CEC agreed to consider two of the nine suggestions forwarded. Advanced green light on Mayfield Road installed, but cannot be seen from box!
- Oct 2018 Walkabout - It was raised during the 'walkabout' with Councillor Cameron and council officers on Oct 2018 and has been raised frequently at subsequent CC meetings.
- Recent Walk to School campaign – Liberton Primary School parents have expressed concerns about the difficulties of crossing Kirk Brae in general.

2 More detail – the problems

2.1 Pedestrians – Kirk Brae and Mayfield Road

For pedestrians the lack of aided crossings on the Kirk Brae and Mayfield Road entrances to the junction make these very difficult crossing points where at busy times pedestrians,

potentially including parents with children walking to school are dependent on the short pause in the traffic flow arising from the slight pause in the traffic as the lights change and the brief time taken for vehicles to proceed through the junction. Vehicles accelerating quickly present an increased hazard, especially to children and elderly pedestrians.

Liberton Primary school parents have voiced concern about using this junction.

Further, the elongated geometry of the junction means that traffic can travel at speed when turning through the junction and also that for pedestrians crossing Kirk Brae from the Liberton Road side this fast moving traffic can be approaching at an angle from behind making sight of vehicles more difficult, similarly for crossing Mayfield Road from the Liberton Brae side– this adds to the difficulty of crossing the Kirk Brae and Mayfield Road arms.

In addition the recently built flats on Liberton Road for elderly residents has increased potential footfall across the junction and the planned student accommodation in Mayfield Road will do likewise. Residents to the north of the junction must cross either the Kirk Brae or Mayfield Road entrances to access Blackford Glen Road, the Hermitage of Braid and the Braid Hills if approaching via Tower Mains when wishing to use these areas for recreation and exercise.

2.2 Cyclists

Crossing the junction from the south is particularly problematic.

- From Mayfield Road to Liberton Brae – the steep incline means that cyclists unless strong move off slowly. If in the outside lane this holds up the traffic going towards Liberton Brae, if in the inside lane this in addition to holding up the stream of traffic going towards Kirk Brae also risks the cyclist being cut across by vehicles as they turn into Kirk Brae.
- From Mayfield Road to Kirk Brae – similarly cyclists hold up traffic at the steep start.
- Mayfield Road going south cycle lane – this stops short of the junction and is replaced by a traffic lane – making the protected box at the junction difficult to reach and therefore not always useful.
- The advanced green light for cyclists at Mayfield Road while welcome in principle is difficult to see from the protected box as it is located on light directly to left.
- Cycle lanes and parking – the cycle lane on Liberton Brae is frequently blocked by parked cars. Parking at Braefoot Terrace causes cyclists, and other vehicles, to move out into the busy outside traffic stream.

Some of these problems might be reduced with improved signage, lane marking and extended double yellow lines at the entrances and exits from the junction, including restrictions to parking on Braefoot Terrace and Mayfield Road especially at peak times.

2.3 Increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic

Changes in traffic density and the 30 year cycle for review of junctions

Due to extensive housebuilding both within the Edinburgh boundary along the A701 from the bypass and along the Lasswade Road and beyond the Edinburgh boundary it is likely the traffic density particularly at peak hours will have increased markedly in recent years and that this will be related to the volume of new housing. Any assessment of the junction should consider and include an estimate of the number of additional houses built and planned along these arterial routes – and estimates of the present and future impact on traffic density.

An increase in house numbers and associated traffic provides a strong argument for bringing forward further review of this complex arterial junction, the only one within South East Edinburgh without a fully pedestrian crossing sequence.

3. Summary

CEC has a policy of active travel and LDCC strongly believes active travel can be encouraged if this junction is made more manageable for pedestrians and cyclists. Active travel can include walking to the Cameron Toll retail complex, accessing the Braid Hills area for recreation, walking to school, but would also include accessing the bus stops in Liberton Road for non car travel.

For pedestrians the lack of aided crossings on the Kirk Brae and Mayfield Road entrances to the junction make these very difficult crossing points.

Liberton Primary school parents have voiced concern about using this junction.

Currently the junction is a major disincentive to all but most confident and strongest cyclists.

As stated above, the increase in house numbers and associated traffic provides a very strong argument for bringing forward further review of this complex arterial junction, the only major one, we believe, within South East Edinburgh without a fully pedestrian crossing sequence.

Bill Krol

Chair – Liberton and District Community Council

Monday 12 October 2020

Appendix 1

Suggestions from LDCC meeting 27 November 2017 – from minute of meeting

4.3.2. Liberton Brae / Mayfield Road

The Chair provided a briefing paper detailing potential changes to improve the safety of the junction for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The following proposed measures were agreed:

- Improved road markings and signage to define lanes of travel
- Sufficiently long phase after traffic lights change to enable slow vehicles and cyclists to clear the junction or an advanced green light on Mayfield Road for southbound cyclists
- Extended cycling box on Mayfield road so that southbound cyclists can start on the flat
- Restricted parking within the junction
- Single yellow lines on Mayfield Road to extend to at least 9:30am
- Extended double yellow lines from the junction on both sides of Liberton Brae
- No right turn signs from Liberton Brae to Kirk Brae
- Reduced pavement on Liberton Road to create more space for cyclists and vehicles
- Visibility of traffic lights to be altered to avoid confusion.

The revisions to the briefing paper were AGREED.

