

Leith Business Association have designs on Leith Walk



The Leith Business Association (LBA) would really like all traffic on Leith Walk to slow down. That is one of the main thoughts behind their plans for the beautification of the important thoroughfare which they are putting to The City of Edinburgh Council as part of the current consultation on how £5.5m of council monies should be spent.

Separately, the utility work which was delayed from September 2012 until January 2013 has not yet started, and the council now say they will need to give 4 weeks notice to residents and business owners in the area before beginning the work programme. There appeared to be a degree of scepticism among the LBA members at last week's meeting that they have been continually fobbed off by council consultations and meetings rather than positive action.

Although this is the feeling of some members, they are also conscious that the current consultation is their big chance to get their views across, and they have put a great deal of work into formulating their comment on the proposals published by the council for improvements to the main artery from the city centre to the port.

The business owners have been waiting for reinstatement of the road and pavements since the decision was taken **not** to bring the trams down Leith Walk. According to council officers who were at the meeting, the council are now working on the assumption that trams will be installed in Leith within the next 10 years or so.



Apart from the safety issues of the road itself, the issue of huge communal bins on the pavements is another matter which the group would like to see resolved.

The association said at last week's meeting that they feel a little neglected by the council who have not in the past always honoured their commitments to the group. There was some straight talking by the group of business people to the council officers in attendance about the historic delays.

Greener Leith were represented at the LBA meeting by Charlotte Encombe who agreed the general idea of simplifying the street layout. The business association also plan for electric car charging points along the street, in a glance towards transport methods of the future.

LBA say that their thoughts on the design differ from the council's own plans but made no apology for that. For example, the group said they would like to see the elimination of the London Road roundabout which they see as paramount among the dangerous elements along the route. The street [was named as one of the most dangerous](#) for cycle users just under a year ago, and LBA have included cyclists in their revisals to the council design.

Another facet of their revolutionary design proposals is to stop traffic across the width of the whole street at the same time, allowing pedestrians to walk across the whole street rather than being stopped in the middle on what is called a 'stepped crossing'. They understand that this will slow traffic down but think that this would be a good thing.

They also commented that they would like to see traffic lights suspended above the street rather than adding in traffic islands in the middle which would unnecessarily narrow the area remaining for road users.

After the meeting we spoke with Alex Wilson, Chair of LBA, about the proposals they had made to the council as part of

the consultation process:-

Although the consultation has now officially ended it seemed that the council officials would still be collating replies even after 13 January 2013. By the date of the Transport & Environment Meeting on 19 March 2013, the council officers will have all the consultation replies, and will make a recommendation to the committee as to the route forward.

✘ Leith Walk Councillor Angela Blacklock has congratulated other local organisations on the extensive work they have put in to a joint submission to the Leith Programme Consultation. The 42 page document was submitted yesterday and included input from local and city-wide groups.

Councillor Blacklock said: -The response was coordinated by Greener Leith with input from dozens of volunteers drawn from 10 other organisations as well as members of the public, members of Leith Business Association and academic experts. A lot of time and effort has gone in to this and the main issues have been picked up such as the lack of greenery and the problems with the junction at the bottom of Leith Walk.

There are also some good ideas, my favourite is requesting developers who apply for planning permission to demolish immediately so that if they don't choose to build straight away the gap site can be used as a free car park. This would help Leith Walk traders with increased footfall and the car park could even become a site for a market on Sundays. I also wholeheartedly agree that we should have a segregated cycle lane."

Greener Leith have issued a press release about their involvement with comment on the plans:-

[Leith Walk – Leith Improvement Plan](#) by