

Council adopts playing out policy

The City of Edinburgh Council has decided that the 2017 pilot project to close streets and allow children to play outside has been so successful that they have made it a new council policy.

There were 54 playing out sessions last year on 30 streets across the city. The council paid for all the costs of road closures and providing and delivering road closure equipment. Now it will be a responsibility devolved to the new locality teams across Edinburgh.



Corstorphine was one of the areas which took part in the pilot. Susan Murray, Chair of Environment Committee, Corstorphine Community Council said : "Local streets that took part in Corstorphine and Carrick Knowe all agreed it was a fantastic initiative and they would like to do it again.

"It was a really easy way for local residents to get to know neighbours of all ages. Although the focus is play, the benefits go way beyond. As a direct result of local street closures, people have said they know neighbours better and they are helping each other with simple things like borrowing tools, clearing drives or getting shopping in the snow."



One neighbour brought out their cargo bike and gave children lifts up and down the street in it.

One Corstorphine resident said : “We kept our street closure really simple . We brought out cups of tea and some people did home-baking. The kids had a ball playing safely and so did adults of all ages. We wish we had done it years ago there have been so many good things as a result. Two neighbours met each other for the first time, despite living on the same street only a few doors apart for 25 years.”

Rebecca aged 7 said : “Closing our street was the best thing ever. It felt so different not having loads of parked cars everywhere. We didn’t realise how much space they took up. I hope we can do it again soon as it was so much fun.”

Councillor Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Convener, said: “Our Edinburgh Playing Out pilot scheme saw hundreds of children, parents and neighbours reclaiming their streets for play, conversation and social interaction. Feedback from the public consultation was enormously positive and showed huge support for rolling this out as Council policy.

“By making our streets places to spend quality time with friends and neighbours, we’re helping build strong community spirit, fostering connections between different generations and enabling children to flourish through free and active play.”



Councillor Eleanor Bird, Young People's Champion, said: "It's so important for children to have the freedom to play outside in an unstructured way. The responses to our consultation showed how hugely beneficial closing off streets for play and recreation is, not just for the children themselves but for their parents and neighbours too. It will be fantastic to see more and more communities holding Playing Out sessions in their streets, especially in this Year of Young People."

Lucy Richardson, member of city organisation Edinburgh Playing Out, said: "Edinburgh Playing Out, a group of parents and

grandparents promoting children's play, are delighted City of Edinburgh Council is planning to make "Edinburgh Play Streets" Council policy. We look forward to working together to promote temporary street closures allowing children to play safely and communities to get together. Please contact us through our [Facebook page](#) ."