ACTION: The Chair to amend the briefing paper and send to Councillor Howie.

Written Deputation from Liberton Primary School Association for

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PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT JUNCTION OF LIBERTON BRAE, KIRK BRAE, MAYFIELD ROAD AND BRAEFOOT TERRACE

We would like to bring to your attention the lack of a Safe Route to School for Liberton Primary School children. We have previously outlined many of these concerns in our Safe Routes to School Travel Plan and in various correspondence over the last three years, and historically by previous LPSA committees over the last few decades:

Kirk Brae

- This road only has one controlled pedestrian crossing, at the very top (with a history of incidents of vehicles cutting over the drop kerb of the pavement on both sides of this crossing due to the narrow road). Using this crossing would take many of the children on a major detour on what is already a relatively long walk to, and from, school. There are two traffic islands, one of which was nearly removed due to cars crashing into it, which does not inspire much confidence in pedestrians trying to cross, especially children. The pavements are very narrow with uneven surfaces.
- The LPSA have been working with Mark Symonds and Stacey Monteith-Skelton from the Council's Road Safety and Active Travel Road Networks department ("the Active Travel Department") in relation to the design and implementation of a controlled crossing on Kirk Brae near the junction with Orchardhead Road. We understand that Capita have been commissioned to produce designs for this crossing and that these are now almost finalised. The Active Travel Department have agreed to share these with the LPSA when they are available from Capita with a view to getting these finalised and agreed and the proposed controlled crossing put in place during the summer holidays next year ready for the start of the school term in August 2021.
- Whilst the Active Travel Department have been extremely helpful in keeping the LPSA up to date and involving us as far as possible in this project, the LPSA wants to ensure that (1) our input to the final designs is taken on board to ensure that the crossing meets the needs of children, parents and careers using this route to travel to and from school and (2) the crossing is put in place next summer as planned.
- We have also asked for pedestrian lights to be added to the traffic lights at the foot of Kirk Brae. Please understand that this is a junction of three major roads, plus one side road which only has one pedestrian crossing across the foot of Liberton Brae, plus another across Liberton Road. There is currently no safe route across the north of Kirk Brae and the south of Mayfield Road, along with the main stretch of Kirk Brae. Some of our pupils are literally marooned and must judge if it is safe to dodge the traffic to cross the road, to walk, scoot or cycle to and from school every day. This is an extremely busy intersection on a main route, with fast flowing traffic. In addition

to the schools and families living close by there are students travelling to Kings Buildings and many elderly residents. We know the difficulty of trying to negotiate Kirk Brae, or the Mayfield Road junction, with children on foot, scooters, bikes and in buggies, we extend our concern to those in our community who are infirm or disabled, and know this is also of concern to St John Vianney's parents, the Liberton Association, the Liberton District and Community Council and various individual residents.

- We believe that certain elements exacerbate the problems and should elevate Kirk Brae in any assessment: in particular the extremely narrow, bumpy pavements; the fire station; the fact that it is a major route and is currently a 30mph limit.
- With many vehicles going faster than 30mph whilst descending the hill, but often travelling fast in both directions, we also ask for this road to be reduced to 20mph.

Gilmerton Road and Glenallan Drive

- We have a high level of cars trying to park around the school which makes Gilmerton Road and Glenallan Drive both unacceptably unsafe for children at drop off and pick up. A lot of parents feel it is safer to drive their children to school, others are travelling a reasonable distance from and to home as the school sits on the edge of the catchment area.
- Gilmerton Road has a dangerous island crossing at the junction of Double Hedges Road and Glenallan Drive which has a dedicated Crossing Patrol Guide, but she can only stop *one* side of traffic at a time - something not always realised by the children who often attempt to go straight across.
- The LPSA and the Headteacher submitted a joint application for Glenallan Drive to be a traffic-free zone during drop-off and pick-up times, but the application was rejected due to "a lack of alternative parking". These issues were all detailed in our Travel Plan.
- Currently, due to the rebuilding work at Liberton Primary there is a much higher footfall of children and parents using the Glenallan Road entrance/exit. We have been told there will be a path installed which is badly needed. The large grassy area is already getting very muddy and slippery and is hazardous to walk on. Some parents are parking on the grass and pavement which makes it more dangerous. The road is very narrow and there is no pavement for a good part of it, so walking on the grass or road is the only option.
- We have had some feedback from parents and a local resident who feel changes could be made to Gilmerton Road and Glenallan Drive including increasing double yellow lines on the corners, creating a pavement where there is none on Glenallan

Drive, and potentially creating a lay-by to allow cars to safely pass and not block visibility or residents' drives. More alternative parking has been requested too.

- Last October we put "Parksmart" banners up, in partnership with the Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) group in the school, to try and encourage parents to park sensibly, especially not on the zigzag lines. The banners had to be temporarily removed but we plan to replace them, but would like more enforcement measures from CEC too.

We would like to leave you with a video we made in partnership with the Liberton Association, after we invited our local MP to join us for the walk to school last winter, in which you can see a party of children and parents attempting to get from the Alnwickhill side of the catchment to the school. We could choose several different routes and they would all have unsafe elements. The children who live on this side have three busy main roads to cross as it is.

You will hopefully not fail to see how important these issues are for affected pupils, parents, carers, and community.

<https://www.facebook.com/LibertonAssociation/videos/3045153392164665/?v=3045153392164665>

Thank you for your time.

Liberton Primary School Association