Tram design is being influenced by discussions

The council has not yet made a decision about building an extension to the tram line, but it continues with work on design proposals.

It is strongly emphasised that they have listened to feedback from those consulted, and this afternoon councillors are hearing more about the various options under consideration.

No decision on proceeding is expected until a meeting on 13 December.

Meanwhile workshops involving residents, traders, active travel organisations and community representatives are taking place to refine the proposals.

The three workshops, which centre on key themes raised during the six-week first phase of public consultation held by the project team during March and April, began on 14 June with a focus on the section between Pilrig Street and Foot of the Walk.

 Twenty four people attended the four-hour session, including elected members, community councillors, local businesses, partner organisations including bus company Lothian and interest groups such as Sustrans and Living Streets.

Four alternative layouts for Pilrig Street to Foot of the Walk were presented to the workshop, with one — 3b — being preferred by the attendees.

This option includes two running lanes for all traffic (one northbound, one southbound), segregated cycleway and maximised footway on both sides of the street, plus a 1.8m central verge

which can be used as a safe crossing point/refuge. Option 3b also accommodates parking and loading on both sides, where space is adequate.

Although this option was preferred, a number of issues were raised, such as access for emergency vehicles in case one or both running lanes are blocked and also loading for commercial premises.

The Trams to Newhaven project team is currently examining these issues ahead of a second workshop on Pilrig Street to Foot of the Walk on 27 June, where a preferred option will be chosen as part of the final designs for Council to vote on later in 2018.

The remaining workshop in the series, on 25 June, will focus on public realm at Elm Row.

Members of the Transport and Environment Committee today heard a presentation from the project team outlining amendments which have already been made to the Trams to Newhaven plans following the spring consultation.

These amendments include:

— moving the location of the Balfour Street tram stop and signalising the junction to maintain access/egress to/from Balfour Street and Cambridge Gardens
— introduction of three new signalised pedestrian crossings between Pilrig St and Foot of the Walk, with potential for additional uncontrolled crossings
— amending alignment at south end of Constitution Street to accommodate loading
— signalising junctions at Albert Street and Manderston Street

Transport Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes said: "Thursday's workshop was enormously useful and we're very grateful to everyone who's given their time and energy to help us refine the plans for taking trams to Newhaven.

"We're working incredibly hard to shape the proposals using the invaluable feedback submitted, so that the final designs which Council will vote on towards the end of this year are as community-based as possible."

Andy Keba, Sustrans Scotland's Head of Strategic Partnerships, said: "We found Thursday's Trams to Newhaven workshop extremely constructive. It is clear that the City of Edinburgh Council recognises the ambition for Leith Walk to continue to improve as a place that prioritises people. Sustrans Scotland look forward to continued engagement with the process, and will support those measures which improve walking and cycling for the community of Leith."

Stuart Hay, Director of Living Streets Scotland, said: "The tram designs have come a long way to addressing the concerns of pedestrians and cyclists in terms of space and quality of the public realm. It was good to see the tram team working with communities on the solutions to some challenging issues. Hopefully, further work can meet technical and business considerations and the needs of the local community."